

'A Question of Identity' addresses civil rights

By Richard Tijerina
Staff Writer

The Aggie Players' debut performance of the semester opens Friday

Review

night in the Rudder Forum with Pat Pfeiffer's original play, "A Question of Identity." And judging from the size and reaction of the crowd at the Thursday night screening, it should be a rousing success.

The play, which centers around a liberal white reporter's struggle to find the truth behind a civil rights leader's death, is a two hour journey into the heart and soul of the civil rights movement. By the end of the play, the young reporter named David Stein is forced to look at himself and answer some disturbing questions about the movement, politics, race relations, modern journalism and himself.

Martell Stroup is excellent as the reporter Stein. His relentless search

for the truth sometimes gets him in trouble with those he is trying to obtain answers from, but he nevertheless continues to look for the answers that are continually hidden from him.

Those answers that are hidden concern the mysterious cause of the death of the civil rights leader, a fictitious character named Wayne Ellison. Ellison died in a car accident when his brakes failed while going around a turn, and the police report mentions the suspicious absence of brake fluid in the master cylinder.

Stein is convinced of foul play in Ellison's murder, but he cannot obtain any hard facts from either Ellison's widow or son. Stein's two main theories on Ellison's death are that an ex-FBI agent killed him or that he arranged his death himself to further the movement's cause by making himself a martyr.

Danya Arafat beautifully portrays Stein's wife Linda, the angry young woman who constantly struggles for Stein's attention.

Halfway through the play, the real focus centers on Stein's struggles to

find himself while writing his news story on Ellison's death. Stein was once involved in the movement himself, but has since lost place of his ideals. A strong scene takes place between Stein and Ellison's widow that helps to define and raise some questions concerning his character.

"Mr. Stein," Ellison asks, "just what is it that makes you run? A passion for the truth... or the Pulitzer Prize? You'd better search yourself, then maybe you'd find the truth."

Stein's search for the truth eventually leads him into an obsession that soon starts to decay the foundation of his marriage. When Linda finally confronts him with a take-your-story-or-me speech, she leaves him with a message that makes him think again of his priorities in life and what is and is not important to him.

"It's just a story, David," she says. "Just another item in the newspaper. You turned it into a crusade."

The script is beautifully written by Pfeiffer. Each scene proceeds in a clear, concise manner that Pfeiffer should be given complete credit for.

The movement is good and the dialogue is crisp.

What is most enjoyable about a few scenes is the way in which she connects them all at the end.

In one scene, Stein visits the Ellisons for the first time and immediately asks to use the restroom. Later, when the scene is ended and Stein is rudely asked out by Ellison's widow, he is told that he forgot to flush the toilet.

All in all, the play is a moving portrait of the civil rights movement and will make the audience member leave the theater thinking twice about his or her views on several subjects, including civil rights, journalism and modern relationships.

"A Question of Identity" will be making a two weekend run at A&M. Performances are slated for October 7, 8, 13, 14 and 15 at 8 p.m. in the Rudder Forum. Tickets are \$5 for the general public and \$4 for students and senior citizens. Reservations or ticket information can be made by calling the Rudder Box Office at 845-1234.

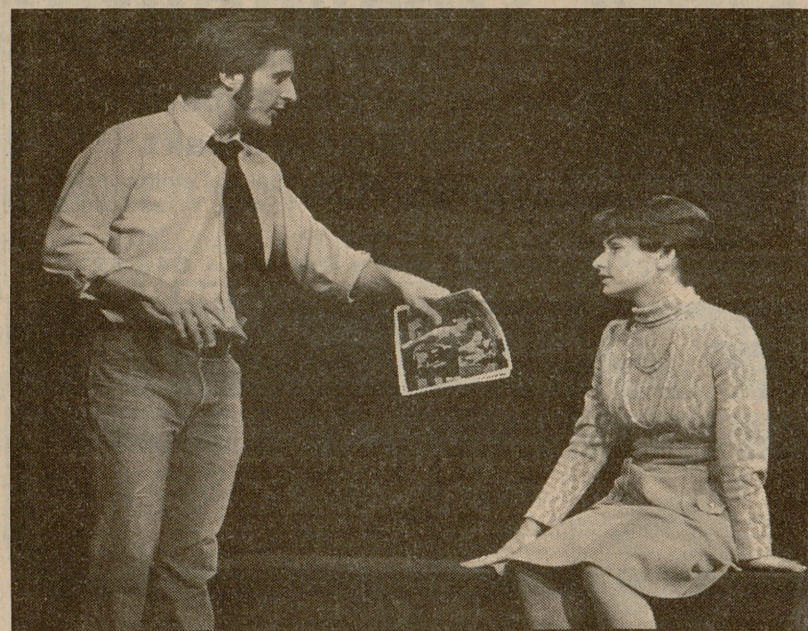


Photo by Fredrick D. Joe
"A Question of Identity," won in the Aggie Players' New Plays competition.

Gibson: Students should prepare for advanced education

By Kelley Wondrash
Reporter

Students interested in graduate school should begin preparation at least a year before they plan to attend, said Dr. Claude Gibson, acting assistant dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

As part of the College of Liberal Arts Career Development Workshop, a program on how to prepare for graduate school was presented Thursday evening in Rudder Tower.

"The first question you should ask yourself is why do you want to attend graduate school," Gibson said. "There are many reasons students want to attend graduate school. Some want to go for personal fulfillment while others want to gain additional experience in their field. Whatever the reason you must decide why you want to go."

Gibson said the next important question to ask is when does a student want to attend graduate school.

"Generally you have to know the answer to this question a year before you want to attend graduate school," Gibson said. "There are tests that must be taken and these must be completed before you apply to graduate school."

Another important question to ask is what does a student want to do in graduate school, Gibson said.

"Students can help answer this question by talking to a professor or someone that is involved in the area they are interested in studying," Gibson said. "Ask faculty members what they had to do when they were in graduate school or ask them what courses you should take to prepare for

graduate school. The answers the faculty members give you could help make your decision about what to do in graduate school easier."

Dr. Charles Stoup, business officer for the College of Liberal Arts, said it is important for students to apply to several graduate schools so they can maximize their chances at being admitted.

"Students also need to apply to a wide range of institutions," Stoup said. "If you apply at a small, private institution, you need to apply at a larger university also. This also will multiply a student's chances of being admitted to one of the graduate schools he or she applies to," Stoup said.

Gibson said there are books available in the library that can help students in their decision on which graduate school to attend.

"These books are located in the reference room of the library and contain information about specific graduate institutions," Gibson said. "These books have information on admission requirements, costs, the number of students attending the school and the types of graduate programs offered at the school."

Gibson said there are other questions to ask when looking for a graduate school.

"Find out what the library is like at the institution you want to attend," Gibson said. He said this is important because graduate students spend much of their time doing research in the library.

Gibson said to find out who the specialist are that students will be studying under and to find out what kinds of courses are available in the student's field of study.

Once these questions have been answered stu-

dents can start applying to the graduate schools they have chosen, Gibson said.

Stoup said competition to get into graduate school is stiff so students should be aware of two important criteria they will be judged on.

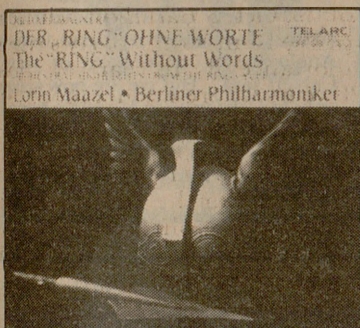
"Also get to know your professors. This is important because when you apply to most graduate schools you will have to send letters of reference and these are usually written by your professors."

Stoup believes that students should start thinking about graduate school as early as their sophomore year.

Stoup said as juniors students should take their Graduate Record Examination (GRE). He said students should take the test during their junior year so they can spend their senior year applying to graduate school.

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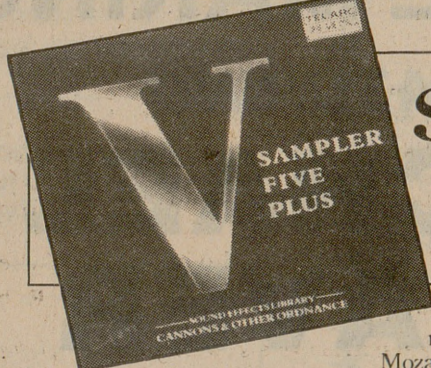
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