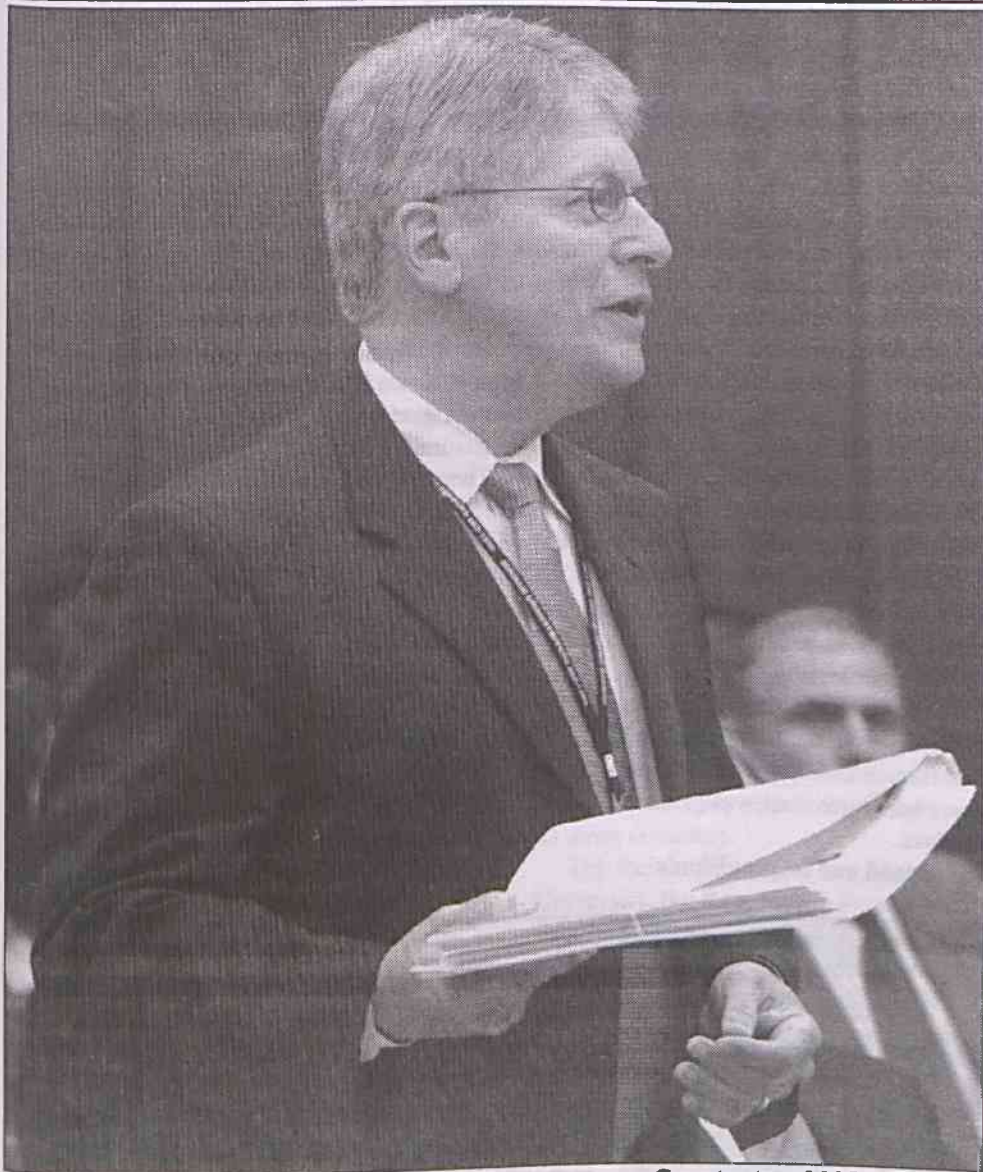


Thursday, April 26, 2007

# OPINIONS

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Courtesy of MCT Campus

Mike Nifong, prosecutor in the Duke case, was recently taken in front of an ethics board.

## Justice denied

**Donna Webber**  
Columnist

Rape, physical assault, kidnapping and robbery were the items of the day. The talking heads of television the sonorous voices of the radio talk shows righteous men and women everywhere and civil rights advocates all over the nation came together to pass judgment, convict and push for harsh punishment. Even renowned religious leaders gave their pronouncements. Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton called for demonstrations and actions to punish the guilty immediately. Duke lacrosse was in the crosshairs of the public.

Adding to this was a prosecutor named Mike Nifong who was running for re-election and would leave no stone unturned or turned to find these alleged perpetrators guilty as charged. The complainant was above reproach. The defendants were a raucous, rowdy group of misfits or hooligans who deserved to be hung or at the very least, sentenced to life.

There was no doubt about it: they were guilty. Guilty of being from families who could afford to send them to a prestigious university, guilty of belonging to of all things, the Duke Lacrosse team. They were guilty of wanting to attend a "kegger" in lieu of joining up to fight in the armed forces. They were guilty of playing loud music and guilty of noisy, boisterous parties. They were guilty of being young men

who thought that the world was just like a text book definition, extolling the virtues of fairness, equal treatment and justice for those accused of a crime. As the case waned interminably onward, there were changes in the accusations. There were mock lineups. There were indictments handed down. There was expensive and expansive legal counsel to be brought on board. There was DNA evidence that was mishandled. There were time lines that did not match. There was never a thorough investigation of witnesses or the complainant.

Nifong's public statements contained little lies, white lies and damned lies. When the attorney general and the ethics committee of the legal profession finally took charge, the defendants were totally exonerated.

Who can give back to these young men the 395 days they lost forever? Who can compensate their families for the mental anguish and the economic consequences they have suffered? Who can remove the scarlet letter that will follow these young men the rest of their lives?

Was it justice served or justice denied? Time will tell, but what is for sure, is that those who had power misused it for personal gain.

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## Women's rights should be decided by women

**Jessica Frizen**  
Columnist

Partial birth abortion was banned last week and we should all be disappointed.

It's a cruel procedure that far too many women use as a form of birth control, but what's more inhumane is that five men [who don't have to endure childbirth] sitting on their high horse in the Supreme Court can decide that an unborn baby has more American freedom and rights than that baby's mother does.

One can't completely eliminate any form of abortion, because there are always exceptions, like women who may die if they go through with the birthing procedure. It should be understood that this is a very small percentage of women, but what happens when a six- or seven-month pregnant woman is told she would die if

she had the baby? The government steps in and says, "Well, too bad."

Bush is proposing to increase spending on the promotion of abstinence-only education to \$141 million next year. Just to put that in perspective, our government was spending \$10 million in 1997.

Only five percent of women in this nation abstain from premarital sex, according to a study done by the Guttmacher Institute in 2006.

That percentage is not increasing because we refuse to educate students about safe sex.

Preach abstinence only and take away the right to abort a baby after a certain amount of time, then watch the number of unwanted and teen pregnancies skyrocket; watch the number of unsafe abortion procedures grow to unbelievable lengths.

Our next generation isn't going to know how to have protected sex and is going to feel lost when they suddenly realize they are forced to produce a human life against their will.

It's terrifying that the government is slowly taking away a woman's freedom.

It's contradicting that men, those who can get women pregnant with one night and then suddenly disappear, are the ones saying we can't make our own decisions after six months of pregnancy.

Men who are maybe 2 percent of the life-bearing process, are forcing women to sacrifice their everyday lives for nine months and endure the pain of childbirth, whether they want to or not.

Make the morning-after pill more available, teach abstinence, but teach about condoms, birth control pills, rings, sperm-

cides, STDs, getting tested, building healthy relationships and the whole nine yards.

Maybe then it would be more civil for men to take away the rights of women, simply because they think it's immoral. Five men taking away women's right to choose is immoral and dangerous.

Women should be able to decide what to do with their bodies for themselves, not a group of appointed men.

Perhaps partial birth abortion is a disgusting reality, but the choice to use it should be in the hands of the women who consider using it, not in the hands of impartial men who will never have to deal with the issue again.

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