

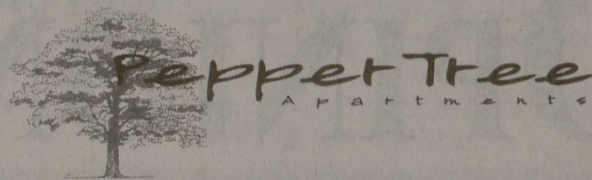


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**Americans unsure about race policies**

By Steve Giegerich  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A new poll highlights Americans' conflicted feelings about affirmative action at colleges: A majority of those surveyed said it benefits society, but even more said schools should not admit minorities who have lower grades than other qualified candidates.

The finding is part of a comprehensive survey of American attitudes toward colleges and universities being released Monday by The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Among other findings, the survey revealed that more than 80 percent of Americans believe skyrocketing tuition has made higher education less affordable to the middle class. At the same time, 75 percent believe a college education is "worth the price."

The telephone survey of 1,000 adults ages 25 to 65 has a margin of error of plus or minus

3.1 percentage points. With the Supreme Court deciding a critical case that challenges the University of Michigan's use of race as a factor in admissions, 58 percent of respondents to the Chronicle poll said affirmative action programs benefit society.

But 64 percent of those surveyed said they thought minority students should not be admitted to a school if their grades and test scores didn't meet the level of other applicants.

David Ward, president of the American Council on Education, expects those conflicting attitudes to continue even after the Supreme Court ruling.

He said Americans have a deeply ingrained sense of fair play and individual rights — and for many, affirmative action doesn't seem fair. "If you feel you've been deprived of something by a process, it is felt very strongly," he said. "And that's an area where universities are struggling."

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**Heston makes last appearance as NRA president but is too feeble to give speech**

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Charlton Heston made his last appearance as president of the National Rifle Association on Saturday, shuffling onto the stage before a crowd of 4,000 NRA members but too feeble to give a farewell speech.

The actor, diagnosed with symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, was strong enough to raise an 1866 Winchester rifle over his head and deliver his trademark line, "From my cold, dead hands."

He received a standing ovation but only spoke three more sentences at the annual NRA meeting Saturday.

"Thank you for everything, not only now but for all the years," Heston said. "It has been a wonderful run. I'm going to miss you." Heston, 78, the public voice of the NRA for five years, was diagnosed last year with symptoms of Alzheimer's, a neurological disease that can lead to dementia.

"Alzheimer's is a ravaging disease ... and Mr. Heston is suffering from those effects," said Marion Hammer, who was NRA president before Heston. "There are times, as is to be expected, when he is as sharp as he would like to be."



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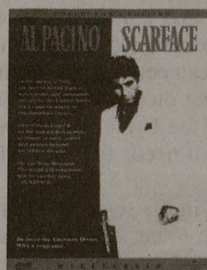
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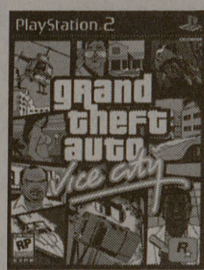
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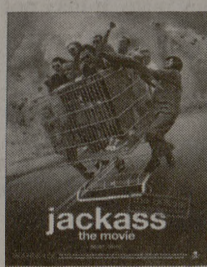
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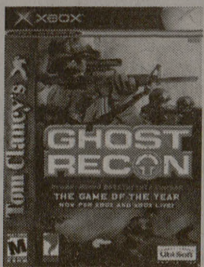
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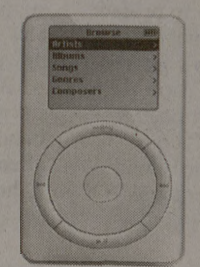
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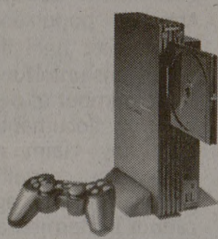
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