

## BOARD EDITORIALS

## INNOCENT CONVICT

The state should take responsibility and compensate Darryl Hunt for the 18 years he spent in prison for a murder that he did not commit.

For almost two decades, Darryl Eugene Hunt lived behind bars, sentenced to life in prison for a brutal rape and murder.

The 1984 crime was shocking and heinous, an event that roiled Winston-Salem and enraged members of the community.

It was also a crime that Hunt did not commit. Last week, Gov. Mike Easley granted the former convict a pardon of innocence, a step that recognizes the state's error in convicting Hunt and allows him to seek restitution for the time he spent in prison.

A judge had overturned Hunt's conviction in February after DNA evidence indicated that he did not commit the crime and another man confessed to the killing.

Easley's decision was an obvious one, but he deserves commendation for issuing the pardon when some had advocated against it.

The victim's family members opposed both the pardon and Hunt's release. Such wariness is understandable, considering that they have spent the past 19 years believing him to be the man who raped and murdered their daughter and wife. A governor facing re-election might have found it politically expedient to bow to the family's wishes and avoid a possible "soft on crime" label.

Still, the DNA evidence and subsequent confession indisputably show that Hunt was wrongly convicted, and Easley was right to grant the pardon. In doing so, he clearly demonstrated the state's responsibility to own up to its mistakes. North Carolina vigilantly must protect the innocent, even those who carry a certain stigma as convicts.

Now, the state's Industrial Commission must act in good conscience and award Hunt financial restitution for the 18 years taken away from him. Hunt is eligible for almost \$360,000 in compensation — \$20,000 for each year he was wrongly incarcerated. He deserves each cent, if only because of the

money's symbolic value. To lock up a person for a crime he or she did not commit is a failure of the state's judicial system.

Hunt spent a substantial portion of his life in jail. During the course of those 18 years, he was denied the ability to live with loved ones or pursue a profession. The state is responsible for the denying Hunt the basic freedoms that all U.S. citizens come to expect, and the state must pay.

When considering the enormity of North Carolina's malfeasance, the \$20,000 figure for each year of imprisonment seems distressingly insufficient.

Concerns over earning power are certainly relevant, and it is entirely possible that such a monetary figure comes close to what the average innocent convict would make. However, the state's obligation exceeds simple reimbursement.

Anyone who has suffered to the degree that Hunt has deserves reparation, and the state should pay a considerable amount of punitive damages.

Even more troubling are the ramifications for the rest of North Carolina's judicial system. Hunt is the first person in recent memory to be pardoned for murder, the one crime in the state that can lead to the most absolute of punishments.

Hunt's conviction easily could have garnered a death sentence, perhaps with a different jury or a more aggressive prosecutor.

Such a chilling mistake was obviously possible — therefore, Easley and the N.C. General Assembly should revisit the possibility of imposing a moratorium on capital punishment.

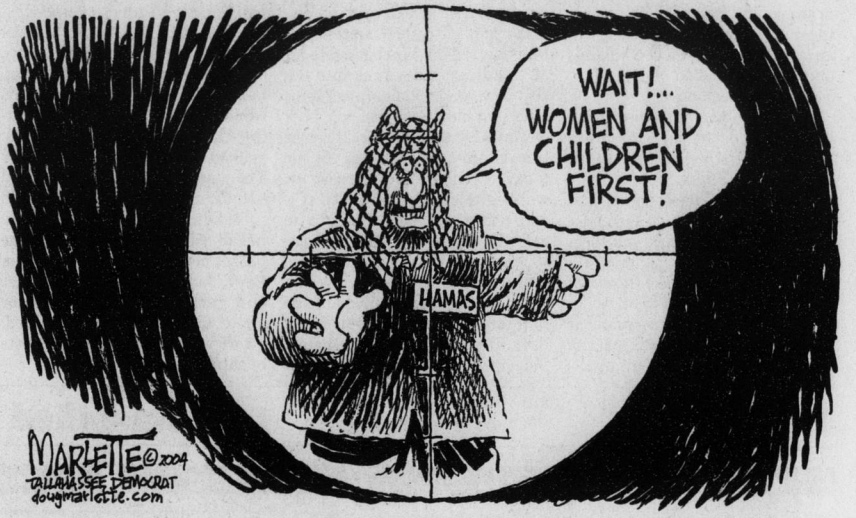
Such a move would be a fitting tribute to a man who has been wronged so egregiously by the state. If this mistake prompts judicial reform, the years that Darryl Hunt lost to the state can translate into a new emphasis on truth and justice for all innocent North Carolinians.

## ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"It is better that ten guilty men go free than one innocent suffer."

WILLIAM BLACKSTONE, BRITISH JURIST

## EDITORIAL CARTOON



## COMMENTARY

## People should treasure every minute in North Carolina

My grandfather once told me that there wasn't a better place to live than North Carolina. He'd traveled the world over, but I'm pretty sure he was always ready to return to the place he'd called home his entire life.

Like that wise man, I too have lived here since birth. It's a fine place, the Old North State. And I've never had a reason to leave.

However, after being here for 22 years, and with nothing holding me back, it's time to check out somewhere new.

But before I go, I must celebrate the rich culture and all the fine offerings of this expansive state, the things that bring people here, keep people here and will likely bring me back here.

As a product of urban and rural areas, I've felt both shape me in immeasurable ways.

Let's start where I started, in the small town of Selma, southeast of Raleigh. My roots are in rural North Carolina, replete with Piggly Wiggly, the corner mom-and-pop pharmacy and a community newspaper shop that didn't seem quite as big at 20 as it did when you were a little tyke banging on an old typewriter.

Country came to town in the mid-1980s, when Charlotte became home. It was pretty special being able to grow and change just as the Queen City shot up in its own right.

It was easy to get caught up in the big city excitement. The Charlotte Hornets once buzzed around town, and that same civic pride carried over when the Carolina Panthers entered some years later.

But you've really got to get out of your hometown to figure out what this state is all about.



MICHAEL DAVIS  
COUNTRY FEEDBACK

After all, we have lots of geographic and cultural diversity packed into more than 53,000 square miles.

We have a lot of class, and little crass. Maybe I've been brainwashed by living here my entire life, but I can't think of all that much that turns me off.

How can you not like a state where you can pick a sand burr out of your foot and hike a mountain trail all in the same weekend if you really wanted?

Don't rush yourself, though — we North Carolinians like it laid back.

So laid back that we don't really trouble ourselves when it snows. It's always fun getting giddy over forecasts for one or two inches of the white stuff, knowing full well that's enough snow to shut down civilization. I wish that excitement on everyone — we all need a fun day off.

And when it all melts away, get in the car and get some of the best pork barbecue around.

Easterners, with their vinegar affinity, and Westerners, with the tomato base, will forever argue about who has the best.

You decide — doesn't make any difference to me, as long as I've got some sweet tea so I can wash it all down. Bridges Barbecue in Shelby, Kings in Kinston and Jimmy's Barbecue in Lexington are good places to start on your 'cue tour.

Want more top-notch cuisine? After a long afternoon lolling on the sand, eat some fried shrimp and tell me isn't that the best thing you've ever tasted. And be sure to save some hush puppies and go feed the sea gulls after dinner.

Despite my musings, my Tar Heel curriculum has been more than beaches and barbecue.

I can thank this state for a solid education since I was five. The school systems get a fair amount of grief, but those teachers are working too many hours, and for very little pay, simply to enlighten us.

And despite tuition hikes, our fantastic system of colleges and universities allows students to learn in any of the state's various environments for quite a bargain. Taxpayers are backing a hefty portion because here, we see a college degree as a boost to society.

In this state, everyone pitches in to do his part. Maybe it's just an extension of our hospitality. I'll gladly tolerate sticky summer nights and pesky mosquitoes for that collective spirit.

In North Carolina, you can get the best of both worlds. Put your feet up and rest in rural realms, or dabble in the city life. The options are endless and keep things interesting.

We live in a great place. Relish every minute of your time here, whether it's a quick four years or the rest of your life.

This state has given me so much — all with flavors I couldn't sample anywhere else.

Thanks for everything, North Carolina. I'll see you later.

Contact Michael Davis at [davismt@email.unc.edu](mailto:davismt@email.unc.edu).

## COST OF CLEANING UP

Orange County's increased spending on recycling services requires that local residents pay the expense necessary to curb landfill use.

Since 2000, Orange County residents have been enjoying recycling services that effectively have been free. But residents soon might be called upon to pay for these services.

County officials have proposed a fee to help pay for the program, according to The (Raleigh) News & Observer. Commissioners might review the proposal in June.

If the plan goes into effect, all Orange County property owners will have to pay a mandatory \$36 base fee for recycling services. Chapel Hill and Carrboro property owners will be charged an extra \$39 to offset the cost of their weekly curbside pickups. Rural property owners will have to pay an additional \$16.

That brings the total charge to \$75 for town residents and \$52 for rural residents.

Town residents shouldn't bemoan the fact that they would have to pay a higher fee, as their recyclable materials are picked up twice as often as those of rural residents.

While urban citizens get to clean out their recycling bin every week, those people not living within town limits must let their soda cans and newspapers pile up for two weeks before the bi-monthly collections.

No matter where they live, residents might decry the new fee, but it is a necessary evil.

Recycling services are needed to prevent the county landfill from filling up too rapidly. More money is needed to ensure that residents continue using recycling services instead of creating large amounts of permanent waste.

Orange County is the leading county in North Carolina in per capita garbage reduction: The N&O reported that the per capita amount of waste going to the landfill has gone down by 45 percent since 1991.

However, the target is to reduce contributions to the landfill by 61 percent. The county still has a long way to go.

The county's recycling program previously was paid for through "tipping fees." A tipping fee is the price of dumping at the landfill for commercial and town garbage collectors.

That small revenue source is no longer enough to cover the costs of countywide recycling. Considering the fiscal crises that have plagued municipalities across the state, an additional recycling tax is reasonable.

The new fee will allow the county to expand its recycling efforts and continue to provide the services from which its residents benefit.

It is important that Orange County develop facilities and methods of dealing with a higher volume of recyclable material.

As more people and businesses move to this part of North Carolina, an infrastructure that can handle the increased flow of garbage and recyclables must be maintained and upgraded constantly.

It would be foolish to take for granted this area's success in terms of per capita garbage reduction. Orange County will fall behind and not be able to tout its progress in waste management if it fails to take further steps.

The county has made impressive strides in cutting down waste that ends up in the landfill. This is especially laudable considering the large number of students living in the county.

But the reduction target of 61 percent has not been met yet. Using the additional funds provided by the new fee, the county can continue to be environmentally conscientious.

This additional money will allow Orange County to continue making progress in ensuring that residents do not run out of room for their waste.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above editorials are the opinions of solely The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board, and were reached after open debate. The board consists of seven board members, the editorial page associate editor, the editorial page editor and the DTH editor. The 2003-04 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

## READERS' FORUM

## Weapons ban is ineffective in reducing gun violence

TO THE EDITOR:

On April 19, The Daily Tar Heel ran a letter advocating extension of the Assault Weapons Ban of 1994. To many, the ban is a shameful fraud and merely a piece of "feel good" legislation with no value in preventing crime.

The weapons this ban covers are not the Uzis, AK-47s and other military weapons you see on CNN. True selective fire military weapons already were restricted by two prior laws. The weapons banned in 1994 are semi-automatic pistols and sporting rifles that have military-style cosmetic features but function identically to many common firearms.

The differences between the banned firearms and legal ones are entirely cosmetic, having no effect on lethality or rate of fire.

The rhetoric that these weapons are used only by terrorists, drug dealers and armed gangs is also false.

The 19 weapons banned in 1994 account for about 0.2 percent of all violent crimes and about 1 percent of gun crimes.

In 1995, President Clinton's administration completed a study finding that less than 1 percent of state and federal inmates used broadly defined "military-type" weapons for crimes that took place prior to the 1994 ban.

In 1997, a similar survey of federal inmates showed no reduction in crimes committed with the banned "assault rifles."

Clearly, this does not constitute an imminent threat to public safety.

The fact that Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold broke 19 laws prior to entering Columbine High School, including production of unlawful destructive and explosive devices, underscores why the Assault Weapons Ban is critically flawed.

It emphasizes restricting the rights of law-abiding citizens instead of punishing those who break the law.

How effective can legislation like the Assault Weapons Ban be when criminals rarely use military-style rifles?

How effective can gun control be when criminals like Klebold and Harris steal, manufacture or illegally obtain their weapons?

Jonathan Reich  
Junior  
Political Science

## Geography might play part in who develops disorders

TO THE EDITOR:

While on a cruise of the western Caribbean, I took note of how many of the young females on board were extremely thin.

Two different appearances dominated the ship. There were the

skinny females and the average bodied females. After meeting and conversing with the women of both profiles, I realized that the predominantly thin sect was composed of southerners while the less thin, average-looking group consisted of northern women.

This phenomenon encouraged me to focus on the pressures that might prompt women living in warmer climates to be more conscious about their physical appearances.

After all, warm weather equates with form-fitting tank tops, short shorts, and bathing suits; women from cold climates do not face physical exposure as regularly as us southern girls.

A study conducted at Temple University examined whether or not living in a warm weather climate contributes to eating disorders. It found an alarming relationship between geographic location and the body mass index of college females aged 19 to 24.

Nineteen percent of southeastern females had a BMI of less than 19 — which is considered underweight — whereas only 1 percent of northeastern females had a BMI of less than 19.

The study concluded that women from the southeastern United States are more likely to have eating disorders, weigh less and preoccupy themselves with their body images compared to northern women.

WRAL recently did a segment on eating disorders on local college campuses and reported that one out of four female college students suffers from an eating disorder.

In light of such alarming statistics, UNC women must be proactive and make themselves aware of eating disorder risk factors. Pressures associated with college, daily demands and the warm N.C. climate place us at risk.

Acknowledgement of these facts gives us a heads up, helping to prevent the occurrence of eating disorders.

Erin Caudle  
Senior  
Nursing

## High attendance is best way to attract famous acts

TO THE EDITOR:

For my past two years with the Carolina Union Activities Board, I've heard a lot of talk about "big concerts."

"Why don't you do big concerts?" people ask. "How come other campuses have them and we don't?"

Well, wonder no longer, Carolina: Nas will be in the Smith Center on April 22 at 8 p.m.

The thing is, putting on a concert of this magnitude takes more work than you can possibly imagine (trust me). And if students actually want to see a big-name artist in concert

on campus each year, their attendance is the best way to show that to the people who can make such shows happen.

This concert is somewhat of an experiment for us all: It will be the first time for hip-hop in the Smith Center and the first major concert for CUAB in a while.

But it could be the start of a successful tradition if we get the attendance to make it worth our while.

It's impossible to find someone that everybody likes and who's affordable. But we've done our best — the rest is up to you.

There are plenty of tickets, at both UNC student (\$10) and general public (\$25) prices, still available.

We'll see you Thursday at the Smith Center.

Chris Lamb  
President  
CUAB

TO SUBMIT A LETTER: The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments.

Letters to the editor should be no longer than 300 words and must be typed, double-spaced, dated and signed by no more than two people. Students should include their year, major and phone number. Faculty and staff should include their title, department and phone number. The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity. Publication is not guaranteed. Bring letters to the DTH office at Suite 104, Carolina Union, mail them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or e-mail them to [editdesk@unc.edu](mailto:editdesk@unc.edu).

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ELYSE ASHBURN  
EDITOR, 962-4086  
OFFICE HOURS 2:15-3:15 PM MON. WED.

DANIEL THIGPEN  
MANAGING EDITOR, 962-0750

JENNIFER SAMUELS  
PROJECTS MANAGING EDITOR, 962-0750

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EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR, 962-0750

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ERIC GAUSCHI  
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