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OPINION

Will Harriet Miers be blessing or curse to Bush legacy?

By Peter A. Brown
KRT WIRE SERVICE

President Bush's choice of Harriet Miers for the Supreme Court should eventually end the debate about his intelligence.

Democrats, who have long questioned his intellect, now must hope they're right and he isn't smart enough to judge how she'll rule.

Conversely, his supporters must take the pick on faith — trusting that she won't be this Bush's David Souter, whom the president's father named to the court and turned out to be among its more liberal members.

That's because there is little evidence how Miers thinks about some of the most controversial issues of the day.

Given the confirmation process, we are unlikely to find out until she begins issuing rulings.

It's apparent that Miers is a pro-business conservative. She pays lip service to the notion that judges should interpret existing statutes, not make them by taking the law further than the elected representatives are willing to go.

Because she has never been a judge, or gone through congressional confirmation hearings for her White House

jobs, however, we really don't know much about how her mind works.

Barring a revelation that one assumes the White House has screened for, the chances of stopping her confirmation are slim to none.

It's poor politics, especially for Red State Democrats who have to seek re-election, to turn someone who looks like your grandmother into Public Enemy No. 1, no matter how much cash abortion- and gay-rights groups may have given to their campaigns.

Which is why if Bush's criterion for picking a Supreme Court justice is someone

whose personal views are so unknown their impartiality can't be called into question, he gets an A.

But if his goal is a justice he can absolutely count on to be a reliable conservative vote on controversial cases, then it's not clear to the rest of us what grade he should get.

After all, Bush is one of the few people who has the insight to know, or suspect, how she will rule.

One would assume that the president is sure of her views and values. He has known her for more than ten years, and she is the chief White House lawyer.

Yet because there is little public record on her stand about the most controversial matters — like abortion, gay rights, immigration, etc. — it will not be clear to most of us or the senators who must confirm her, how she will vote.

We have our suspicions, and the company she has kept in recent years would appear to provide clues.

Yet history shows that presidents can appoint Supreme Court justices expecting them to have a specific judicial philosophy and be proved wrong.

Just look at Souter, a New Hampshire Supreme Court

justice when tapped for the high court on the expectation by the elder Bush that he was a reliable conservative vote like Antonin Scalia.

Dwight Eisenhower was none too pleased with many of the rulings by Earl Warren, whom Ike made chief justice.

But in both of those cases, the presidents did not know their nominees well before hand.

Miers is another story.

We won't know for a while, but, in the end, picking Harriet Miers for the Supreme Court will prove once and for all just how smart Bush really is.

From the Editor: Congress threatens to cut student aid: Rams need to make their voices heard

By Lisa R. Boone
ARGUS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Congress is currently considering Budget Reconciliation, a process that will cut student aid programs by \$9 billion—the largest cut to student aid in history.

Over the last year, tuition at four-year public universities increased 10.5 percent and tuition at community colleges increased 8.7 percent without a rise in the percentage of governmental aid. As a result, student debt has drastically increased.

University alumni often grumble about large bills they receive for loans accumulated to cover tuition and fees. However, pending cuts to student-aid programs will rule out the possibility of some future students receiving aid at all.

According to the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, by 2010 nearly 4.5 million high-school graduates will not be able to afford to enroll in four-year colleges. In addition, the state PIRGs' Higher Education Project reports that cuts detailed in the Budget Reconciliation bill will force the average student to pay \$5,800 more over the life of their loan.

In a recent press release the United States Student Association President Eddy Morales said Congress is turning its back on our generation.

"Our federal government has set a plan into motion to drastically decrease aid for students, at a time when students need more aid than ever to achieve their higher education goals," said Morales. "Investing in higher education is investing in the future. Cutting higher education in such a drastic way is Congress turning its back on our generation."

Fellow Rams, we need to let Congress know we are against the addition of we want to ensure that sufficient financial aid will be provided to future college students. The 2006 Budget Reconciliation bill will be voted on this month or early November and can be defeated if Congress is convinced to oppose the legislation.

The United States Student Association urges students to contact their member of Congress at 1-800-574-4243 to express opposition of the Budget Reconciliation bill and visit www.unionvoice.org/campaign/ussa to sign a petition against the bill.

For more information on how to get involved in the campaign visit: www.usstudents.org



Boone

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"Seven Guitars."

The plays, Richards said, "gave so much opportunity for black theater artists that had not existed to that degree previously." When he first met Wilson, Richards recalled, "he was a brilliant young man, eager to learn. And he did learn."

Wilson lived and worked on a punishing, largely self-imposed nomadic schedule, following his plays from regional theater to regional theater as they made their way to Broadway. In the years prior to his death, Wilson lived in Seattle with his third wife, costume designer Constanza Romero, and their daughter, 8-year-old Azula Carmen Wilson. Wilson is also survived by Sakina Ansari, his daughter from his first marriage. Ansari came to Chicago last year when Wilson accepted the 2004 *Chicago Tribune* Prize for Literary Achievement.

Regarding the completion of his 10-play project, Wilson told the *Tribune* last year: "I can do it, because I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. ... I will have completed the cycle."

A largely self-educated poet,

Frederick August Kittel (his birth name) grew up in Pittsburgh's Hill District, and later immortalized the neighborhood in his plays. He was born April 27, 1945, the fourth of six children of a black cleaning woman, Daisy Wilson, who came from North Carolina, and a white, largely absent German-American baker, Frederick Kittel.

In 1960, Wilson dropped out of Gladstone High School after a teacher accused him of plagiarizing a paper on Napoleon. The poet-to-be subsequently spent hours at Carnegie Library in lieu of a formal education. He changed his name to Wilson in 1965 after his father died.

Wilson enlisted in the U.S. Army for a three-year hitch, and was discharged after one. Back in the Hill District he worked various jobs — short-order cook, dishwasher, gardener — and began writing in earnest.

With a group of other black Pittsburgh poets and writers, he contributed to the Center Avenue Poets Workshop and, in 1968, started Black Horizons Theater Company.

Often as director, Wilson presented to the Hill community work by revo-

lution-minded playwrights such as Amiri Baraka and Ed Bullins.

In 1969, Wilson married Brenda Burton, a nurse. Their daughter, Sakina, was born the following year. The marriage ended in divorce in 1972.

In 1978, after visiting a friend in St. Paul, Wilson liked it well enough to move there. From 1981 to 1990 Wilson was married to social worker Judy Oliver. In 1994 Wilson married costume designer Romero, whom he met while working on "The Piano Lesson."

Athol Fugard, whose play "Master Harold" ... and the boys" was produced at Yale Repertory Theater in the early 1980s around the time of "Ma Rainey," considered Wilson a friend and soulmate. His death, he said Sunday, is "terrible news. One knew it was coming. But the sense of loss is overwhelming."

"The only thing that can be said — and I said it in a little note to him not long ago — is that he completed this extraordinary project he set for himself. And by writing those plays, he's made sure his name will never be forgotten."

Let Us Hear from You

The News Argus welcomes Letters to the Editor. Please send letters to newzargus@yahoo.com, with the subject line "Letter to the Editor." Include your full name, including middle initial, classification at the university (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior or senior), and the name of your home city and state. All letters are subject to cutting and editing and should be limited to 200 words.



WSSU lives up to founding principle of serving others

Over the past month, I have come to understand the full magnitude of the power of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita as the media captured the unfolding of the devastation. It became clear that not only were the lives of millions living in the region changed forever, but that the country would never be the same. The widespread destruction was clear. Yet, through the tragedy and grief, there has been an overwhelming display of courage and commitment to help those in need.

One such area of need is with displaced college students from the Gulf Region. As you would imagine, colleges and universities were not immune to the devastation in the region. There were over 18 colleges, universities, and community colleges affected by



the hurricanes on some level with some institutions completely suspending operations. With thousands of students unable to continue their semester as planned, the national higher education community has made a tremendous commitment to provide opportunities for these displaced students. From the far western United States with the students of Utah Valley State donating food and clothes and sponsoring a talent show to raise money to the assistance from Champlain

College in Vermont, post-secondary institutions all over the country are playing a key role in helping students affected by this tragedy.

Along with donations, educational institutions are contributing through providing admissions to displaced students. WSSU is certainly a part of this commitment. Through the dedication of faculty and staff, WSSU was able to quickly develop a plan for providing opportunities for students from the Gulf region seeking to continue their education. Equally as important, we have devised a plan for much needed support services for students joining our campus community such as temporary housing, counseling services, financial aid, student health services, and dining services. As

well, our WSSU Foundation Katrina Student Relief Fund provides a means for persons to assist WSSU students affected by this disaster in the Gulf Region.

As student leaders, you have also shown your dedication to serve others during this devastating aftermath. One such example is with the Student Athletic Advisory Committees' dedication to gathering clothes for the hurricane victims. As well, the Gamma Lambda Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. sponsored a teddy bear drive for the children of the disaster along with collecting monetary donations. You are clearly leading by example.

As we acknowledge this leadership, we must also consider the currently enrolled WSSU students who were touched by this

devastation. These students need our undivided attention and support. Whether through counseling services or other areas of support, we must encourage these young men and women to rely on our campus community in this time of need. I request that you provide the leadership and friendship to your fellow students in need and direct them to use the appropriate resources.

It is important for us to remember that our institution was founded on the importance of learning and service, principles that are best supported through action in times of need. This tragedy provides an opportunity to rekindle our unfettered commitment to serving those around us.

Thank you for helping others.