

Head to Head:

Where should Marcos be laid to rest?

Bury him in the Philippines

Richard Shafer
Guest Columnist

Ferdinand Marcos deserves to return to the Philippines to be laid to rest. In the history of American-supported dictators, Marcos was one of the least oppressive, certainly not as bad as say Pinochet of Chile, Batista of Cuba or Samosa of Nicaragua.

Marcos, in the 1960s and throughout most of the 1970s, managed to engineer one of the great economic miracles of Asia. At the same time, he allowed press freedom and relatively free and fair political elections. After his first election victory, he held onto the presidency by clear mandate of the Philippine people.

But following a sharp decline in the Philippine economy, a budding Marxist domestic insurgency, the United States' defeat in Vietnam and the establishment of communist governments in Burma, Laos and Cambodia, Marcos felt compelled to declare martial law in 1972. He had waged on American ambitions in Southeast Asia and it wasn't paying off. The Philippines was suffering economic and political chaos.

Marcos had fought on our side most of his life. If he wasn't truly the most decorated Philippine war hero in the fight against the Japanese, he at least did his part for three difficult years before General McArthur managed to return.

Marcos had a genius for governing. The portion of the national resources he didn't appropriate for himself and friends was spent quite wisely. He

maintained a good national highway system, the airline ran on time, students from all over the world flocked to study at Philippine universities, and on the island of Leyete he built a new geothermal electric plant capable of supplying about a quarter of the country with power generated from an eternal source of natural hot water. Not a bad record compared to most countries of the Third World.

So why doesn't President Aquino show some mercy and let the Marcos family bury the old man in his home province on the northern tip of Luzon? It's very far from Manila and farther from most of the rest of the island nation. I don't believe the political consequences would be so dire, the Philippine people are civilized, democratic and generally moderate.

It appears to me that Cory Aquino's intransigence on the issue is part of a personal and family vendetta she is continuing.

When I saw her speak at a 1985 campaign rally in the city of Ormoc, Mrs. Aquino presented herself as a martyred wife, more than as a serious presidential candidate. She told how guards under Marcos' orders forbid her to touch her husband when she visited him in prison before his exile to the United States. Her personal suffering was one of the main themes of her early speeches.

President Aquino also appeared to carry a residue of jealousy against Imelda Marcos. For at least a year, before Cory met her husband, Ninoy Aquino and Imelda were a hot item around Manila, and very much the focus of the popular press. Imelda was



A bust of Marcos north of Manila

the beauty queen and Ninoy the handsome rising political star. They broke off the romance; Imelda met Ferdinand and Ninoy met Cory.

This is all old news. The Philippine people are well versed in the rivalries carried out for generations by its landed aristocracy. It's time to cast away such remnants of the feudal order.

The economic development and democratization of the Philippines are not well served by allowing such personal rivalries to fragment the nation and interfere with government. I believe if Cory Aquino makes the compassionate gesture of forgiving her old enemy and allowing him to be buried at home, it will serve as a symbolic healing act for both her and for the Philippine people.

Richard Shafer is an assistant professor of journalism.

Don't bury him in his homeland

Randy Hines
Guest Columnist

Turmoil continues in the Philippines as former President Ferdinand Marcos' supporters demand his body be returned to his homeland for burial. Such a move would not contribute to healing in this strife-stricken nation.

Marcos, a falsely decorated war veteran, imposed martial law in 1972 — thus killing the freest press in Asia — and began his one-man rule. It lasted until 1986, of course, when democratic elections promoted Cory Aquino to the presidency.

Although the nightmare of Marcos' reign is over, the country will need decades to get over the plundering of its treasury by Marcos. Courts are still trying to find out where he stored his millions — much of which was U.S. foreign aid which aided no one but the dictator and his wife Imelda. Some projects for which Marcos used funds benefited only himself.

His ego is personified — actually it's chiseled — on a huge bust on a mountain just off the Marcos Highway (what else?) north of Manila. A stone's throw away is a now-deserted country club built for his golf outings. South of Manila, Marcos had a huge mansion constructed for a papal visit. Aware of the poverty in the region, the pope said he would refuse to stay in such quarters. It sits unfinished, another shrine to self.

Extravagance most often seen by Americans is the Presidential Palace, which Aquino turned back over to the Filipino people as a museum. Although jokes about Imelda's shoes are popular,

the excess at public expense is minimal. I saw a toy, motorized sports car for a grandchild to ride which cost more than my compact. I experienced his legacy of graft and corruption. Showing college administrators a copy in the Manila newspaper that I sent as a news release, I was asked, "How much did it cost you?"

Despite all this, fanatical followers of Marcos are ready for more coups. A man wearing a yellow jacket (Aquino's color) unfortunately walked by a Marcos rally in Manila. His bullet-riddled body was found the next day.

After 20 years of pillaging the Philippines, Marcos does not deserve to be buried there. The country needs to be bound from his reign of terror. A more Marcos monument — even a tomb — would retard such recovery.

Randy Hines is Student Publications Coordinator and also a member of the journalism faculty.

Editor's note: The previous columns were based on the views of journalism professors who spent time in the Philippines. Randy Hines spent the 1986-87 school year in the country as a publications consultant. Dr. Richard Shafer, who spent Sept. 1985-1986 in the Philippines, was a freelance journalist and wrote a dissertation on the Press and Third World development.

Vote yes to Proposition 21: an opportunity to increase college education funding

The cost of a college education is increasing faster than the average family income. According to figures released by the Texas Faculty Association, in the past nine years college tuition cost has increased between 70 and 90 percent, whereas the average family income has risen only 33 percent in the same time period.

On Nov. 7, voters will have an opportunity to alleviate this problem by voting in favor of Proposition 21 — The College Opportunity Act.

Because tuition costs are expected to rise considerably in the years to come, it is necessary for parents and students to start saving early for college.

Voting Proposition 21 into effect will provide for the issuance of general savings bonds to be used as college savings bonds. The bonds, which are tax free, will serve a dual purpose by promoting long-term savings and also generating proceeds to keep solvent the Hinson Hazelwood College Access Loan Program, which, since 1977, has enabled 170,000 students to go to college.

The passage of the amendment will immediately issue an additional \$75 million to the dwindling fund. Proceeds from the sale of the bonds also will be directly deposited into the fund.

The issuance of college savings bonds will benefit the economy and ensure future prosperity for the state by making education more affordable to Texas residents.

By enabling more people to go to college, Texas will get a significant return on its investment. Voting for Proposition 21 is an opportunity that shouldn't be missed.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Expanding spring elections could eliminate long election day lines

One school election season ended on Oct. 10 when freshman election run-offs took place. Although a long way off, the next school election season will approach during the spring semester. Now seems to be an appropriate time to make some suggestions regarding a problem hampering elections in the past: long lines at the polls.

The clearest and simplest solution to this problem also seems to be the best one: making polling facilities large and numerous enough to handle election-day crowds.

First, let's consider the issue of long lines. Many of you may remember waiting in a line or seeing them on election day last spring. I remember seeing a line that stretched fully half the length of the Academic Building. Page 514 of the new *Aggieland* also shows an election-day line. That may seem like thin evidence of a problem, but any long lines at the polls on election day can turn away potential voters.

If last spring's election-day lines did turn away many potential voters, election outcomes may have been influenced. In the election, several races were decided by narrow vote margins. When races are close, a few turned-away voters could make the difference as to who is elected to a position.

And the positions themselves certainly mean something. Student Gov-



Jim Hayes
Columnist

ernment alots millions of dollars annually, decides various student issues and speaks as the students' voice to school administrators. Yell leaders lead Twelfth Man yells and project an image for the whole school. RHA, OCA and class council officers plan and direct activities and represent their constituents.

Also, as students we are forming voting habits that can remain with us for years to come. By discouraging voting now, long lines may have the effect of discouraging our voting in later elections.

Second, how can the problem of long lines be resolved? Last spring, a proposal to establish additional polling places passed the Student Senate only to die by a presidential veto. The Student Body President at the time, Jay Hays, said the plan establishing additional polling places failed to give balanced access to both on and off-campus voters and risked having too few

poll workers show up. The election went ahead with four polling places instead of the proposed six.

Election expansion planning would have to address the weaknesses of the current system. Additional polling places would have to be located where students living on and off-campus had roughly equal access. For example, polls located near bus stops might set polls located in residence hall areas. Also, any expansion plan would have to be accompanied by the assurance that enough workers would show up for the polls.

Third, how could such a change be enacted? Well, last spring the Student Senate passed the resolution establishing more polling places, and the Student Body president vetoed it. The current Student Senate also consists of elected representatives who, once elected, will respond readily to the voices of their own constituents. Constituents could encourage the Student Senate to approve an expansion plan which can dodge a presidential veto this time around.

Spring elections play an important role: they provide the mechanism which we choose many student leaders for the whole school year. And the to shorten lines during spring elections seems clear: expand the elections.

Jim Hayes is a senior economics major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Former presidents receive big bucks

Next time members of Congress insist that they are earnestly trying to save money, taxpayers should ask them why they continue to vote for outrageously generous stipends to ex-presidents.

There is a certain amount of irony in the fact that the same week that automatic spending cuts went into effect to conform to the Gramm-Rudman deficit-reduction act, the House voted 383-30 to give \$1.8 million to four ex-presidents and one ex-president's widow.

The money is to cover pensions, office costs and other expenses. When the \$1.8 million is added to the \$12.5 million that the Secret Service will spend to provide security for former presidents and their families, the price tag is sizable.

Rep. Paul Kanjorski, D-Pa., was on target in complaining

that, "This Congress should examine whether we are great in our largesse in providing services and costs to former presidents who engage in personal income endeavors."

He was specifically referring to Ronald Reagan, who received \$559,500 in pension and expense money to add to the \$2 million he was paid by his Japanese sponsors for two speeches in Japan last week.

Kanjorski calls that an "unmitigated atrocity. That may be a trifle melodramatic, but that kind of expenditure is an absurd expense for a government that is billions of dollars in debt. Former presidents deserve a reasonable pension. Common sense should dictate that what they are receiving now exceeds reasonable by a healthy amount."

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