

# Philosophy lecturer seeks state Senate seat

by Stephanie Penner

Frank Beckwith is a dichotomy. On one hand he is a philosophy lecturer specializing in ethics. On the other, he is a Republican state Senate candidate accused of unethical behavior.

Beckwith, who has taught at the university for five years, appears no older than the students who fill his classroom. He dresses in UNLV garb from head to foot; red shorts, white t-shirt, tennis shoes.

Despite his youthful appearance, Beckwith holds a master's and doctorate degree in philosophy from Fordham University and a master's degree in apologetics (the theological aspect of how people defend religious beliefs) from Simon Greenleaf University. He received his bachelor's degree in philosophy from UNLV.

Beckwith is currently the delegate to the Clark County Republican Convention and the National Republican Convention in Houston as well as the chairperson of the Platform Committee. He is the author of four books, numerous scholarly articles and the faculty advisor for Young Republicans and Intervarsity Christian Fellowship.

"I am running for office," Beckwith writes in his campaign brochure, "because I have grown weary of our politicians making

decisions which benefit themselves and their special interest groups rather than the people they claim to represent."

If elected, Beckwith said he will do what is best for the university and will be able to give the school's perspective but he won't be an activist. "I must remember my constituents," he said.

Beckwith, a 1991 nominee for an excellence in teaching award, hopes to bring a higher standard of ethics to the legislature. He said he believes it is possible to put teeth into the state ethics laws.

"I would put professional ethicists on the ethics committee," he said. "Right now there are none. The committee is all business-oriented people. It's like having a medical committee without any doctors."

While Beckwith may be an expert in ethics, it hasn't saved him from recent scrutiny. In early July, Beckwith was accused by Senate District 8 opponent John DuBois of using university stationery to seek campaign contributions from lobbyists. Ten letters on UNLV letterhead were mistakenly mailed.

"Any university personnel member is free to engage in any political activities they wish," said Brad Booke, assistant general counsel. "But university policy prohibits the use of university equipment or supplies."

Beckwith said he erred in late June and corrected the matter a week after the letters were sent out; about a week before DuBois went to the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* with the information.

"A state senator called me a week after I sent the letters and told me what I'd done," Beckwith said. "I immediately reimbursed the university and sent letters of apology to the people who might have gotten them."

According to Beckwith the mistake happened when he was working on two projects at his parents' home. One was university business; writing letters for a philosophy conference in San Francisco in which he is the chairperson. The other was the solicitation of funds for his campaign.

The two different letterheads were mixed up in the printer and because his brother was asked to address and seal the letters, Beckwith never discovered the mistake.

"What hurts me the most," Beckwith said, "is that somebody in my own party (DuBois) is exploiting an inadvertent mistake that I corrected long before he even knew about it. I consider this a desperate attempt by a political has-been to rescue a faltering campaign."

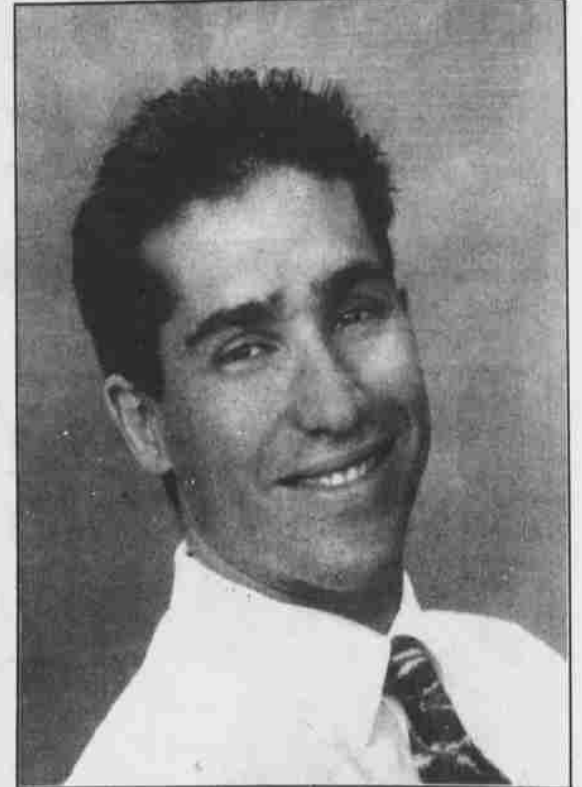
"Keep in mind this is a man who voted himself a 300 percent pension raise and was caught mis-

using state travel funds when he was an assemblyman," he added.

DuBois, a former state legislator trying to make a comeback, asked President Robert Maxson to investigate whether Beckwith has used any other university resources to further his campaign.

David Hintzman, assistant general counsel, investigated the charges brought against Beckwith. "The situation was classified as a personnel matter," Hintzman said, "and it is the university's policy to keep personnel problems confidential." Any actions taken by the university are also confidential, Hintzman said.

Beckwith told *The Rebel Yell* the university found no negligence on his part. Beckwith said the university counsel said the matter was unintentional and inadvertent and because the situation



Beckwith

was given immediate restitution, no university bylaws were violated.

But as a man of ethics Beckwith admits his mistake. "I made a mistake. I'm human," he said. "I don't know what more I can do."

The primary election is Sept. 1 and the general election is Nov. 3 which is also Beckwith's birthday. He will be 32.

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