

# Professor Explores Liberalism of Eleanor Roosevelt

**Bradley Schlegel**  
Staff Writer

Allida Black has spent most of her adult life studying Eleanor Roosevelt.

"She has always fascinated me," said Black, a visiting associate professor of American Studies and History at PSH. "I admire who she is and what she stood for."

Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, spent 12 years in the White House helping shape the policies of the New Deal.

Though she left Washington in 1945, Eleanor Roosevelt continued to carry strong political influence until her death in 1962.

Those post-White House accomplishments are the basis for Black's first book, "Casting her own Shadow: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Shaping of Post-War Liberalism." The book is due out November 1, 1996 and will be published by Columbia University Press.

After seven years of exhaustive research, Black has put together the portrait opposite of the current perception of liberalism. It was necessary to "understand the history of liberalism" and "have a clearer perception of First Ladies."

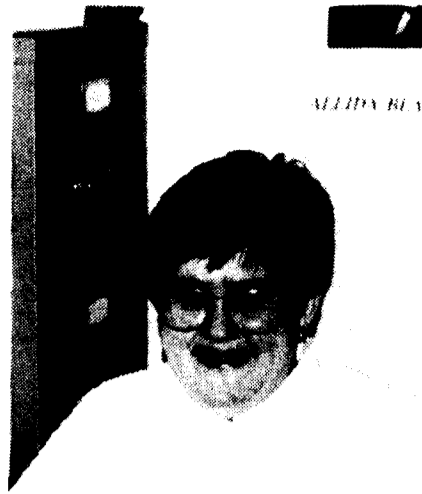
"Rights have become separate from responsibilities," said Black, who did her doctoral thesis on Eleanor. "Mrs. Roosevelt always believed that with rights come responsibilities. To be an American, one had a moral obligation to remain informed."

"Most people think a liberal believes in giving things away," said Black. "That's not the way I see it, or the way Mrs. Roosevelt would. Most people think of welfare as just black women with children. But that's not necessarily the case. People don't see a lot of white women and working-class families with children that get support."

"Allida's book will fit in very nicely with our series in contemporary American studies," said Chad Kia, assistant editor at Columbia University Press. "This is a great time to have this book published. People are very interested in the New Deal, partly because its effects are still with us."

The book will be packaged as a companion to a two-volume biography on Eleanor Roosevelt and a book of essays edited by William Leuchtenburg, of the University of North Carolina.

Eleanor Roosevelt was very influential in



Allida Black

world and international politics. She was a member of the American delegation to the United Nations, and was the key author of the International Declaration of Human Rights. She was on the executive board of the

NAACP and "Americans for Democratic Action." She was very influential in the Democratic party. She had a daily newspaper column and two monthly magazine columns. She gave 75 speeches a year and wrote 15 books.

Mrs. Roosevelt also championed the causes of public education, especially colleges.

"She truly cared what college kids thought," said Black. "She was very close to many college groups of the 60s. She turned away from the Democratic Party when they did not take the stands she believed in."

"I looked at how she tried to influence civil rights, housing, public education and civil liberties. She was a liberal who saw the big picture," Black explained. "She was able to put domestic and international politics and the middle class and civil rights all together."

"She was one liberal who focused on the positive rather than the negatives. She didn't believe in the politics of fear to make a point. She believed to be a true American you had to take the time it think about the successes and failures of the nation, try to learn from that, and go forward," said Black.

The book lacked a publisher until the editor

of Columbia Press read an excerpt in the "Presidential Studies Quarterly," an academic journal.

Black has spent every day of the last five years in the FDR Library, and says she is "one of two people to look at every piece of paper regarding Eleanor." She visited five other libraries interviewed 15 people who knew Eleanor Roosevelt first hand.

"Her legacy is that everybody has a role to play," said Black. "That is to listen to people and try to deal with the issues intelligently, and that change will eventually happen."

Kia expects the book to have wide general appeal as well as in classroom settings.

Dr. William J. Mahar, head of the Humanities Department is pleased with Black's contribution to PSH.

"Dr. Black's contribution is consistent with our other instructors whose books have had a major impact on the subject matter," Mahar said. "I like to see them doing this in subjects related to the classes they teach. It benefits the students, keeping them up to date with new information. It also acknowledges the fact that the professors here are high quality people."

## Dr Kiffer: Interim Provost on Campus

**Danielle C. Hollister**  
Staff Reporter

A retired administrator and former professor at University Park has given up his golfing and fly-fishing during the week to serve as interim provost at Penn State Harrisburg.

Dr. Theodore Kiffer, who retired from his position of associate dean at University Park three years ago, is temporarily filling the vacancy created by former Provost Dr. Leventhal's retirement.

As interim provost, Dr. Kiffer said he has full authority and responsibility to conduct the affairs of the campus as he sees fit, with the consent of the faculty because that's his style.

"When I was first asked about giving up my retirement freedom, I thought I'm not really interested," Dr. Kiffer said.

Dr. Kiffer said he listened to the offer and thought about it for a few days. He even made a list of positives and negatives.

The negatives included giving up his freedom and his home. Dr. Kiffer said he and his wife have a nice place out in the country with a stream running through it. He said to be able to retire on a comfortable income and do what you want is a great feeling.

But he said his final decision to accept the position was based partially on his own sense of altruism and appreciation to Penn State.

"I thought I owe a lot to Penn State," Dr. Kiffer said.

Now he lives in Meade Heights and eats in the dining hall during the week. He said he enjoys being close to the students so he can get to know them.

As far as the living conditions in Meade Heights, Dr. Kiffer said, "You need to spend four years on a destroyer and then you'll appreciate Meade Heights."

He is referring to his time spent in the US Navy during World War II. Dr. Kiffer said he was on an amphibious support vessel that sailed out of Pearl Harbor five times and invaded five different Japanese islands.

After the invasion of Guam, he was sent to back to the United States and assigned to an

aircraft vessel for the rest of the war. "It's been 52 years since I left that ship," Dr. Kiffer said.

He was preparing to go to a reunion of his shipmates from World War II. Dr. Kiffer said there are 26 survivors who are meeting south of Orlando, Fla. He said it will be the first time he has seen these friends in 50 years.

Dr. Kiffer has appointed Dr. Sachs to act in his place while he is in Florida. He said Dr. Sachs will not have the same authority as "acting" provost that he has as "interim" provost.

After serving in the military, Dr. Kiffer received his Bachelor's degree from Robert Wesleyan College in Rochester, NY, where he majored in English with a minor in history. He then went on to the seminary and became a pastor for eight years.

"I didn't feel quite right about what I was doing, so I decided to start grad school," Dr. Kiffer said.

He came to Penn State University Park, where he received his master's degree in English with a minor in history. Dr. Kiffer also earned his Ph.D. in English at Penn State.

"With out my asking, I was offered a teaching position while finishing my doctorate," he said.

After teaching at Penn State and Kutztown University for a few years, Dr. Kiffer went to Africa where he was an associate professor of linguistics and a senior Fulbright lecturer in linguistics and English at the University of Liberia.

After almost ten years teaching experience, Dr. Kiffer said out of the blue he was offered the position of Chief Academic Officer at the Penn State Berks campus. He said he never took any courses to be an administrator.

"I never thought I would ever become an administrator," Dr. Kiffer said.

He said the faculty used to say to him, "Don't you miss the students?"

"I do and I did to a certain extent because I always enjoyed teaching very, very much," Dr. Kiffer said. "I enjoyed being with the students."

He said he looks at it like he exchanged a couple of classrooms of students for the fac-

ulty. He said he deals with the faculty on a personal basis too.

The PSH faculty seems to be pleased with the way Dr. Kiffer has dealt with them in the short time that he has been here.

"I'm impressed with him because of his openness with faculty, staff and students," Tom Steck, supervisor of Administrative Services said. "He seems like a real people person."

"He seemed like a pretty nice guy. He thought we were students and we told him we were the landscape crew, so he introduced himself to everyone and told us we're doing a good job," John McLaughlin, landscape group leader said.

"Dr. Kiffer seems to be a down-to-earth kind of guy who wants to know his people," Paul Politza, maintenance and construction manager, said.

Dr. Kiffer said he feels in some ways that after 16 years, he became kind of an expert in curricular activities.

"People perceive that I have a way of making things happen and resolving situations," he said.

When asked if he was told of any specific situations to deal with on this campus, Dr. Kiffer said, "I was told absolutely nothing."

He said because he's only been here for six weeks, he can only offer perceptions of what is lacking on this campus. He said he thinks there is a lack of community, a lack of cohesiveness among the students.

"I don't want to sound too negative, but there doesn't seem to me to be the sense of academic community that I would like," Dr. Kiffer said. "I believe it all starts and ends with the students. I have always tried to put students first."

He said he thinks the first thing is to not just say that he cares, but to demonstrate the fact that he does. That's why he eats in the dining hall, to intermingle with students.

Dr. Kiffer said he wants to make himself as open as possible and be available to help the students personally.

"To my great satisfaction, anyone who has had a problem, it has been resolved," he said.

Manager of Public Information and Public

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## Who Are the Lion Ambassadors...?

**Jeff Wittmaier**  
Staff Reporter

The Lion Ambassadors are considered a Penn State Harrisburg club, but what they do is unlike any other organization at PSH.

The Lion Ambassadors are a community related club. They are a community organization for the Penn State Harrisburg college community and the local community.

At the beginning of the year the members sit down and vote on what they think the theme of the year should be and then organize activities for that theme. This year the theme of the Lion Ambassadors is children.

"When we decided on children as our theme we then went about organizing activities for that theme," Tiffany Green, president of the Lion Ambassadors, said.

Alumni events are also a part of the duties of the Lion Ambassadors.

"We host the Alumni events on campus," Green said. "This is part of our obligation as a club. We also host other college events, such as open houses, we give tours during them. Also we host the award convocation ceremony and graduation."

This semester the Lion Ambassadors are helping with a book publishing celebration, Women's History Month(March) and undergraduate admissions open houses.

Not only do the Lion Ambassadors help

with events on campus, but also they sponsor events for the community.

"We are sponsoring the Big Brother/Big Sister college program," Green said. "The program will last the entire semester and hopefully into next year."

The club ran the Carnation sale over Valentine's Day. The club runs sales like this to fund their organization for the activities that they hold over the course of a semester.

Giving something to the community and giving Penn State Harrisburg a sense of presence in the area is one of the main goals of the Lion Ambassadors.

"We held a holiday party for the homeless at the Harrisburg YWCA in December as one of our activities," Green said.

As part of their activities, the Lion Ambassadors are going to visit the Polyclinic sometime this semester to visit the children.

On April 2 the Lion Ambassadors are holding a Bowling for Kids Sake. Also the Lion Ambassadors with Kappa Delta Phi are holding Reading Literacy Week, from April 23-29.

"We will be reading to local kids," Green said. "We wanted to incorporate another PSH club, which is why we are holding this activity with Kappa Delta Phi."

The Lion Ambassadors will also be holding a mug sale this semester.

"We try to schedule as many events as we can to benefit the college and local commu-

nity," Green said.

The Lion Ambassadors are a very unique club a Penn State Harrisburg with their total commitment to the surrounding community.

"Right now we are sort of going through a transition time," Green said. "We have about 30 members, 15 of which are active and 15 are inactive. Each active member must participate in at least three activities and inactive member need to fulfil two activities. The reason that some members are inactive is due to internships or student teaching."

The Lion Ambassadors are always looking for new members, so if you are interested in joining the Lion Ambassadors stop by the Alumni and Special events office on the first floor of the Olmsted Building. You can also contact one of the officers of the Lion Ambassadors, Tiffany Green, President; Lori Trutt, Vice President; Justin Walzi, Treasurer; Jim McFalls, Secretary.

"In addition to the activities that we sponsor, we also hold one activity just the members of the Lion Ambassadors.

The Lion Ambassadors are rewarding Penn State Harrisburg by holding community service activities, so that the local community knows that PSH cares about the local area.

"It is really rewarding to see an event organized and then accomplished, it gives you a sense of inner satisfaction knowing that you may have made a difference," Green said.

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