

The Rebels make it to the top

Well, we finally did it. After a whole lot of hard work, we are the NCAA champions. The university should feel incredible pride in their team. It is a time for celebration. But it is also time to think. Will this victory help to enrich our entire university, academically as well as athletically? Will it help our image? Will the Rebels be lifted above the mire of scandal because of the triumph? Will more legislative, as well as private support come to UNLV programs that aren't so "popular?"

The NCAA victory is an opportune time for the university to seek more funding for all programs. It also gives the team a chance to improve their image. But after all is said is done, Congratulations, Rebels.



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"I'd rather see newspapers with no government than a government with no newspapers." - Thomas Jefferson

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LETTERS POLICY

All letters must be limited to 400 words—anything more will be considered an opinion piece. The Yellin' Rebel reserves the right to reject submissions and to edit for libel, grammar, spelling errors, length and writing style.

Letters must be typed and include the name of the writer (unless anonymity is requested for a valid reason), as well as the writer's telephone number, major and year in school.

All submissions must be sent to: The Yellin' Rebel, (care of Letters to the Editor), MSU 302, 4505 S. Maryland Pkwy., Las Vegas, NV 89154.

Time hasn't changed a thing

by Roosevelt Fitzgerald

Even though it has been 22 years, it seems like only yesterday. I was in the first of what would be three years of graduated study at Notre Dame University.

There were only a handful of black students there at the time and only a few in the graduate college. It was at a time when we, as a nation, was still involved in our psychological calisthenics in an attempt to determine whether we would actually become as democratic as we had believed we were for years or remain a figment of our collective imagination.

Eight months earlier I arrived in Indiana from Mississippi and experienced two phenomena completely alien to me: Snow and integration. I had gotten used to the first and the second was coming along. The latter was slower in developing partially because I had little time for socializing.

I carried twelve graduate hours each semester and worked a full time job. There were moments in-between classes or on the way to the library for limited conversations with a few of my classmates, all of whom were white, but not really the kind of time one need for discovery. So, while we knew each others' name, we didn't know each other.

That was the reality I found myself in on that fateful day of April 4, 22 years ago. I had attended two

classes that day gone to the library and returned to O'Shaunnessy Hall for my third class of the day. As usual and as I've done most of my life, I walked alone.

Also, as I walked, I was quite aware of what transpired within my line of vision. There was something odd about the behavior of other students as I approached by I couldn't put my finger on it. From a distance I could see them in quiet animated conversation but, as I drew near, they grew silent.

My reaction to what I observed was not at all unusual; I concluded that I was the topic of conversation.

I wondered why would they be talking about me. They didn't know me. We didn't associate with each other. I hadn't done anything to them and, up to that point, they hadn't done anything to me.

Tension began to tighten in me—a tension which was always there but uncoiled—and I began to think they were going to jump me. All of these things ran through my mind as I climbed the stairways and walked the hallways. By the time I reached the third floor I was mentally and physically prepared for war. I was prepared for the worst.

When I entered the classroom there were several pockets of students all engaged in conversation and, upon my entering, the room was hushed. I went to my seat and

put my books down and just stood there watching without looking.

One of the fellows began to approach me and, close on his heels came others. I made my plan; I would crack his skull, cave in the second's chest, break the third's neck, drive the fourth's nosebone into his brain, and bash three or four with a wall map, throw one or two out of the window and then, if more came, I would really get serious.

"I'm sorry," the first guy said. "I'm sorry they killed him." I didn't know what he was talking about and I'm sure my expression conveyed that.

"Haven't you heard? Martin Luther King was murdered in Memphis today." I couldn't believe my ears. I stood there frozen. Only my eyes moved and as they did so, going from face to face, they saw confirmation. I wanted to cry and my mind screamed, "No. No. No."

I wanted to choke those words down his throat. My mind wanted to run away. I had never felt so low and alone. There had been times I hadn't felt particularly good about my country but that day, 22 years ago, I came about as close to hating it as one might without actually doing so. I needed air. Out the door, down the corridor and to an open window.

I looked up and there was the "Gold Dome." In its reflection I

saw friendly forests, with friendly paths and friendly forest creatures and a house with a red chimney and a plume of friendly smoke. I remembered the tail-end of a story out of Chicago which had to do with a baseball player who was charged with rigging the outcome of a game.

Joe Jackson was the protagonist's name. He was a baseball player—a hero—and the allegations against he and his team mates had a far reaching effect on baseball. More than that, they had an effect on one of Jackson's loyal fans—a kid named David.

David had followed Jackson's career for all his short life. He had baseball cars and other memorabilia and frequently, he would play hooky from school to go watch the team and his hero play. When he heard what had happened and about the ensuing trail, he went daily to the courthouse to catch a glimpse of his hero to possibly get a chance to approach him and find out the real skinny on what had happened.

Finally, one cloudy afternoon, sitting there on the step of the courthouse he saw Jackson walking alone down the steps, and he ran over to him and took his hand. Jackson paused, looked down at the boy who also had tears in his eyes, and asked if he wanted an autograph. The kid shook his head negatively. Jackson started to walk way by the kid

tugged at his hand and said: "Say it ain't so Joe. Say it ain't so."

I saw Dr. King's face in the gold dome and I remembered the few times I had seen him and heard him speak. I remembered life before he came along and how people like me were not worth a plug nickle and didn't even know it.

I thought about how he had brought a recognizing to who we really were, who we could never be again and who we were. Many times and for many years people asked, on the birth of a black child, "Is you the one?"

He was the one. We all knew it. He had done so much in just thirteen years since the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955. He preached love and not hate. He said "the best thing you can do with your enemy is to make him your friend." I hadn't been raised that way. I was raised to forgive no one, to get even, an eye for an eye. He had started me on the way toward a change and now I was told that he had been murdered.

I said a prayer in my mind asking that what I had been told not be true. "Say it ain't so, God. Say it ain't so." But, like Joe Jackson, God did not.

April 4 had been my birthday; it has not been since that day.

Fitzgerald is a professor of anthropology at the university.