

# Opinion

## Let's honor those who fight racism

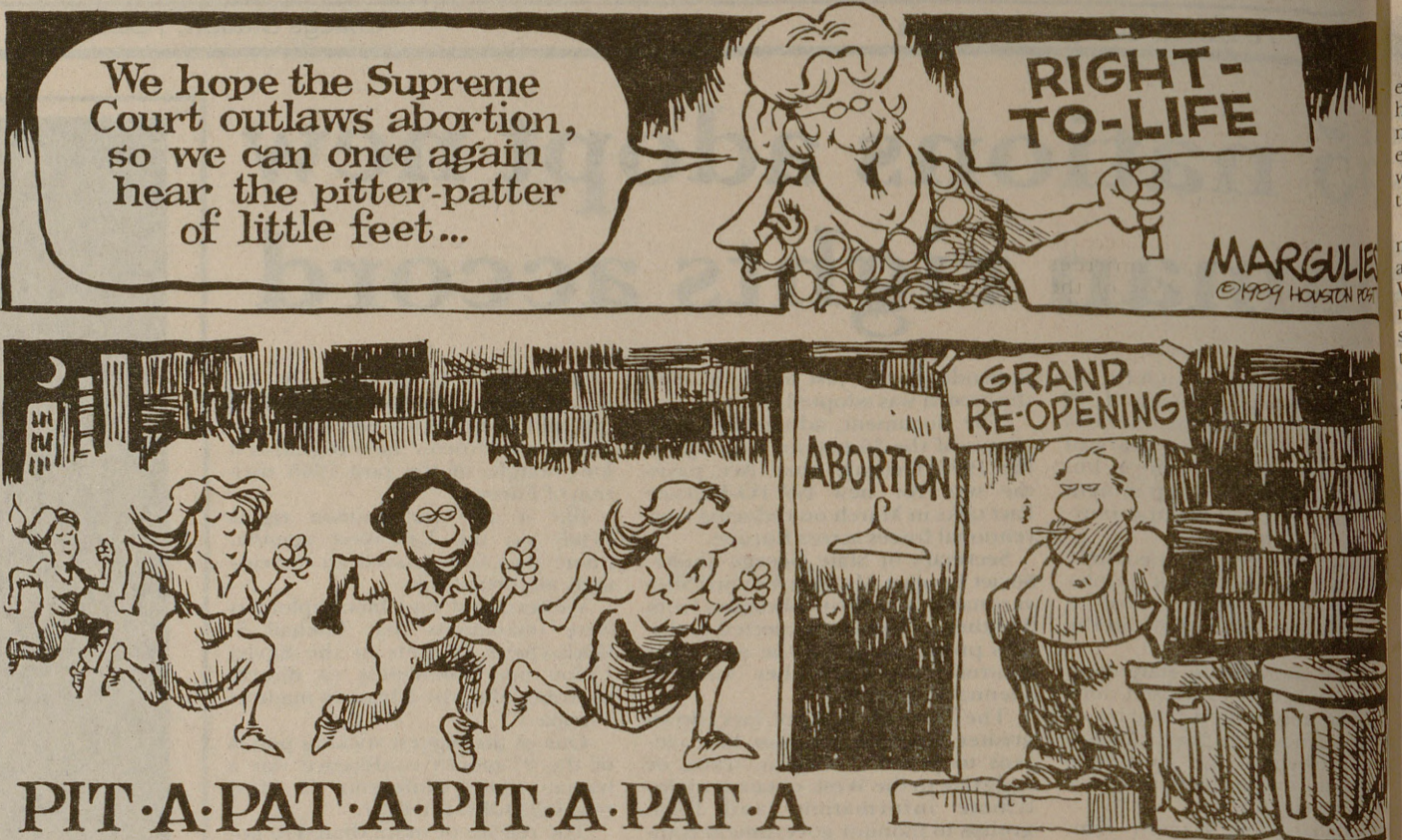
Today the people of our nation officially honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Although he died 21 years ago, the impact he made on the world will be with us forever. He was a man of principle who was not afraid to stand up to racial injustices, and because of his efforts the United States has undergone many improvements in racial equality.

But racism still exists. And one doesn't have to go to South Africa to find it. Groups such as the Ku Klux Klan still thrive in the United States.

Recently, Joe Kendall, a state district judge, sentenced a man to 10 years in prison for vandalizing a Jewish temple near Dallas and painting swastikas on the walls of the building. By issuing the maximum sentence possible, Judge Kendall reaffirmed that people who act on their racist beliefs will not go unpunished.

People like Judge Kendall and Dr. King have helped to make our country a better place to live. Today we should honor not only these men, but everyone who has fought, or is fighting, the ugly institution of racism.

The Battalion Editorial Board



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## Jackie's backers were problem

It was the final scene. Dec. 12, 1988.

As the eyes of Texas focused on John David Crow and R.C. Slocum — the new athletic director and head coach, respectively, at Texas A&M — one man stood in the background unnoticed. In a dark blue suit and aqua tie, he watched the final chapter of the story that had dominated his life for more than three years finally be inked into the book.

Doug Bedell just stood aside and watched.

He was just an unknown face in a crowd of lookers-on, watching the changing of the guard in the A&M Athletic Department.

It was not, after all, the "Doug Bedell Show" at The Press Conference To End All Press Conferences. And he and the other reporters from the *Dallas Morning News* took great pains to keep it that way.

The nation's attention would be focused on the real story that day. And it wasn't about the man who broke the story that culminated in the inauguration of a new era in Texas A&M football. It was about John David Crow and R.C. Slocum taking their new places in the A&M athletic hierarchy.

No, scratch that. It was about Jackie Sherrill. Just like it had been since 1985.

Boosters, alumni, regents, fans and Sherrill himself had been trying to convince everyone that it was about picky NCAA regulations, the situation at scores of other universities nationwide as well as A&M, persecution by investigative journalists with a Stephen King movie full of axes to grind, and just about anything else they could think of to get the heat off The Big Man.

**Hal Hammons**  
Guest Columnist

But the story was The Big Man. Him and him alone.

And once again, he wasn't present to explain his actions. Hardly surprising after the month of evasion tactics he had put the world through.

You've got to give the man points for consistency. Throughout his tenure at the University he has followed the same exact crisis management strategy:

If you can't avoid it, ignore it. If you can't ignore it, avoid it. If you can't avoid it or ignore it, whine and pout like crazy about persecution to anyone who will listen.

You can't argue with success. Ronald Reagan should learn to dodge crises so successfully.

Perhaps some of you readers consider yourself members of the Sherrill Fan Club. If so, understand that this is not meant to hurt your feelings, but to provoke you to consider your stance more carefully.

In my judgment, if you still consider Jackie Sherrill an Aggie hero *a la Sul Ross and Earl Rudder*, you are seriously short of integrity and/or intelligence.

If integrity is your problem, if you think winning football games and raking in big bucks for the athletic program is reason enough to thumb your nose at the rules of the game, I don't suppose I can do anything about that.

When the *Dallas Morning News* broke the story about Sherrill paying "hush money" to George Smith, Sherrill

literally ran and hid. He went so far as to abandon his coaching duties for the weekend, handing the scepter to Slocum "to minimize distractions."

The next week, before the Texas game, he announced that he would not comment on the allegations until the end of the season. Since football season, deer season and Autumn 1988 are all over, we can only assume Mr. Sherrill operates on some special calendar of his own.

When the Alabama game ended, and with it Aggie Football '88, it became obvious that wasn't the season in question. He still refused to comment or to say when he would.

In the meantime, the *News* identified Joe Avezzano and George Pugh as the assistant coaches implicated in the NCAA findings report. Sherrill still was refusing to identify them or punish them, calling the situation a straight case of "the word of the NCAA against the word of my coaches." As if the NCAA punished a member institution for actions that "quite possibly" might have been taken.

And then, out of the blue, Sherrill announced his resignation. By proxy, of course. And the end of the investigation was now the time he had said "from the beginning" would be when he would tell his side of the argument. It's curious that even now a man defended by hundreds of ardent admirers was even at that point avoiding any opportunity to defend himself.

The Texas press corps does not hate Jackie Sherrill. The Texas press corps does not hate Texas A&M. The Texas press corps is not looking for any scrap

## Mail Call

### Let's boycott A&M

EDITOR:

Racism is one of many problems that people of the '80s generation believe to be solved. They contend that in the ancient era of the 1960s civil rights activists pulled the plug on years of inequality.

Yet, recent events prove that racism is still abundant in America. The Howard Beach incident and the Tawana Brawley case serve as examples.

One way to combat rising racist sentiment is to think about racism and the bloody path America has traveled to reach the state which exists today. An opportunity is offered in Martin Luther King day. However, Texas A&M has made celebration difficult by ignoring the holiday and insisting classes be held.

In protest, I urge you to boycott class and all University facilities. Don't buy books or food from the University. Stand up against racism, celebrate a great man's life and battle for the freedom of all people.

Derek Kalahar '91

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

of sensationalism connecting a Southwest Conference school with NCAA rules violations.

In short, the Texas press corps is not to blame for the rash of infractions levied against SWC schools this decade any more than the national media was to blame for Watergate or the Iran-Contra scandal.

The fault lies squarely at the feet of people like Sherrill, his kind and their supporters. People who think their particular school is above the rules, for whatever reason. People who think of winning football games as the ultimate goal, for which all rules and ethics must and will be sacrificed.

If you are one of those people, I blame you for the mess A&M football is

in just as much as I blame the former athletic director and head coach. You created the monster that was the Jackie Sherrill administration as much as Jackie Sherrill did.

You're supposed to be in college learn. Well, learn from this. Let's elevate morals and ethics instead of gridding demigods. Let's set integrity as our goal instead of the Cotton Bowl.

And maybe, just maybe, we will have to go through this mess again.

Hal Hammons is an assistant editor for *The Battalion*.

## Want to blast The Batt? Then do it with a letter

As we begin a new semester, I am reminded of the immortal words of a wise, old friend of mine. Well, he wasn't really that wise, in fact he was a little slow, but he was old — well, middle-aged at least.

Aw, shoot. Let's just start this thing over.

As we begin a new semester, I am reminded of the immortal words of a young, idiot friend of mine.

"Dean," he told me, "burned meatloaf tastes better if you put a lot of ketchup on it. It also helps if you scrape the black stuff off."

It's been years since my friend gave me those words of advice, but I've never forgotten them. I'm not sure why, but I never have.

Actually, I'm not even sure what that advice means. It's bound to have some deep, philosophical connotations, though. And if anybody knows what

they are, I'd appreciate a letter or phone call.

I could go on and on with interesting little bits of trivia such as this, but as my philosophical, idiot friend would say, "Shut up."

So I'll get right to the point. At some time during this semester, you are probably going to disagree with something you read in *The Battalion*. Instead of just sitting there and getting mad about it, or running around yelling obscenities, maybe you should take some action. Write a letter to the editor. It's painless. It's easy. It's —

OK. I can tell what you're thinking. You're thinking, "Yeah, sure. I take the time to write a letter to the editor, and when it gets to *The Battalion* it just ends up in the trash. Right?"

Wrong. Although we can't run every letter that we receive, we will do our best to print as many as we can. I mean that.



Dean Sueltenfuss  
Opinion Page Editor

And you can help yourself out by following the directions contained in our letters policy. Basically, your letter should be readable and it should contain your name, classification, and telephone number. You also need to sign it. We won't print it until we have all of this information. Letters should be dropped off at *The Battalion* in Room 216 of the Reed McDonald Building.

That's not too difficult, is it? As my young, philosophical, idiot friend would say, "Duhhh, nope."

And if writing a letter is too impersonal for you, or if you just want to talk with someone at *The Battalion*, stop by or give us a call. Ask to speak with me or any one of our other editors. We want your opinions and criticisms, but we'll never get them if you don't take the first step.

If you have an opinion to express, but you believe that a 300-word letter won't do it justice, then you might want to consider writing a guest column. Unsolicited guest columns might be printed, but it would generally be a good idea to contact *The Battalion* first by phone or in person and tell us what you would like to write about. Then we can decide whether we would be interested in using it or not. If we are interested in using it,

we can give you a few guidelines for writing the column that will make it easier for you to write and easier for us to edit.

You don't necessarily have to be responding to something you've read in *The Battalion* when you write a letter to the editor. If there's something occurring at Texas A&M (or anywhere else) that you think merits attention, then please write a letter about it. And remember, you're not just writing to *The Battalion*, but to the students, professors and administrators of A&M.

Suddenly, I am reminded of an amusing anecdote which has some bearing on the message I am trying to convey. It concerns a guy named Bubba O'Keefe.

Bubba graduated from high school a few years ago and, not really being the college type, went to work as a prison guard in Kumquat, Idaho. His first few weeks went fairly well. He let the prisoners out of their cells when they were supposed to be let out, and he locked them back up when they were supposed to be locked up. Except for the depressing prison environment, Bubba actually liked the job.

But then, during Bubba's third week on the job, tragedy struck.

Bubba accidentally unlocked the cell door of one James "Mad Dog" Koslowski, a convicted mass murderer serving a life sentence with no chance of parole. Mad Dog, who weighs over 500 pounds, quickly escaped from his cell and proceeded to knock Bubba senseless. Bubba spent weeks in a hospital recovering from severe head wounds. After he was released from the hospital, Bubba returned to the prison.

He had only been back at the prison for a few days when tragedy struck again.

Same cell, same Mad Dog, same trouble. Bubba was promptly fired. He died only months later in a dilapidated rat-infested shack.

You might have already guessed the moral of this little digression. The moral is: Don't name your kid "Bubba" for God's sake don't let him be a prison guard.

I believe I mentioned something earlier about this story having some relevance to writing letters to the editor. I want to explain that, so please pay close attention.

Uhhhhh, give me a minute.

OK. I've got it.

Unfortunately, however, I'm out of room, so I won't be able to tell you what the story about Bubba has to do with writing letters to the editor. Rest assured, though, that you would have been most amazed and delighted had gotten the opportunity to share that information with you.

Well, maybe I do have time. You see, Bubba never wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper — not even once.

Do you want to be a Bubba? Do you want to get your skull crushed by a convicted mass murderer named Mad Dog? Do you want to die in a dilapidated, rat-infested shack?

No? Then sometime this semester, before it's too late, you'd better write a letter to the editor.

Dean Sueltenfuss is a junior journalism major and opinion page editor for *The Battalion*.

**The Battalion**  
(USPS 045 360)

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Opinions expressed in *The Battalion* are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

*The Battalion* also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.

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