

# Have a colorless day

by Andrew Festa

"The tragedy of life doesn't lie in not having reached your goals, the tragedy lies in having no goals to reach." Black Educator Benjamin Mays wrote those words.

Uh oh. I said the word black. In a Politically Correct society, that's a no-no. He's not even a colored person; he's a person of color.

Now wait a minute. The label 'person of color' can be applied to any member of the human race. Since black and white are both colors, all people are 'persons of color.' Following that logic, then, the term 'person of color' is a misnomer.

'Black' and 'white', too, are misused labels. I've never heard of a 'black' person, nor do I think of myself as white.

Paper can be white, but not a person (unless freshly dipped in a special solution of people-bleach.)

True, there was and still is a problem of prejudice. Now that we're aware of the problem, however, we need to chill out on the accusation thing and begin the healing

process thing.

Political Correctness, with its underlying sincerity, has only made matters worse. Using PC on prejudice is akin to using masking tape to fix a hot air balloon; aside from looking ugly, few would trust it enough to ride. Thus, we fall far short of the long term correction goal. Uh, excuse me - the goal of correction.

We first need to become aware of a problem before we can make the necessary changes. So OK already, we're aware, having been kicked in the proverbial testicles by PC protagonists. What we need now is to address prejudice with care, conviction, courage, and clarity of purpose.

In some of my past columns for *The Collegian*, I've done some kicking of my own, hoping to focus attention on the dilemma of prejudice.

Though it might be hard to believe, the University is open to suggestions. They realize prejudice won't just go away. (Wouldn't it be nice if students offered some suggestions?)

Come on gals and guys,

you're educated people, and this may well become your Alma Mater.

What about having a non-alcoholic party where the people who attend brainstorm for ways to help 'Ole Penn State?' (What? No Booze?) Ok. Scratch that.

How about a policy that asks everyone to drop an idea or two in a box at the door on the way into the party? Those ideas could then be sent to the person or department most

## Andrew Festa

willing and able to help. Perhaps one of those ideas, with the University's cooperation, would be something students could do themselves.

Penn State is actually a fine system. It, like any large institution, has flaws but, the people who run it have their hands full. In some cases, they have their hands tied.

Students have a lot more power at their fingertips than they realize. They can bring about far reaching changes

because of their numbers (over 50,000). Most don't even realize how strong their united voices can actually be. We needn't get radical, unless we feel an overwhelming need to join the PC hit squad.

For the four or five years we're here, Penn State is our family. Wouldn't you help your family if you could?

We are all students of color and, while we deserve the best, it isn't always forthcoming. One reason for that is the system itself. Another reason is that we tend to expect too much.

We need to pull together as a team for the good of the family, and further, for the good of humanity. (If that concept is new to you, please ask a communication or marketing professor about the Demming principle.)

My main intention for ragging on the inadequacies of Penn State is two fold: first, I had hoped to inspire students to search actively for solutions; second, I figured the University, being the 'giant of ego' that it is, would react by implementing its own plan of corrections without reaching into the PC Zone.

Though I could be wrong, neither expectation has come to pass, yet. The rhetoric coming from the University does sound promising, though I do tend to wonder about intent. Oh well. One can't have it all.

Everyday we experience millions of minor events which clump together into larger events. We, being the subjects and manipulators of those events, have a duty to our 'family' and society. We can choose to act on those events in a positive way, minimizing the negative impacts, or 'let someone else do it.'

In the words of Tennyson, "Failure is an event, never a person." Failure, however, is almost a certainty unless the people are willing to pull together for the common good.

Remember, we're all in this together.

Have a colorless day, you people of color.

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# OK, Judge, cut out the grandfather clause

by Mike Royko

"Judge Thomas, in a speech you delivered in 1987, you said, and I quote: 'I believe it is the responsibility of every decent person to wear clean underwear, so that in the event of an accident, you will not be embarrassed in front of the nurses in the emergency room.' Is that quotation accurate?"

"Yes, senator, it is."

"Now, you went on to say that if a person does not have an automatic washer and dryer, that person should wash his or her underwear by hand. And if that person does not have hot water, he or she should make do with cold water. Is that accurate?"

"Yes, senator, I believe it is."

"Do I take it, then, that you believe every individual, regardless of their means, is responsible for their own underwear?"

"Let me put it this way, senator. When I was a poor child, one day my grandfather saw me slipping my tattered trousers over yesterday's underwear, and my grandfather told me ..."

"Judge Thomas, are we going to have to sit through still another one of your grandfather stories? I'm starting to hallucinate that your grandfather has been nominated for the Supreme Court."

"I appreciate that, senator, but

I was taught as a poor child that the cleanliness of one's underwear was a measure of one's character."

"I think we would all agree on that, and you are to be much admired for your high-mindedness, as well as the cleanliness of your underwear. And I want to take this moment to compliment you on the members of your fine family, all of whom I would assume have clean underwear. But I have to ask you: Do you believe that having clean underwear is part of natural law?"

"Senator, I don't believe that I have ever said clean underwear is part of natural law."

"Ah, then you don't believe it is part of natural law."

"Senator, I have never said that, either."

"Then what is your position? Is clean underwear part of natural law or isn't it?"

"I don't believe it would be appropriate for me to give an opinion on that."

"Why not? You seemed to be emphatic in your views on clean underwear when you made that speech."

"At that time, I was a member of the executive branch. I am now a member of the judicial branch, and I believe I should approach the issue of clean underwear with an open mind."

"Then you will not tell us how you feel about the decision,

Nurse Jones vs. Grungy Joe, which dealt with the issue of dirty underwear in emergency rooms?"

"Senator, as my grandfather once said about speaking without all the facts ..."



## Mike Royko

"Judge Thomas, I absolutely refuse to listen to one more of your grandfather stories. I would like to know this: What if a

person has no washer and dryer, no hot water and the cold water pipe is frozen. How do you propose that this person obtain a clean change of underwear?"

"Senator, that is a hypothetical case. But if that person had a stove and a pot and could borrow some water from a neighbor, he or she would have the means of heating water and washing the underwear."

"True, judge, but what if that person didn't have such means?"

"Senator, is there a hypothetical Laundromat near this hypothetical person?"

"This hypothetical person can't afford a Laundromat. So would you not agree that in some cases society should provide the means for this person to obtain a clean change of underwear?"

"Senator, that is a matter for the legislative branch to decide. As a member of the judicial branch, I can only try to determine if providing free clean underwear is within the framework of the Constitution."

"I understand that, judge, but I want to know what your personal philosophy is. If I may quote from that same speech, you later said: 'I do not want to see free clean underwear become a way of life. A person who is accustomed to receiving free clean underwear will, in time, grow to expect free clean socks.' Is that your philosophy?"

"Well, as my grandfather said, 'Better to be free and wash your own socks with a hole in the big toe than to walk in a rich man's Gucci shoes.'"

"Judge, I haven't the faintest idea what that means."

"I don't either, senator. My grandfather wasn't real good at old sayings."

"Judge Thomas, with all respect, even Judge Bork was willing to share with us his personal philosophy on the question of clean underwear for those who have a need."

"Yes, senator, but look what happened to Judge Bork. Besides, Judge Bork's old grandfather might have had a different opinion on this issue than my old grandfather, who always said ..."

"Judge, not one more word about your grandfather or I will flip out."

"I can appreciate that senator. As a matter of fact, my old grandmother used to always tell my grandfather ..."

"We stand recessed."

*Mike Royko is a Chicago-based, nationally syndicated columnist. His column appears weekly in The Collegian.*