

# FORUM

## Mike Espy Errs on Age-Old Risk/Benefits Equation?



outhouse. In his home state, supporters are dumbfounded and disappointed. "Good Lord," wrote a (white) Magnolia State journalist who "just knew Mike had the greatest opportunity to be the first black governor."

Questions abound now about who is responsible. Some think that his misfortunes can be laid at the feet of poor advisors and staff oversights. "Mike wasn't coached on what company to keep, what to watch out for," say others.

In the final analysis, Mike Espy's fall from grace is a matter of personal responsibility. As a youngster, he gained a reputation as a dependable and trustworthy person. He beat nails at his grandfather's coffin factory. Many Mississippians hope and expect that he will overcome this setback: he boxed himself in. The benefits were not worth the risks.

(Bill Turner is a freelance columnist for The Chronicle.)

talking to young people about bad decision-making. In Mr. Espy's case — according to the reports of friends, including his ex-wife — he loved to travel. He was overwhelmed by Washington's perks, the trimmings of power and gold plated advantages.

But, especially along the Potomac, life is filled with risks. Whether he solicited or simply accepted them, Mr. Espy has been indicted for receiving tickets to see the Cowboys play the Packers; the Bulls perform against the Phoenix Suns; the U.S. Open tennis championship; and, among other boners, he had more than \$4,200 channeled to his girlfriend.

For these miscalculations of the risk-benefits equation, he has been tagged with 12 counts of wire fraud, more than a dozen counts of approaching businesses and receiving gifts, charges of making false statements about the gifts and witness tampering.

In a way, Mr. Espy's calculations were like betting the farm against an

personal responsibility. As a youngster, he gained a reputation as a dependable and trustworthy person. He beat nails at his grandfather's coffin factory. Many Mississippians hope and expect that he will overcome this setback: he boxed himself in. The benefits were not worth the risks.

## What Could Be Hard About Golf?

"I've learned that I still have a lot to learn." (Age 92)

It was my first shot on the par three golf course and I was hooked. It landed on the green, and I made par! Yes! That was a great feeling.

It was my second attempt at playing golf, and it had taken a fraternity brother to insist that we go and play. The first attempt was a little less successful.

Several years ago, while on a business trip, the guys from the office encouraged me to join them and play a round of golf. Anytime they traveled, their golf clubs did too. Business was often conducted on the links. I considered myself an ex-athlete, having played high school and college football, and was mentally prepared to accept the challenge. Think positive and imagine success. I had seen this game played and had the confidence that I could do it. After a couple of holes, I reasoned, I would be mastering this beautiful course.

My first shot was ugly. Picture this: perfect grip, good stance, head down, then up and back down. I moved the club in front and back of the ball repeatedly. I concentrated, brought the club back, and swung for the home run. I should have stopped right there.

I looked for the ball and it was nowhere in sight. I understood then why you should keep your head down. I dug up a hole the size of a small crater, and the ball rolled about six inches away.

After a couple of holes and about six lost balls, I went back to riding the cart and smoking my cigar. This game is more difficult than I thought.

I remember my classmates playing golf in high school. I could not

understand why people would hit a little white ball, walk until they found it and hit it again until they put it in a hole. I would rather hit somebody on the football field and dare them to get up. Now that was satisfaction.

Well, Father Time has a way of slowing us down, and as you get older, you often change your perspective on things. I also discovered that a lot of people play golf and have been for some time now. Why didn't someone let me in on the secret.

After that first shot on the par three, I was ready to play again that



### Motivational Moments

Nigel Alston

week. My brother-in-law had given me an old set of clubs and warned my wife. "If he likes the game, you will not see much of him."

I purchased "Ben Hogan's Five Rules of Golf," and began to read up on the game — the stance, the grip, the swing, etc. Armed with new knowledge and eager to play, I was back on the course and had talked another novice into playing with me.

I was not prepared for what happened next. I had played better when I

didn't know what I was doing than I did with this new knowledge. Frustration set in, and I was not having a good time. I understand from expert golfers that this is part of the fascination and addiction to the game. Now it is a challenge.

I have been postponing lessons for some time now, hoping the athlete in me will show up and master the game. Ernie Morris (Winston Lake Golf Pro), I am on the way!

I am actually making a little progress. I almost hit a birdie at the Governor's Open last year. You see, a bird was walking across the fairway and I almost hit it.

My game is about the same as the scene in the Michael Jordan and Larry Bird basketball commercial, where they are shooting the ball off tall buildings, the moon, etc., and into the hoop. I'm off the tree, through the woods, in the water, down the cart path, out of the sand trap and into the hole.

Now, if I can only get Tiger Woods to help me with an endorsement. I think I would be a good spokesperson to influence non-golfers to take up the game.

See you at the Governor's Open on Sept. 20. The game really is fun, and I get to smoke a couple of cigars. Smoking on the course and not at home makes my wife happy. I guess my brother-in-law was right.

(Nigel Alston is an executive for Integon Insurance Company.)

## Embattled Baptist leader facing lawsuit from Coloradan



Dr. Henry Lyons shakes the hands of supporters after the general board of directors meeting at the National Baptist Convention in Denver, on Monday Sept. 1. Earlier, Lyons received a vote of confidence to keep him as president by the board's executive committee.

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — An Englewood man is suing embattled Baptist leader Henry Lyons, claiming Lyons failed to follow through on a business venture to help minorities.

Lyons is the leader of the National Baptist Convention USA, which meets Sept. 1-5 in Denver.

Garret Barry, president of Ottawa Financial Corp., said he invested about \$25,000 in the MEFAC Limited Liability Corp. with Lyons and leaders of the National Baptist Convention of America, another nationwide church group.

The officers never met after a kickoff symposium two years ago, Barry said, and the partners never followed through on plans to aid minorities, despite collecting more than \$600,000 from private donors and the federal government.

Barry and his lawyer claim that at least one of the partners "plundered" the company and gave family members and friends thousands of dollars in consulting fees.

Glenn Younger, Lyons' Denver lawyer, declined to discuss the lawsuit in detail Tuesday. "The law and the procedures are being followed in this case," Younger said. "That's the end of this conversation."

Lyons has come under fire for alleged misuse of church funds.

Among other charges, the Florida minister has been accused of using church funds to help buy a 5-carat diamond and a luxury villa for his mistress.

Barry said he has racked up about \$100,000 in legal fees in the case against Lyons.

"It's a financial drain on me. I'm not a person of great wealth and resources," said Barry, an Indian who runs a nationwide financial consulting firm for minority businesses.

The case, filed in December in U.S. District Court in Denver, is set for trial Oct. 5.

MEFAC is under investigation by the U.S. Justice Department for misusing at least \$150,000 that were supposed to help poor farmers in Alabama.

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