

February 16, 1993

A missed opportunity

The Student Senate's decision Wednesday to withhold funding to bring Yolanda King to speak at the March 5 "Womyn's Festival" has caused a bit of a stir.

Students—male and female—believe the Senate has not acted in their best interests. Senators are worried that students are not seeing the real reasons for refusing to bring King.

Both are right.

Students have taken offense at the Senate's lame argument that people don't know who King (the daughter of Martin Luther King, Jr.) is. Senators say they "informally polled" students about King and found her identity was unknown to most of those polled. Some students who were present during Wednesday's Senate meeting said they thought senators had probably questioned just younger students, not taking into account the average age of students at UNLV—26.

However, senators made a good point when they said this request had the appearances of the administration using Student Government as a slush fund. According to the Senate, student groups can only receive \$500.

"I don't think it's fair that we give part of the administration \$6,000 and then I look into the face of someone who paid into the pool and say 'you can have only \$500,'" said Sen. James Yohe.

The objection to paying more than its "fair share" is a valid one on the Senate's part. But some of the objections made by the senators—Who's Yolanda King? Saturday's a bad day. "This is rubber stamp treatment"—were not important enough to base this decision on. (One senator actually objected to how small the Student Government logo appeared on the pre-printed fliers for the event.)

It's unfortunate that this decision has cost the campus an important speaker—a speaker it needs to hear.

The above is the opinion of The Rebel Yell. All other inclusions on the opinion page reflect the opinions of the author or artist indicated and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Rebel Yell staff.

\$6,000 for Yolanda King wouldn't have been in students' best interests

BY DAVID TURNER

On Feb. 10, the Student Senate, by a 10-2 vote, refused to allocate \$6,000 and approve a contract that would have brought Yolanda King to this university.

As legislators, we are responsible for the spending of the students' tuition dollar. With the proper information, we are able to make conscious, educated and responsible decisions to obtain the maximum value for that dollar. When the Student Government wastes or improperly spends students' money, then it is time to scrutinize its actions.

However, it was the opinion that this \$6,000, in the given situation, would not have been wisely spent. There is no call for scrutiny in this matter.

There was more than one reason for the failure of this request, for example:

1. The low attendance expected at a non-required Saturday afternoon lecture.
2. Insufficient time for proper promotions/advertisements.
3. Sample polls of undergraduates revealed alarming lack of

recognition of the keynote speaker.

4. In addition to \$6,000, students were contracted to pay for two hotel rooms, meals, air fare/ground transportation.

5. Yolanda King's only prominence is that she is the daughter of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Her speech is only marketed toward women that have degrees that will/may have experienced situations with the fabled "glass ceiling" issue.

What will the expense of \$6,000 for one and one-half hours provide undergraduate students use or benefit of? Some senators expressed their feeling that males might not attend due to the nature of the speech.

The Student Government Executive Board and Senate meeting agendas are posted 72 hours in advance. Undergraduates are especially welcome to voice their concerns with their respective senators prior to the meeting.

David Turner is a student senator for Student Development

Condemnation of King unnecessary

BY DEBRA D. BASS

Everyone seems to have taken a defensive stance on the issue of whether Yolanda King should speak at the "Womyn's Festival." And whether she's worthy of \$6,000 from Student Government.

The Student Senate feels it is suffering undo criticism and students feel they have been cheated out of hearing an enriching, topical speaker. Although both sentiments are justifiable, we seem to be overlooking the key to a peaceful resolution and it is primarily due to the poor diplomatic skills of the Student Senate members.

The senators are basically presenting the argument that Yolanda King is not worth the money. . .

— because some students don't know who she is (let's all try naming last year's Nobel prize winner in science)

— because men may not

want to come see a feminist speaker (most men are either married to or dating someone with a feminist perspective)

and because her only claim to fame is a famous relative (ever heard of Winnie Mandela, Betty Shabazz or anyone with the last name Kennedy).

The money seems to be the biggest factor, not King's credibility. As students, we can understand that a \$6,000 expenditure is a large burden on the budget, but don't belittle us with allegations like King has nothing of significance to say to this campus, or students won't turn out on a Saturday afternoon to listen to her anyway.

The only thing that needs to be said is, "Yes, King is a desirable, worthy and appro-

priate speaker for the Womyn's Festival, but we cannot spare this great expenditure on one speaker." Case closed.

This feeble attempt at discrediting King is only going to offend the multitude of students who might be interested in hearing her.

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Perhaps Student Government should take the initiative and agree to fund a suitable alternative. Or at least show students the many other wonderful and exciting, educational events—which obviously hold precedence over an African-American feminist speaker—our money is being allocated to produce.

Debra Bass is opinion page editor of The Rebel Yell

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor submitted to The Rebel Yell should be 250 words or less in length.

The Rebel Yell strives to publish all student submissions. However, we reserve the right to edit letters as necessary.

Please send letters to:

The Rebel Yell-STS
4505 S. Maryland Pkwy.
Las Vegas NV 89154

Or stop by MSU Room 302.



Student Senate not the students' voice

This is an open letter from one student to the so-called "Student" Senate.

After reading the front page article about funding for Yolanda King to speak on campus in the Feb. 11 edition of *The Rebel Yell*, I called Bud Benneman for a conversation on the issue. The conclusion I reached from these sources is that at least 10 of you are guilty of some grand illusion of moral infallibility.

Surely the Senate had provided funds to organizations that helped support the administration before. Is the support of a student function to be denied if it somehow also makes the school look good? As of right now, your actions make this school look sexist, racist, and plain stupid. Thank you for this action.

Please do not represent yourself as my voice in the matter of King. You are supposed to be the voice of student will, interest and issues. I do not feel some petty, bureaucratic in-fighting represents me or the other students.

As for Sens. James Yohe and David Turner, stop trying to show what big boys you are and stick to the issues. Lisa Zentner was right in trying to bring to UNLV an internationally known speaker the caliber of King.

Are your problems (boys) with the speaker generated because she is female? African-American? Does the fact that this festival uses a "Y" in its name bring fear to your hearts? The whole affair has the stench of little boys trying to keep others out of their sandbox.

As a student that pays into the "pool," I would like to hear King speak. Your fear of women and some stupid bureaucratic politics, should not be the deciding factor.

James Ballard
Department of Sociology

Senate decision shows 'pathetic ignorance'

I am very angered and horrified by the way the Student Government handled the matter of funding Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s daughter, Yolanda King, to speak on our campus in conjunction with the Womyn's Festival on March 6.

Remarks such as, and I quote, "Who wants to hear a dead man's daughter speak?" show a pathetic ignorance about our civil rights movement, not to mention the personal slap in the face to all African Americans and women. This Student Government, as far as I can see, is certainly not working in the best interest of our diverse student body.

Organizers of the Womyn's Festival were under the impression Student Government should enthusiastically participate. We had been informed that funding was already approved and available for an event that is empowering, educational and fun for the community.

They could not even relate to the fact that King was the perfect person to speak at the university in honor of Black Awareness Month and Women's History Month. I feel Student Government is totally out of sync with the needs and wants of the student body and the community, and is instead working on its own ego agenda.

I would like to see this amicably corrected rather than place the organizers of this event in the unpleasant position of having to make public the immature and irresponsible behavior of a Student Government who are clearly an embarrassment to our fine school.

Judith B. Corbisiero
Cultural Committee member
Womyn's Festival

Yolanda King should speak here

"Who is Yolanda King?" This is the question Sen. Scott Fisher cites as the main reason funding was not allotted to bring King to campus. The asking of the question is precisely the reason why King should be brought to UNLV.

The history of this country has been one of exclusion—the exclusion of African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, women, gays and lesbians, the poor, and the list goes on and on. With this exclusion has come the loss of countless voices, experiences and lives.

Today we have the chance to reclaim some of the richness of these lost cultures. We have the opportunity to listen to the words of Yolanda King, African-American feminist. Or shall I say, had the opportunity, because the Student Senate has decided they are not willing to spend one dime to bring an esteemed lecturer, a female of African decent, to this "institution of higher education."

Racism? Sexism? Call it what you will, I call it yet another demonstration of the inability (unwillingness) of this university to grow intellectually, to extend itself multiculturally, to join the movement for equality. Who would King appeal to? Every student who is interested in learning (hum, now there's a new concept). That's who. Perhaps the better question is who wouldn't she appeal to? And why not?

Melissa Monson
sociology