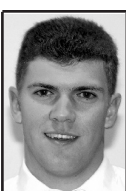


Condemning race discussion solves nothing

Condemnation from liberals discourages honest racism discussion by white students.

I am white. I begin with this disclaimer knowing that once this is discovered, some will disqualify my authority to discuss racial issues because of my skin tone. Sadly, this only begins to exemplify the problems we face in confronting race.

I found out that being white disqualified my intelligence on racial issues last year upon writing



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an extremely fair editorial in the *Old Gold and Black* regarding affirmative action. Proponents of the program attacked my credibility for labeling it as insulting. Evidently, while they can claim that I receive preference everyday by being white, I am not entitled to feeling insulted when someone judges my merit simply by my being white.

As a result, I was not altogether surprised when the controversy erupted over Rush Limbaugh's comments on ESPN's *Sunday's NFL Countdown*. Limbaugh said that Donovan McNabb is overrated, and that the "media has been very desirous that a black quarterback do well."

But contrary to what racial agitators want you to believe, Limbaugh did not judge McNabb's ability based upon his race, but criticized the media's coverage of the quarterback. Anyone who has ever listened to Limbaugh would know that he constantly encourages people to ignore race when judging people because he sees everyone as equal.

Regardless of what you've been told, Limbaugh's comments were not racist. In fact, they were aimed at criticizing people for making race an issue, something the NFL and people like Jesse Jackson have done by judging a team's coaching staff by a head coach's skin color rather than his merits. However, the resulting media backlash says a lot about the integrity of our society.

But the problem is also real at Wake Forest. Over the past couple of weeks, we have witnessed controversy surrounding a plaque honoring "Dr. Tom" Jeffries—a plaque placed on this campus to formally honor a great man who played a relatively informal, yet significant, role in the university's day-to-day operation. Mr. Jeffries

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was a man so respected that prominent professors and caring students served as pallbearers at his funeral. Mr. Jeffries was a man so respected that white members of the community sought to immortalize his presence on campus with a bronze plaque in a time when segregation and racism ran rampant.

Where else on campus do you see a memorial the size of Mr. Jeffries' plaque honoring a staff member, much less a custodian? Clearly, Mr. Jeffries had a profound impact at the old campus; and clearly, his peers held him in the highest regard.

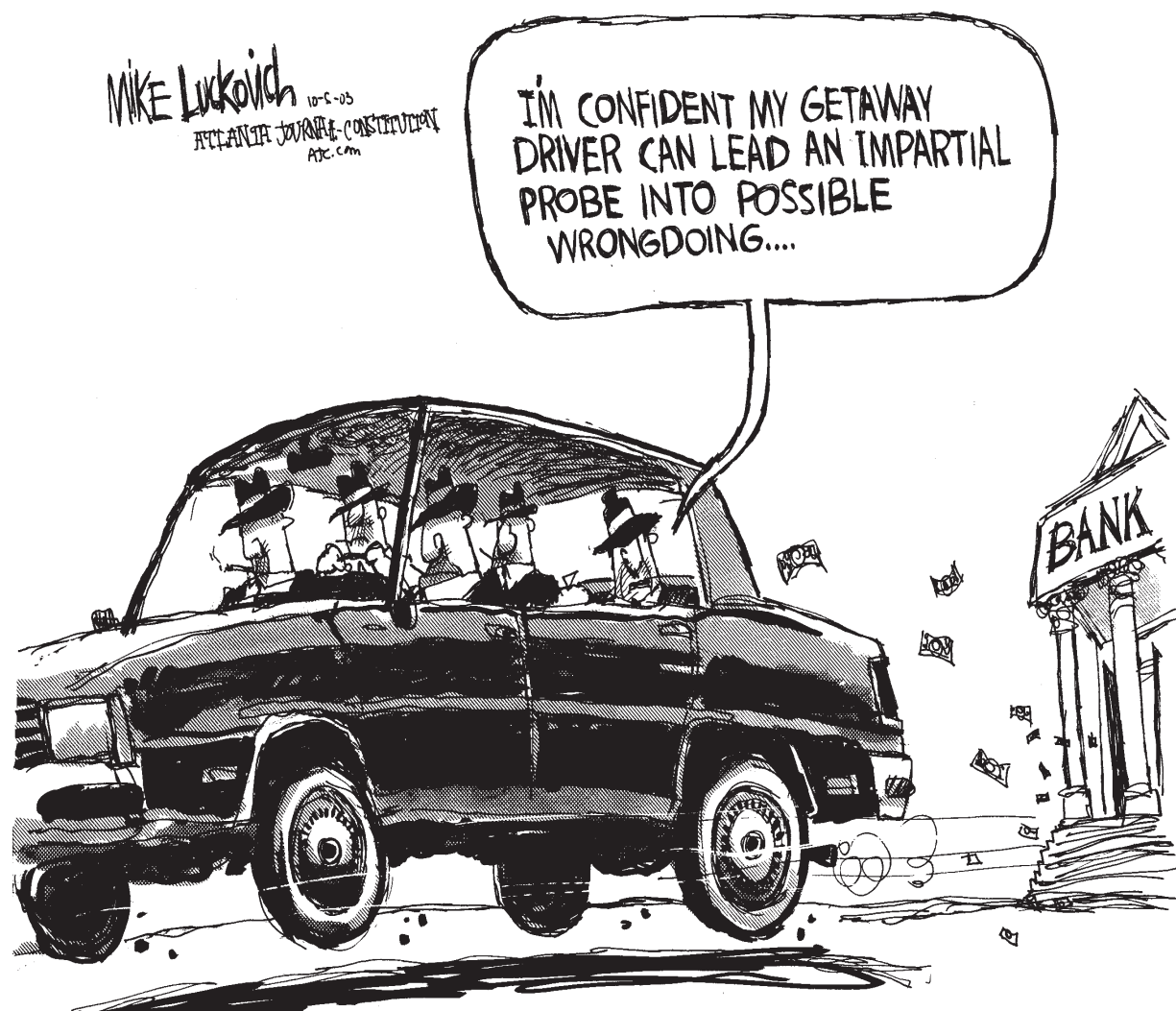
This plaque is nothing more than an attempt to honor a friend and that is why it is inscribed so informally. Now, Mr. Jeffries' memory is being tainted, not by the words on the plaque but by racial agitators who are seeking to claim the plaque is dehumanizing. We should not advance racist language; however, there was no such motive in creating this plaque. The only motive involved was to recognize a person they saw as an equal. On the other hand, using Mr. Jeffries as an example of advancing political correctness by altering his plaque will forever pollute his memory and accomplishments.

In these same few weeks, many have written about how white attitudes and privileges remain the cause of such racial tensions. When I told a good friend of mine who was a student of Dr. Watts about his recent comments and theories that were expressed in the *OGB*, he responded by saying, "Dr. Watts was one of my favorite professors and I thought he had more sense than that."

I think we all can have a little more sense. It is time we as a society realize that race relations will not progress as long as whites, blacks, yellows, greens and blues continue to force accusations of racism upon each other. Unfortunately, some whites are racist, and some blacks are racist; but racism should never be condoned. We must come together, rather than divide, to fight racism.

Yes, I am white. No, I am not racist; and no, I will not let you convince me that I have the "luxury" to deny being racist. This supposed "luxury" I enjoy on speaking about race will undoubtedly involve subsequent attacks on my character for writing this article, yet I will stand up for what I believe is right because I desire a world in which, one day, race is no longer the qualifying aspect of a man's worth.

Fritz Vaughan is a senior political science major.



Putting issues in focus

Conference meets mandate to better campus life.

As a participant in every President's Leadership Conference for the last 18 years, I must take exception to the opinions expressed in

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this past week's *Old Gold and Black* staff editorial ("PLC Focus Should Be Elsewhere," Oct. 2).

The first few conferences focused on leadership training for students. After a few years, organizers realized that this was not the best use of time. The next few conferences tended to focus on large campus issues, such as the ones mentioned in the article. These were perhaps the least productive conferences.

For the past few years, students, faculty and administrators have worked together to develop a student leadership agenda for the year. This year's topics of discussion were part of the well-written and very thoughtful *Strategic Plan for Student Life*, which was developed by last year's Student Government officers. This year's Student Government officers wanted to "Piece Together" ideas and action plans for the year, based on the strategic plan.

The issues mentioned in the editorial are all critical issues for our campus to discuss, but

I welcome discussion about traditions as well as student action toward creating new campus traditions and strengthening and sustaining old ones.

the PLC is not the appropriate venue for such discussion. The *Howler* homecoming article and the "Dr. Tom" plaque outside of Tribble are indeed serious matters. The campus forum held on Sept. 8, 2003 was a more appropriate venue for such discussion, and hopefully it was only the beginning of campus dialogue on these issues. For those students who would like to learn the *skills* of effective dialogue, the theme year committee is sponsoring dialogue sessions with an outside consultant. The first of these, on the issue of race on campus, was held on Sept. 24. The second, which will focus on gender issues on campus, will be held on Oct. 14.

While parking is and has been a difficult issue on campus, it is also not an appropriate topic for the PLC. The Traffic Commission, University Police and others have been conducting an ongoing examination of parking issues and concerns on campus. Parking issues cannot be resolved in a forum such as the PLC. It should be noted that the student voice is represented on the Traffic Commission each year.

Finally, the theme year is very important. Most theme year events that have been held already have been well attended. The theme year

committee was quite deliberate about making sure that students were on the committee and were consulted about the events and activities that were planned.

It is my understanding that the first part of the Agora — the pairing of administrators and students in a shadowing experience — was very successful.

The topic of creating campus traditions was indeed a timely one. Our student life visits with comparable institutions during the past two years have demonstrated that new traditions can be created successfully. The benefit of such events and activities is the development of stronger campus community.

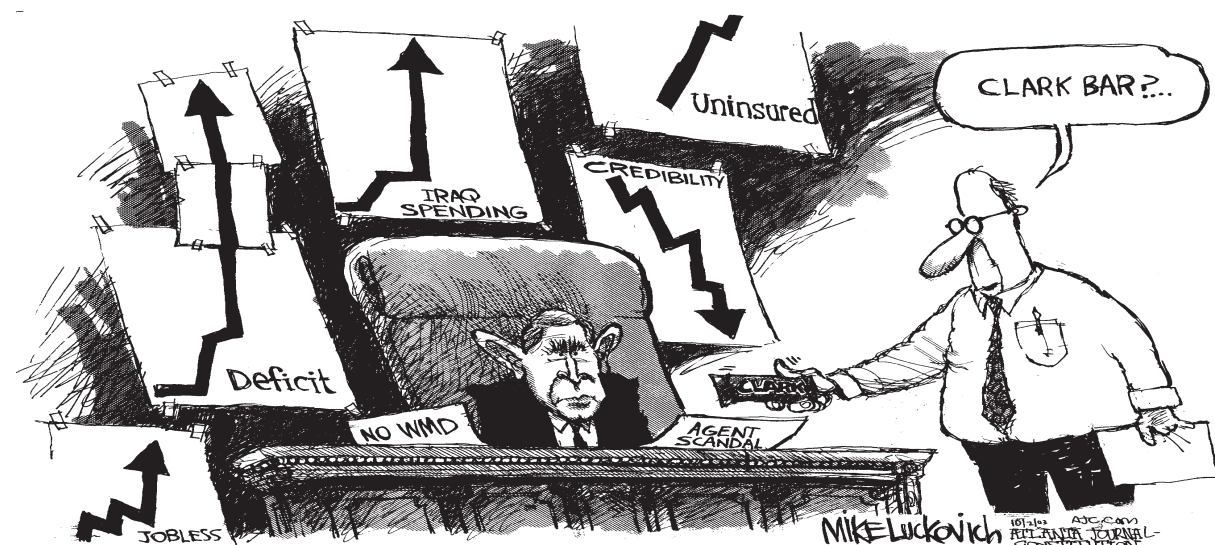
I welcome discussion about traditions as well as student action toward creating new campus traditions and strengthening and sustaining old ones.

I have talked with Student Government leaders over the past few years regarding selection of PLC participants. In general, leaders of student organizations have been selected for their ability to go back and work with their own groups to turn ideas into action. Perhaps a few "at-large" students who are known as campus "opinion leaders" could be selected in the future.

I commend this year's Student Government leaders for an excellent conference.

I believe that the focus areas were appropriate and well covered.

Mary T. Gerardy is the associate vice president for student life.



White racism not to blame for all social disparities

Accountability more relevant than collectivist claptrap.

In her reply to me in last week's *Old Gold and Black*, Dr. Deepa Kumar dutifully recites the liberal litany on racism. This gives us a good opportunity to examine some of the common fallacies that Kumar supports. Dr. Kumar correctly states that a



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higher proportion of black people than white people are arrested for committing crimes. She also mentions that black unemployment is higher than white people's, and blacks' earnings are lower. Clearly this must be a sign of racism, right? After all,

we assume that all problems facing the black race must be caused by the white man, either directly or indirectly.

However, there is no logical reason to automatically conclude that white racism is at fault without first checking the facts. Black conservatives from Larry Elder to Thomas Sowell make a strong case for an opposing theory. They point to the astonishing fact that 70 percent of black children in America are born out of wedlock, compared to 30 percent of the general population and focus on this fact as the source of high black poverty and arrest rates.

When you think about it, this makes sense. Fathers play a powerful role in teaching a child values. According to census statistics, children in single parent homes are 10 times as likely to be poor, and 20 times as likely to be in jail as children from homes with both parents, whether they be black or white.

Leftist faculty members will not teach you this in a sociology class, presumably because they haven't figured out a way to blame it on white racism yet. Every black father walking out on his child's mother is making an individual choice, a choice not to

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teach his son to take responsibility for himself, to work hard, get educated, and earn an honest living.

He is also making the choice to condemn his son to a far higher likelihood of using drugs, running away from home, and having illegitimate children himself.

This systemic problem can be pinned on a liberal system that encourages black men to blame their failures on racism and let the government pick up the tab for their

mistakes. If you relieve people of responsibility for their actions, you can't expect responsible behavior. Also, by crying "racism!" at every inequality, liberals stop us from rationally analyzing problems and dealing with them effectively.

As Elder points out, if more black people are getting arrested for crime, then maybe it's because black people commit half of all homicides, the majority of victims also being black. The people that commit crimes should be arrested regardless of their skin color.

If black people commit more crimes per capita, in a fair system they will also be arrested more per capita. I think it would be unwise and unfair to prevent a police officer from apprehending a criminal because he had already arrested all the black people he was allowed for the month.

No Dr. Kumar, the income gap between whites and blacks is not caused by systemic racism. It is caused by systemic irresponsibility: individuals making bad choices and teaching their children to do the same, with the blessing and encouragement of liberal intellectuals.

Kumar then goes on to portray some

real examples of racism, such a study that found specific instances where a white and a black student with identical résumés applied for a job, and the white student was called back more often. Notice how instead of drawing on unprovable assumptions, this study actually presents valid cause for concern. This could be a valid area of inquiry and improvement and offers a legitimate criticism of society, as long as all other variables are accounted for, such as personality, which can be difficult.

There are real economic and social disparities between different racial groups in America. However, it is a huge leap of faith, and bigotry, to go from observing these inequalities to concluding that they must be solely caused by white racism. If we ignore all other explanations and assume racism, then progress will never be made. Until better arguments are made, I will continue to support my position, that the law, business firms, schools, and private individuals should judge everyone on their own individual merit.

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