



Should faculty members publicize their university affiliation in connection with religion?

JAY

ROBBINS

Assistant opinion

difficult to resolve

sional educators

eligion in the classroom is a topic

that makes almost everyone flinch. No one wants to argue

what or how people should believe, and

our Constitution guarantees our freedom

of religion. Few people think that teach-

ers have the right to preach to their stu-

dents, but subtler questions — like the

propriety of the recent Faculty Friends

advertisement in The Battalion — often

fall into an ethical "gray area" which is

Considering the teacher's role in the learning process, the faculty members

and administrators of any university

should not connect their personal religious beliefs to their positions as profes-

to gain knowledge. Whether they're learning about primary colors, prime

numbers or prima facie evidence, stu-

dents depend on the teacher to bridge the gap between minds and material. In order to receive their education, stu-dents must cross that bridge thousands

In connecting their professional identity to their personal religion, educators

opportunities because they automatically

signify their professional non-objectivity in regard to certain beliefs and ideals.

is like a huge, Las Vegas-style, neon sign

society uses to evaluate ethics, politics,

X of the Pharmacopoeia department, be-

lieve ...," she sets up her role of teacher

When an educator says, "I, Professor

lief because it encompasses "faith, which does not require the debatable proof provided by the logic tools which

economics and other philosophies.

The faculty members

and administrators of

any university should

not connect their per-

sional educators.

edge, not accessing it.

mean doing it is right.

students.

top priority.

sonal religious beliefs to

their positions as profes-

within her personal role as a believer. All

students who face that type of behavior

ideas, consciously or unconsciously, for elements which might offend religious

sensibilities or clash with articles of faith.

ideas slows and falters under these stress-

es. If a teacher's personal religion gets in

his students' way, then the teacher isn't doing his job — he's cutting off knowl-

Teachers have every right to espouse any beliefs they choose, religious or oth-

organize. But to quote William Safire,

"The right to do something does not

erwise. Faculty Friends has every right to

The place of an educator's religious

activity is separate from her professional

life. A teacher should also feel an ethical compunction to keep the bias of the be-

liever out of the educator's view of his

As a point of consideration for their

students and profession, faculty and ad-

The resolution of the gray areas of religion in education should always end

with the students' best interests as the

ministrators should not endanger the

learning process by complicating it

with their personal religious beliefs.

The open exchange of knowledge and

have to pay the toll of evaluating their

When a person advocates a religion, it

Inis is what I belie Religion is different from any other be-

infringe on their students' educational

Every teacher's primary function and purpose is to offer students the chance

TONI GARRARD CLAY

Opinion editor The First Amendment of our Consti-

tution states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an estabhment of religion, or prohibiting the e exercise thereof Our forefathers, you see, felt it neces-

ry to protect religion from government. ver the years; however, the amendmens original intent has been warped, and he battle cry "Separation of Church and State" has led the way in an alarming movement to hush the voice of religion utside the place of worship.

Such an incident of religious intolerince occurred here at Texas A&M over an ad placed in The Battalion by a group of Christian faculty members. The "Faculty Friends" ad lists the names and departnents of several dozen faculty members who are united by their belief in Christ and the willingness to share that belief with others. Oh, the horror.

Interestingly enough, it is not only non-believers who find fault with the ad, but other-believers as well. Objectors laim that non-Christian students will be mable to approach a Faculty Friends member about certain personal issues

The argument that the Faculty Friends advertisement incorporates the entire University with a particular religious belief is a stretch into the absurd.

arthermore, they claim a non-Christian udent who has a problem with a Christan professor may hesitate to bring the isue to the attention of someone known to be a member of Faculty Friends. And the lincher: the advertisement connects the University with a particular religious affili-tion, in this case Christianity.

Let us consider that whether or not a Christian faculty member places his or er name in an ad, that individual is still Christian. They as a person are just as approachable before the ad as after it. Only low the student may have more insight not that individual than otherwise would ave been possible. Knowledge is power, it not? Furthermore, this between-thenes innuendo that Faculty Friends memers will discriminate against non-Chrisans is insulting and demeaning. Chrisans are no more likely to discriminate than any non-religious or other-religious erson, and an advertisement does not change this fact.

A double standard is at work here as ell. Consider A&M's "Allies" program degned to support gays, lesbians and bisexuals. Program members — which include faculty — place an "ALLY" sign on their doors decorated with the well-known homosexual icon, the pink triangle. Could of these identifying placards (which are onstantly present as opposed to appearing ne day in the paper) pose problems for ersons who are morally opposed to hoosexual and bisexual lifestyles? Where is

The argument that the Faculty Friends vertisement incorporates the entire Uniersity with a particular religious belief is a retch into the absurd as well. If they were Faculty Asians or Faculty Native-Amerins, would this incorporate A&M with a

ingle ethnicity? Hardly The Constitutional guarantee to free peech extends to each and every citizen, ven faculty members with a particular reigious belief. It would seem that here, at n institution of higher learning and a breeding ground for ideas and philoso-phies, we could be tolerant of individuals

hoosing to exercise their basic rights.

communication major

# Wedding bells ring amid tragedy Taking vows consists of more than getting married

ROY L. CLAY

Columnist



The Battalion

t was the perfect day. The only thing missing was the sound of church bells - and, since the small country church didn't have any, I guess it couldn't be

what was most important was the fact that my family and my soon-to-be wife's family, which I love as my own, were there to see that unforgettable day. My mother sat in the front row while my father stood be-

side me as I made my wedding vows.
"What could be more ironic?" I asked myself later. "The two people who survived my rebellious teen-age years and prayed for me while I wasted life on the edge of selfdestruction are here to watch this moment.'

Even when I rejected social norms and mocked something so traditional as marriage, their relationship was a small beacon in the whirlwind darkness that had become my life. In a way, that day was my formal proclamation that I accepted the values and the beliefs my family had instilled in me as a

young boy. It was the perfect day.

But things change. Last year, my mother called to tell me that she and my father had decided to separate. Within three months they filed for divorce and began to make

plans to live separate lives after 27 years of marriage. The beacon had been extin-

At the time, the reasons for their decision to divorce were less important than the fact that the safe refuge I had known all my life was gone. No more Christmas Eve nights listening to carols while Mom made hot soup and cold eggnog in the kitchen. No more summer nights sitting on the huge front porch talking with the most influential people in my life. In essence, no more family.

At age 26, the news was devastating. A cornerstone on which I had built my life and had felt so much pride on my wedding day simply disappeared. However, with the help of my wife and a lot of prayer I got through the anguish and, even though that pain still surfaces occasionally, I have come to terms with it.

But during this period of adjustment, one issue kept coming back into my mind time and time again: if this experience was so hard on someone who's 26 and has the stability of a loving and caring spouse to lean on, how can children cope with the destruc-tion of their main source of security?

Many students here went through the divorce of their parents when they were children. It's hard to imagine what it is like to lose the security of your home at such a young age. It has to be difficult on a girl or a boy to see the ugliness involved with many broken marriages. The things said by people who are angry, scared and hurt over the destruction of such a personal relationship can be ruthless and nasty.

So many kids who witness these things don't make the necessary adjustments for a healthy personal life, and who can blame them? Divorce is a hard thing to deal with at

The love and respect between a mother and a father is something a child can feel safe about when everything in the world seems too "big." And although children ultimately make their own decisions in life, the presence of loving parents who care for them and each other has a positive effect on how they develop. I can attest to that per-

So why bring it up? In a way, I guess this is therapeutic. But there's another more cru-

Most students at this university are just beginning life independent of their parents. A few have already made the decision to get married, while others aren't ready to take that step yet. Either way, this is the time when most people consider what they want

out of their relationships and marriage. So, think about this: when the time comes, take your choice for a spouse very seriously, because many people will depend on your marriage — far more than you could ever realize — and the ones who will depend on it most are your children. The security you and your spouse create in your home is crucial to the future of your children. Nurture your marriage. Your children, born or unborn, rely on your efforts.

We talk a lot about how important it is to love our kids these days. Perhaps that all begins by remembering to love and cherish

Roy L. Clay is a senior history major



Editorials appearing in The Battalion reflect the views of the editorial board. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other Battalion staff members, the Texas A&M student body, regents, administration, faculty or staff.

Columns, guest columns, cartoons and letters express the opinions of the authors.

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number

We reserve the right to edit letters and guest columns for length, style, and accuracy.

Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.
Address letters to:

The Battalion - Mail Call 013 Reed McDonald Mail stop 1111 Texas A&M University College Station, TX 77843 Fax: (409) 845-2647



# Winder blows it with shopping stereotypes

This is in response to Dave Winder's "Shopping styles differ vastly along great gender divide" on March 22. In his column, Winder made women out to be dependent, impractical, shop-aholics. Winder also stated that women "like those little plastic cards That way they never translate purchase dol-lars into real dollars." This is exactly the way our very own male-dominated government has been running their budget for years. Also, "Shop till you drop" is not my national anthem, as Winder says. Last time I checked, it was the "Star Spangled Banner."

Winder perpetuated negative gender. stereotypes by generalizing a few of his experiences to be true for all people. I realize that everyone is entitled to their own opinion; I strongly believe in freedom of speech, but not in the wasting of space. I can't believe that this unintelligent and unresearched column, to say the least, was actually printed. In the future, I suggest that The Battalion print college-level articles or teach Dave Winder how to write one.

> Aimee Llewellyn Class of '96 Kelly Dodd

## Gasoline tax would fund new technology

Everyone knows that the world's oil supply is quickly but surely being depleted. So what are we doing about this inevitable shortfall? Nothing. Well, I think it's time to do something before it's too late — if it's not already. Congress should impose a yearly 10 percent increase, above inflation, on the price of gasoline. This will discourage driving cars at the present rate, and at the same time finally provide real incentive for exploring more environment-friendly, efficient transportation

alternatives. We could expand the intercity bus systems, increase carpooling and riding bikes when possible, and develop more efficient public transportation modes. And perhaps we should take another look at high speed rail, privately funded or not. This 10 percent increase in the price of gasoline would encourage all of these improvements.

We must follow Europe's lead into the 21st century — and that means mass transportation. After all, we Americans take our gasoline for granted. It costs around \$5 per gallon for gas in Europe. A 10 percent hike is nothing compared to that. The United States is supposed to be a leader to the world. So why are we not willing to do our part to avoid the future oil crisis? Something must be done. We can either make a small sacrifice now, or pay heavily later.

Zach Estes

#### 'Call Block' prevents phony phone charges

Please read your phone bill very careful-Aggies! Today when I opened my phone bill I got quite a surprise. There was an extra page attached to my phone bill for third-party calls. These third-party calls were made during the past month to Marshall, California, and San Bernardino, California. The total bill for these calls was approximately 640

Because I don't know anyone in California and have not made any third-party calls in the last month, I was positive these calls were not made by me. I called the AT&T number listed on my bill and they assured me that I did not have to pay for these calls and a bill would be sent to the number from which they originated. And just for grins, I called the number of the person charging these calls to my home to let them know that I was on to them and that they would be receiving a bill for their calls to California

I have contacted GTE and they are currently in the process of placing "Ćall Block" on my phone. No one will ever again be

other location. Call Block is a free service in Texas. Of course, the down side to Call Block is that I won't be able to charge calls to my home if I am somewhere else either. I guess that is the price you pay when you live in a dishonest society.

Debby Hall

### Loyal Aggie helps at vacation breakdown

On Saturday, March 19, coming home from Spring Break, we were graciously reminded of the true Aggie Spirit. After a week of vacation, my fiancé and I were driving through San Marcos on our way here when the alternator went out on our car, leaving us on the outskirts of town. Not even five minutes went by before a car with the same Aggie sticker on it as ours stopped to help us. Eric, a civil engineering major from Arlington, rearranged his luggage to make room for ours and took us back into town to call a tow-truck. But he didn't stop there! He followed us, and the truck to a repair shop and then drove us home the two hours to College Station.

On top of it all, he wouldn't accept a

dime — nothing at all for his time and trouble. So this is for you Eric, thank you very much. If it weren't for you, it would have been quite a hitch-hike. Thanks again!

DJ Schaper Class of '96

Hillary Schatz Class of '96

#### Parking predicament

To those of you who plan to park in the Albertson's parking lot, even for a few minutes to run on campus: You will be towed!

There is a woman who sits in a pickup truck, and when you park there, she will radio the wrecker driver that is parked around the corner to come and tow your

car. I have seen it happen several times.

Just plan on walking a little bit further, and park down past the Cowhop along the

> Gerry Godzwon Class of '94