

EDITORIALS

Play the name game Regents' decision made in haste

In a shotgun marriage, the Texas A&M name has been wedded to the fates of three of the TAMU System universities.

Friday, Texas A&M regents voted to change the names of Texas A&I University to Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Corpus Christi State University to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and Laredo State University to Texas A&M International University.

Responding to a Senate appropriations rider proposed by Sen. Carlos Truan, D-Corpus Christi, Sen. Judith Zaffirini, D-Laredo and Sen. Teel Bivins, R-Amarillo, the Texas A&M Board of Regents made the name changes in order to demonstrate the strong ties within the Texas A&M University System.

Although the rider to the appropriations bill was claimed to have been simply a suggestion, some of the regents expressed concern over alleged threats to the Texas A&M budget if the

resolution was not passed.

The Senate does not have the power to change the names of the universities; however, regents charged that political pressure was used to compel them to use their power to enact the measure.

Although the changes probably will not impact the flagship in the least and will enhance the integrity of the System as a whole, it seems quite peculiar that the changes were made with such deliberate speed in a special session of the Board of Regents. In fact, the situation reeks of political posturing at a time when the Legislature eyes our slice of the budgetary pie.

It is a shame that the regents who are entrusted to guide the future of the A&M System appear to have succumbed to political arm-wrestling. Even worse is the intimation that those elected officials who are entrusted to guide the future of the state appear to have stooped to political highjinks in order to achieve their ends.

But, after all, what's in a name?

Grandkids teaching grandparents Generations of prejudice are evaluated by youth

I never knew my grandmother was prejudiced until she broke her hip. My family had put her into the special care area of a nursing home until she recovered. She didn't mind staying there — that is, until she got a roommate.

The new roommate had also just been released from the hospital. Her family was very kind, and I'm sure that she was too. She was heavily drugged so she slept most of the time. This fact didn't matter, though, to my grandmother. She became increasingly angry with my father for letting this woman stay in her room. She would point to the sleeping woman and whisper, "That woman is a Negro." Sometimes to make sure he understood she would whisper, "She is black." Then my grandmother would make a horrified and disgusted look. My dad would just look at my grandmother with irritation and say, "I'm glad you noticed."

Our family was appalled that my grandmother had so much fear and anger directed toward this innocent woman. My grandmother had never acted like this before. My grandparents were accepting people for their time. They used to hire Hispanics when no one else would. Years later after my grandfather died, my grandmother lived with us and was very gracious to all my friends. She loved the African-American girl who lived with us. We never expected her to act like this. She could accept other races at a distance, but when she had to be in a room one on one with them, she was frightened. This fear was at the root of her prejudice. She was taught to be afraid.

Prejudice is learned, but to be initially afraid of the unfamiliar or different is not abnormal. In my observation, I have seen many African-American babies cry with fright when they see white people. I have also seen white babies cry when they see African-Americans. When I was 10, I took a community education class where I was taught how to entertain children through clown acts. When I used to dress up like a clown, all the babies would cry. It is hard for these babies to realize that people have different skin tones. The more these babies are around different people the more they understand that the unfamiliar or different is not something that should frighten them. This is fortunate since it would be a strange society if every time people of different races encountered each other, they screamed.

My parents have realized the illogical prejudice of their parents and have changed for the better. This does not mean

that they are free of prejudice, nor does it mean that they are unaffected by a society that advocates certain prejudicial norms. Sometimes my parents, too, can get weighed down by this pressure.

I realized this when I asked my parents hypothetically what they would think if I decided to marry an African-American. They told me they thought it would be too hard for me and any children I had. Still, I said I would not let other people's prejudices affect my decision about whom I would love. To allow their attitudes to affect my decision would be to preserve the prejudicial social environment. I said if I loved a man who happened to be African-American, I would marry him and have children. My parents were surprised. My parents aren't totally free of prejudice, but neither am I. I am sure when I have kids they will expose areas of prejudice that I haven't been able to see, and then I will be able to change my attitudes and actions. My children and grandchildren will continue this evaluation process until the prejudice is eliminated.

Some people haven't had pleasant experiences with particular members of some racial or ethnic groups, but this does not mean they can make broad generalities out of these minute experiences. Even if a generality could be made, a mature person must constantly recognize that there are exceptions. Any person from that race or ethnic group could be that exception. My family has decided we must be accepting so we don't exclude ourselves from the pleasure of knowing people. There is something beautiful and valuable in every person, every race and every ethnic group.

Several years ago, a white friend of mine named Kristi married a Hispanic man. Her parents were excited since they love the Hispanic people and culture. The grandparents weren't as excited because they did not like Hispanics. They changed their minds, though, when Kristi had a beautiful little boy named Daniel. The grandparents know this little boy is half-Hispanic, yet they love him still. Their prejudices are being broken down.

One day 2-year-old Daniel and his 3-year-old African-American friend, Mark, innocently touched each other's faces and hair. They didn't know anything about the Civil War, or the prejudices and stereotypes that affect our society. What these boys did understand is that they were different, and they were fascinated by their differences. More importantly, the boys weren't afraid to touch each other. As they touched each other, they realized they were both just human. If only my grandmother would have been one of those children, my family's prejudice could have been eliminated faster.

Holder is a senior journalism major.



JANET HOLDER
Columnist

E-mail to Washington Voice concerns via computer access

This is definitely the information age. We have cellular phones, fax machines, satellites relaying messages from across the world, and now, even the White House has an e-mail address. E-mail, or rather Public Access Electronic Mail, is a computer network correspondence system where users can instantly send electronic mail messages via Internet, the "network of computer networks."

Both the Clinton White House and the 103rd Congress are being equipped to receive e-mail, and it's about time. With the addition of elected officials online, the people who voted them into office now have greater access in voicing their opinions. This has the potential to truly be direct representation in action.

There are an estimated 20 million people in the United States with e-mail access. All universities, including Texas A&M, have access to Internet. Students at Texas A&M pay a comput-

er usage fee with their tuition which allocates to them a computer account allowing them access to Internet and the e-mail system.

Now that the White House and the Congress are being equipped to receive e-mail, students will be able to address their concerns directly to federal government officials. With voter activity at such an all-time high, this new step toward direct democracy could possibly retain the voter involvement and foster a revival of public attention in federal government.

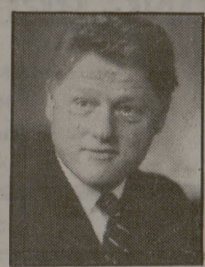
The temporary addresses for electronic mail to the White House are CLINTON PZ on America Online; 75300,3115 on Compuserve; or 75300,3115@compuserve.com for users of the Internet.

The White House has released a statement requesting that the public refrain from making casual use of these addresses until a system is in place to handle greater volumes.



Will you answer the call to action?

On Monday, March 1, the 32nd anniversary of John F. Kennedy's founding of the Peace Corps, President Clinton challenged young people across the nation to "answer the call to service" and outlined his program to make a college education available to every American.



PRESIDENT
BILL CLINTON
Guest Columnist

time, or through one or two years of community service work before, during or after college.

I write to challenge you to join me in a great American adventure—national service.

I make this challenge because our country and our communities need help that government alone cannot provide. Government can make vaccines available to children, but alone it cannot administer shots to them all. It can put more police on the streets, but alone it cannot stop crime. It can improve the quality of our public schools, but cannot alone inspire children to live up to their potential.

It is time for Americans of every background to work together to lift our country up, neighborhood by neighborhood and block by block. It is time to rediscover the excitement and idealism that makes us Americans.

This is what national service is all about.

Through national service, thousands will have the opportunity to pay for college by rebuilding their communities—serving as teachers, police officers, health care workers, and in other capacities. But it will take time for these ideas to pass

Congress, and time to implement them. We must start now.

That is why I have called for a Summer of Service—this summer. More than 1,000 young people will serve in selected areas around the country, learning to lead and getting children who are at risk for school.

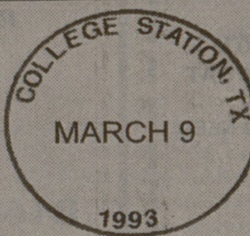
There are many who believe that young Americans will not answer a call to action. They say you are apathetic, and insist that you measure your success in the accumulation of material things. I know they are wrong, and I know you will answer this challenge.

You can become an agent of renewal—either through the summer program or on your own. Write and tell me what you are doing, or what you want to do:

The White House
National Service
Washington, D.C. 20500

Your efforts and energies can lift the spirits of our nation and inspire the world. Please answer the call.

Clinton is the 42nd president of the United States.



MAIL CALL

Terminally ill patients should be able to die

Imagine for a moment a horse in a race whom has just fallen and broken its leg. Proper authorities and medical personnel will promptly kill the horse to end its suffering.

Now imagine for a moment a human being stricken with cancer. The individual is suffering immense pain and has no hope to live. Yet it would be wrong and immoral for that person to want to die, to want to end their suffering. Why?

According to a letter that recently appeared in mail call, individuals must grin and bear their pain for the betterment of society. Apparently, they must suffer, and live out the rest of their lives in a hospital bed, so that society may "grow by serving them."

I don't know about anyone else, but

I believe that if I want to end my life I should be able to do just that. It is not up to the masses to determine my fate, but to me and me alone.

Besides, if I am living in languish and pain, I will become a burden on society, soaking up money for cures to my illness or depression, and I doubt the person down the street will grow from my pain.

Our society, however, does not think along those same lines. It enjoys the credences of Murray, by outlawing suicide and saying it is sin.

Humans relish the idea that we are above all other animals, yet we really are of the same rank. Once again imagine the horse who was destroyed because it broke its leg, it had no choice in life or death. Now imagine the suffering human. Neither does he.

Craig Pritzlaff
Class of 1996