

The Davidsonian

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LETTERS

Crying "racism" not the answer

To the editors,

In last week's issue of *The Davidsonian*, Love of Learning Assistant Joan Miller recounted a disheartening encounter with two of the employees at Dover's grocery store.

While I sympathize with her for being overlooked and therefore frustrated (a common experience in large stores), I found her assertion of "racism" to be an overreaction. Having worked in a grocery store myself, I can quickly recognize the disinterest as apathy or fatigue, not hatred.

Imagine how you would feel getting up at 6:00 a.m., working an eight hour shift at minimum wage, having no lunch, feeling pressured by your boss, and on top of all this, being accused of racism by an alienated customer with an attitude.

Perhaps the two workers were not even aware that you were ready to order; perhaps if you had asked re-

spectfully for some service they would have gladly rendered it.

As for the manager who refused to create a scene for your benefit, this was the only professional choice he or she could have made. One impresses neither fellow workers nor customers by ranting and raving at an employee who made a mistake.

Here's something to keep in mind: last spring while living in a different city, I ventured into a local grocer's to pick up some cereal and milk. The cashier who waited on me greeted me with a frown, picked her nails before waiting on me, and showed no sign of vigor or excitement over being able to serve me.

My annoyance at being overlooked and the subsequent feeling of self-pity were quickly squelched as the clerk turned to bag my groceries. On her right cheek, neck, and arm were numerous black-and-blue

spots. No wonder she was grimacing. If I had to work eight hours in a grocery store only to go home to someone who beat me up, I wouldn't be very chipper, either.

Please remember, Ms. Miller, that when people are rude to you, it probably isn't a malicious gesture meant to offend you. They are probably just having a worse day than you are. Life is tough for everyone, not merely African-Americans. I am truly sorry that you had this experience. Please feel assured that the manager of Dover's *did* take care of the problem.

Remember, Dover's provides a tremendous service to those students who don't own automobiles or can't afford to eat at the Commons or in a house. We should seek to foster good relations with these people, not alienate them and destroy their business.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Whitehead '94

The final word

A cursory glance at the *Observer* informs the foreigner what the Charlotte native has known for some time: the Queen City is on the move. The promising young star of the American South, Charlotte searches for an identity to distinguish itself from cities with whom it no longer competes, while Charlotteans forge an image to bump their town into the ranks of the nation's urban elite.

Similarly, only in the last decade has Davidson been recognized among the best of America's liberal arts colleges. And just as the school strives to shed provincial images with which any Southern institution can be stereotyped—of sexist, racist, and reactionist tendencies—its students spend four years forming the beliefs and molding the ideals by which they want to live.

Though *The Davidsonian* has been criticized for uneven news reporting, scant sports coverage, and crude opinions pieces, Chris and I have been driven by the belief that the paper should reflect, more than anything else, the changing character of the school and its students. And it is in the Opinions section that one sometimes finds a student ardently striving, wrestling even, to create informed and moral beliefs. In these pieces, one finds what Davidson was meant to be, a place where genuine intellectual curiosity thrives.

Through intellectual pursuits at places like Davidson, "tolerance" and "open-mindedness" have replaced "segregation" and "division" as the new Southern by-words. In some sense, however, an open-minded attitude, taken to its extreme, might result in a complacent tendency to accept bad ideas as simply "different." Open-mindedness should not imply blind acceptance, but a desire to listen to differing opinions, an ability to view these opinions without bias, and a willingness to discard poorly conceived ideas.

As Leigh Rawdon, Alex Crumbley, and Mandy Curtis take over the paper, I challenge the Davidson community to accept from them nothing less than excellence. Even where Volume 85 has failed, these three students possess the ability and the desire to take *The Davidsonian* beyond its former limits. This paper can become what the editors want to create, and what our readers deserve to have. And so, read, not blindly accepting, but actively challenging, what they express. Chris and I have every confidence in their ability to excel.

Thanks.

Harrison Roberts
Editor in Chief

Lewis clarifies plagiarism rules

To the editors,

Thanks to Mandy Curtis and to the *Davidsonian* for sifting through the complexities of the recent debate over plagiarism.

Please let me make one slight clarification. Curtis writes: "According to Lewis, there is now more room for judgment; professors can now decide whether the stu-

dent plagiarized."

In actuality, professors cannot decide if a student plagiarized insofar as plagiarism may constitute an honor violation. Honor violations belong in the territory of the Honor Council.

The new statement on plagiarism simply allows professors more latitude in distinguishing between what

Professor Holland calls an "honest mistake"—a technical error—and an act of dishonor.

Wherever dishonor is suspected by a faculty member, the case should still be taken to the Dean of Students.

Sincerely,
Cynthia Lewis
Professor of English

Don't forget Davidson's origin

To the editors,

An analogy concerning the Board of Trustees:

Suppose there is a church. It's a small, pious, solidly-founded church whose minister, deacons and congregation are there seeking fellowship with others, inspiration and a deeper knowledge of Christianity.

Now, this church has a choir—a really good choir. For a while it's a well-kept secret, but pretty soon word starts to spread. Music lovers and musicians alike become curious about this awesome choir and come to listen and share their own talents. Of course, not all of

them are Christians, but the church does not turn one single person away, because its purpose is to open its doors to everyone and share the gifts God has blessed them with—musical and otherwise.

Everything runs smoothly. The choir, because of its diversity and range of voices, and because of ideas contributed by the members has become a magnificent choir, known throughout the land.

And then one day, one of the non-Christian musicians decides he would like to become a deacon so he would be in a better position

to advise the choir. Why not, after all? The majority of the congregation these days is not really Christian, anyway. They just come for the music, and don't bother with the other aspects of the church.

A tremendous debate ensues. The non-Christians are all for it, because they only see the church in terms of music. But the Christians know that it goes much deeper than that. It would be a compromise of everything the Church itself stands for. It would change the whole structure of the church. It

See Walton on page 8.

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