



Form your opinions before going to vote

Ellen Hobbs

Opinion Page Editor

People keep asking me where I think I get the right to make judgments about the candidates that run for office. Well, I'm gonna tell you where I get that right: I'm a voter.

Registered voters are few and far between. People who actually vote are even fewer and farther between. And only a fraction of those people who actually vote have developed opinions about everyone for whom they vote.

That's sad. It's sad because voters don't only have a right to vote, but they have a responsibility to vote. And along with that responsibility to vote comes a responsibility to have an opinion about the person who is getting this vote.

There are two things that voters need to know about before voting: the candidate and the office for which he (or she, of course) is running.

Voters need to be informed about the candidate and his stance on the issues he

the best interests of college students' mind. They just hadn't taken the time to learn about the candidates and vote them as individuals.

You can learn about the candidates for some of the bigger state and national offices pretty easily. You can read the papers, watch TV, pick up their campaign literature or go see them speak during their campaign.

I've heard people say that if you vote about a candidate through any of the mediums, you're getting a biased view of him. But a biased view is better than no view at all.

A less biased view of the candidates for both the well- and lesser-known offices can be found in special publications like the League of Women Voters voters' guide. You can also do a little library research on their past performance if they've been in office before.

Even before we learn about the candidates, we've got to know some things about the office they are running for and the issues they will have to deal with if they win.

Most of us have taken POLS 207—state government—or we'll have to in the near future. Take notes about what offices are which and what the elected officials do.

If there is somebody you think is a great guy, and you vote for him just because he is a great guy, then it's your responsibility if, when he wins, he is a great guy but he knows nothing about the office you put voted him into and does a lousy job.

You've got to get out there and vote. It's your right and responsibility.

But if you're voting and you don't know about your candidate or the office you're voting him into, you are shirking your part of responsibility as a voter.

Form opinions about these candidates. It's the only democratic thing to do.

Ellen Hobbs is a junior journalism major.

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would have to deal with in office, not just about who's Republican and who's a Democrat.

I heard a student who was studying voting patterns at Texas A&M say that it seemed to him that the best way for a crooked candidate to get into office in College Station was to run as a Republican and then not campaign, because so many A&M students voted a straight Republican ticket.

Now, I'm not trying to imply that Republican voting is bad. That means straight-ticket voting is bad.

When you vote a straight-ticket, you're voting for every person of that party, whether or not he deserves the office, and no matter what the office is.

The same student said that in several cases, because of straight-ticket voting, students had been instrumental in voting in candidates that did not have

Mail Call

Co-ops for more than summers

EDITOR:

Regarding the letter of Greg Damron, printed on April 23, on "Summer employment seminar a 'sham,'" it was obvious that the writer does not understand that the Placement Office and the Cooperative Education Office are completely different operations. The Co-op Program at Texas A&M does not offer summer-only positions.

As the spokesperson present (and on time), I apologize for not providing the kind of one-time only information you expected. However, the outlook for liberal arts majors is not as bleak as many may think. Last year (1988-89), our program had 38 liberal arts placements in such organizations as CIA, IBM, NYNEX, OPM, Disneyworld, Employment Standards Commission, Fluor Daniel and General Dynamics, just to name a few. As I mentioned at the start of my presentation, Co-op is voluntary and provides opportunities to those students who want the services. Information was presented on the positions of campus representatives for AT&T Products and Services. The positions of Campus Manager, Assistant Campus Manager and 14 Student Representatives will be available this fall 1990. And to my knowledge, many of those positions are still available. All interested students should call 1-800-592-2121 for interview details.

Maybe the topic of the workshop could have been "liberal arts opportunities and how you must persevere." We all know that employers are very familiar with the relevance of such majors as Electrical, Mechanical, Chemical, and Industrial Engineering. Students with solid foundations in computer science, accounting, business analysis, and management have little explanation regarding applicability to corporate America. The Liberal Arts major must be proactive as well as assertive. Not the pessimist but the optimist. Co-op is one avenue liberal arts students might take to identify one's niche. It is my hope that each liberal arts student will see their own qualities and develop them to the fullest. The poet William Ernest Henly said it best: "It matters not how straight the gate/How charged with punishments the scroll/I am the master of my fate/I am the captain of my soul."

Walter Odum
Assistant director—Office of Cooperative Education

Have an opinion? Express it!

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. There is no guarantee that letters submitted will be printed. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

In praise of great capitalist Michael Milken

December 31, 1989, marked the end of the decade. By most accounts, the 1980's were a decade to be ashamed of. The American populace indulged in all the sins of materialism, selfishness, and greed.

The man that most symbolized this past decade is Michael Milken. Last week, Milken pleaded guilty to six felony counts of investment fraud. The crusaders of the left wing are reveling in the persecution of the most notorious capitalist in the United States.

There is no denying the fact that, as head of the investment firm of Drexel Burnham Lambert, Michael Milken committed wrongdoing, but his crimes amount to mere shoplifting when compared to the allegations leveled against him by the prosecution. The crimes which he has confessed to amount to a case of simple point shaving, exchanges of favors with Ivan Boesky, and using his influence to maintain bond prices.

Andrew Matthews
Columnist

The prosecution of Michael Milken sounded like one of those third-world country trials against political dissidents. In this case Milken was an economic dissident who threatened the livelihood of the entrenched corporate and banking elites.

The government prosecutor, Rudy Giuliani, who happened to be running for mayor of New York, used the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) law to indict Milken on a bunch of frivolous technical accounting infractions. Under the RICO law, prosecutors are able to shut down a business and impose damages before a trial has actually taken place. The prosecution systematically

mutilates what is called due process of law. Instead of seeking the perpetrator of a crime, the government targeted the individual, Milken, then searched for a crime.

To understand the true meaning of this case we need to stand back and look at the big picture. During the 1960's and 1970's, commercial banks and the investment firms tended to grant loans to companies only if they either had tons of collateral or whose bonds were given the highest rating by the bond ratings agencies.

The result was that the only companies who could receive financing were the established corporations with large asset holdings. New entrepreneurial corporations whose future rested on only on a dream found themselves locked-out of the capital markets.

Emerging-growth companies create capital for expansion by issuing bonds which are given inferior ratings,

unflatteringly called 'junk bonds'. Fresh out Stanford, Michael Milken realized that the higher return promised by these bonds more than compensated for the higher risk associated with the junk bonds.

For the next ten years Milken created a \$250 billion market in high-risk/high-yield securities. Drexel and Milken can be credited with the development of whole new industries, thousands of new companies, and millions of new jobs.

The whole fiber-optics industry was established by a three billion-dollar bond issuing by Drexel. Milken provided billions to create a national network of cellular communications.

The biggest crime of Michael Milken was that he was successful. When somebody finances that much economic activity they are sure to reap some rewards.

In one year Milken earned \$500 million. In the eyes of the politicians and financial elites this along was proof

of criminal activity.

This brings us to the root cause of the capitalist witch-hunt. People may claim that greed run amok, but I say that the biggest sin involved here is envy.

Our society is always trying to cut down the tall trees. It does not matter that somebody may create millions of jobs, the fact that they are highly compensated for it will arouse the collective envy and contempt of society.

During the last few days of December all the media columnists and television specials decried high incomes and the accompanying high spending. I say all the more power to them.

If Americans continue to treat productive citizens with disdain, we will only succeed in jeopardize the vitality of our economy, where citizens make sure they only perform up to average.

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