

How Quickly We Forget

Think twice before calling convicted rapist Tyson a hero.

Tyson won. It's been on everyone's mind so, as your ever-vigilant purveyor of truth, I wanted to make sure everyone knew the outcome. Actually, just saying "Tyson won" doesn't seem to capture the impact.

It's like saying "Greg Maddux is a decent pitcher," "Troy Aikman knows how to throw the football" or "The Houston Oilers really sucked last year."

No, Tyson made Peter McNeely look like me trying to get a hit off Greg Maddux, me trying to defend a pass by Troy Aikman or last years Houston Oilers against ... well, anyone else.

What, you say? You didn't get to see the farce, er, I mean fight?

Not a problem.

If you act now, you can get the "Return of Mike Tyson" commemorative video, mug, hair restorer and ab reducer by calling 1-800-IHAVENOLIFE.

It seems everyone wants to cash in on the heroic return of a convicted rapist to the civilized world ... or at least the boxing world.

Hail the conquering hero!

This deserves a second look. As a point of comparison, look at the life of the late Mickey Mantle, who died a few weeks back from cancer.

Ask anyone who follows baseball to name the best player ever and nine out of ten will probably answer Mickey Mantle. He was the Michael Jordan of our parents' generation.

He also drank too much.

Two years ago Mantle finally admitted that he had a problem and checked into the Betty Ford Clinic for treatment. Until his last day, Mantle told anyone who would listen not to do to their lives what he did to his.

When doctors performed a liver transplant on Mantle, they found cancerous growth on most of his vital organs.

In short, Mantle was about to die, and he knew it.

But Mantle never shirked responsibility for any of his actions. He never said, "You just don't understand the pressure."

He never blamed his parents for beating him or society for being too uncaring.

He never once claimed that his poor Oklahoma roots simply didn't prepare him for the real world.

Mantle simply said it was his fault, and now he would have to pay for it.

Mike Tyson is no Mickey Mantle.

Sure, Tyson served his time in the Indiana prison system. Yes, Tyson claims to be a changed man — I've heard that prison can have that effect.

There's just one little problem here: Tyson doesn't seem to think he did anything wrong. He still has not admitted raping the young woman.

Yet at a parade held in New York City to honor Tyson's release from prison, the Rev. Al Sharpton and other local "civil rights" leaders held Tyson up as a shining beacon for the black youth of America.

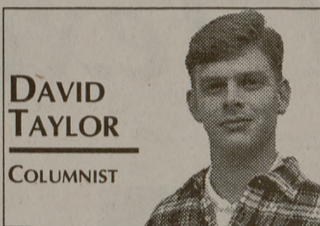
I guess the Rev. Sharpton subscribes to the "David Koresh" theory of public relations — which says that the best way to get your point across is to lead your people to the brink of destruction.

No, Mike Tyson is not going to sow the seeds of the destruction of America's youth, but embracing him as a role model will create some confusion about how to live a productive life.

The Rev. Sharpton — and the rest of us — should know better.

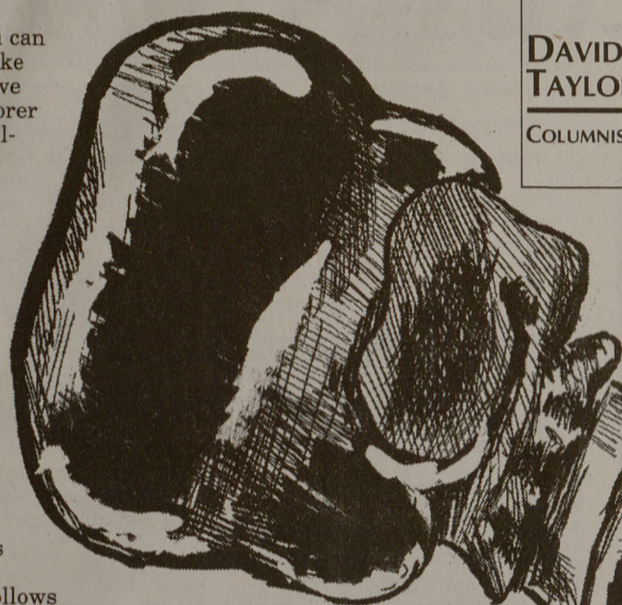
Saying Mike Tyson is a role model for black youth simply because of his race is like saying Superman is a hero for cross-dressers just because he wears tights.

It's also an insult to all the genuine role models who have worked their way out of the ghetto.



DAVID TAYLOR

COLUMNIST



After Mickey Mantle's liver transplant surgery, a national uproar ensued over some perceived "special favor" he may have received due to his baseball past. The media scrutiny never let-up, even after Mantle's terminal status was revealed.

Mantle, it turns out, received no special favors and, hopefully, his baseball skills can serve as his final epitaph.

Coverage of Mike Tyson, however, seems strangely devoid of any concern about the messages being sent by all the hype of his return. It's almost as if we are saying that nothing ever happened.

How can we be so critical of a man who accepts responsibility for his actions and honor one who refuses?

Tyson may be the best heavy-weight boxer right now. He may even be the best boxer, period. But he is certainly not the best example for young black Americans ... or any of us, for that matter.

David Taylor is a senior management major.

Welcome to the A&M they forgot to mention at Fish Camp

All right everybody, gather around and let's take a tour through our sunny, gentle campus.

We just might run into some people and places you never had the pleasure of encountering while you were slogging through English 104 and learning how to "hump it" all that wonderful first summer long.

Why don't we begin at the oldest building at Texas A&M? Incidentally, this architectural anomaly may be found near the exact geographical center of our campus. You might say it resembles some remedial graduate student's senior thesis gone horribly wrong.

Built some time during Sully Ross' day, it hasn't been renovated since the "horseless buggy" captivated the stunned admiration of the world and Teddy Roosevelt took the presidential oath.

That's right, it's our very own Sterling C. Evans Library.

If something strikes you as being wrong with this University, don't hit the highway. Take a swing at the University instead. And then keep hitting it until it changes.

Wander in and take a gander at the lobby or at some of the hi-fi study modules. With a yearly budget of \$7.53, it's no surprise that the interior looks like the result of a brainstorming session between the Mod Squad, Mr. Kotter's Sweathogs and a couple of the less intelligent Brady children.

On our way out, let's dig extra deep in our pockets for some spare change for the good people panhandling out front. Hey, our librarians have to come up with magazine subscription money somehow.

The funds currently allocated to them by the University are roughly equivalent either to the amount spent yearly by the kinesiology department for table tennis balls or the sum rumored to

have been shelled out by Texas A&M officials for their last "Fun in the Sun, Bottles of Rum and Cheerleaders under 21" luau.

As it is, our library has just enough money to subscribe to the complimentary in-flight USAir magazine and some pre-1930s Pacific Ocean travel guides written in the catchy Philippine dialect of Tagalog.

Now let's meander through some of our "parking" lots. Oddly enough, Texas A&M is able to maintain a traffic cop to student ratio of almost one to one, while the remainder of our faculty consistently earns much less than the national average in salary.

Hey, sometimes you have to sacrifice academic quality in order to maintain stability amongst the madcap world of automobile regulation.

These pseudo-police have a challenging and difficult task, what with there being six non-faculty, non-business, non-emergency parking spots on a campus with 42,000 students.

Brighten up their day by pausing to chat with them for a second.

Two clever ways to open a conversation are: "Soon you will be overthrown, running-dog lackey of the fascist hegemony," and, "Infidel dog, soon the streets will run red with your tyrannical blood."

After that, just sort of roll with the conversational flow.

Next, we have some on-campus housing facilities. On every floor we can meet at least one 14th-year sophomore.

He will be named after either a Norse god, a power tool or a character from the Road Warrior.

Thor (or Chainsaw or Mad Max) is sort of a Renaissance man, seeing how he's traveled through 11 different majors and every college in the University.

He is currently studying Welding and Gasoline Dispenser Management while minoring in Your Fingernails and You.

Keep an eye out for the wretched, forlorn masses being herded past like so many cattle.

Nope, these guys aren't escapees from the Soviet gulag or an Alabama chain gang.

They're the newest bunch of involuntary recruits headed out to Bonfire cut.

Notice their clean-shaven heads, their dirty gray rags and the manner in which they huddle together for warmth and protection. Commiserate with them as they are hustled into the backs of waiting pick-up trucks and chained together for the long ride out to their work camps.

Don't worry, hardly anybody's civil rights are being violated in a manner that really counts.

For our last stop, let's make a run by the MSC. While we're here, we can play a fun game called "Respect Our Traditions."

We wait for any unsuspecting student to step on the grass, and then we hit them with a flying tackle.

While they're writhing in pain and we're waiting for the paramedics, we might give them a lecture on "Honoring the Memory of our Aggie Veterans."

If they ask us how our behavior exemplifies the Aggie Spirit, we explain that "Highway 6 runs both ways" and then call them a "two-percenter."

Interestingly enough, this line of reasoning was used by Fidel Castro when he expelled thousands of dissidents and criminals from Cuba in the 1980 Mariel boatlift.

If you don't like it, don't hang around to change it. Get on the next bus out of here.

Hopefully, as the new class of Aggies, you Class of '99 youngsters won't subscribe to this thinking.

If something strikes you as being wrong with the University, don't hit the highway.

Take a swing at the University instead. And then keep hitting it until it changes.

That could you be how you'll leave your mark on this University; through your belief in your own beliefs and your ability to think for yourself.

We'll see, that might even be the way you'll become a true Aggie.

Chris Stidvent is a senior English and philosophy major



CHRIS STIDVENT

COLUMNIST

