

America's identity crisis results in culture wars

BY LOUISE KLEES-WALLACE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

UNLV got a taste of the "Culture Wars" that have been brewing on campuses across the country when Henry Louis Gates, Harvard professor of humanities, spoke before a full house at the Hendrix Auditorium Monday.

The "war" is being fought by two camps: traditionalists on one side and proponents of multiculturalism on the other. The issue being fought over is America's identity. Some question whether its identity is European, African, Asian or Hispanic and European?

Gates quoted Pat Buchanan in last year's Republican Convention as saying there is a war going on for the soul of America.

"I think there is a sense in which Pat Buchanan was right," said Gates, "but the war is not for the soul of America; the war is the soul of America."

Gates said one of the reasons the debates over multi-culturalism get so heated is because they are always approached as an either/or issue.

"It's always a case of my culture versus your culture, traditionalism versus modernism, Eurocentric versus Afro-centric," he said.

Gates said the solution to all the divisiveness is to include and appreciate aspects of all cultures. "Down with either/or, up with both/and," he said. "We should see multi-culturalism as an anecdote to ethno-centrism and cultural chauvinism."

Gates drew laughter from the audience when he said, "anything that can make Pat Buchanan foam at the mouth can't be all bad."

Gates favors a "plural" education that would involve teaching American history from the perspectives of all the different groups involved instead of what he called the "fantasy of the pilgrim fathers."

He warned that the search for "purity" poses "a greater threat to human decency" than a commitment to multi-culturalism.

"Anxieties flow from desires for cultural purity and cultural preservation," he said. He cited the "ethnic cleansing" being carried out in Bosnia as an example of the end result of a quest for cultural purity.

Gates' lecture was a part of the University Forum Spring Lecture Series.

Accounting professor retires after 30 years

Professor tells of UNLV's maturation from Tumbleweed Tech to University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

BY DONNA BATES
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

A whole lot has changed in the 30 years Reuben Neumann has taught accounting at UNLV.

Neumann, 57, was the honoree recently at a retirement tribute which celebrated a lifetime of devotion and hard work. Approximately 250 colleagues and former students of Neumann's attended the gala.

In reflection of his career, Neumann recalled fond memories and changes the university has undergone since he arrived on campus in 1962.

"What is now UNLV was, in 1962, the Southern Regional Division of the University of Nevada, which later became Nevada University."

Neumann said there was only one dean of the entire university and UNLV was considered a college of the Reno campus. Back then it was a requirement to attend at least one semester at Reno in order to graduate.

Neumann was the first and



Neumann

only accounting professor at UNLV for some time. Neumann said he took the position before he ever set foot in Las Vegas, let alone Nevada.

"I took the job sight unseen," Neumann said. "Dean (William) Carlson flew to Fargo, N.D. and I had to drive 100 miles from Grand Forks to interview at the Fargo airport."

When Neumann arrived in Las Vegas with his wife the university, which was referred to as Tumble Weed Tech, consisted of

about 1,000 students. His first annual contract: \$7,000.

Many of the buildings on campus today are named after Neumann's colleagues from the early days of the institution.

"My colleagues were: Jim Dickinson (James R. Dickinson Library), John Wright (Wright Hall), Bill Carlson (Carlson Education Building), Hank Hendrix (Holbert Hendrix Education Auditorium), Donald Moyer (Moyer Student Union) and Herman Westfall (Westfall Business Services Building)," he said.

Neumann, a staunch Runnin' Rebel supporter, jokingly spoke of the fluctuation in popularity of UNLV's basketball team and faculty ticketing procedures for the games.

"When I first came here, all faculty got two free season tickets. Then when Tark (former basketball coach Jerry Tarkanian) came and the team gained popularity, the faculty could buy season tickets for half price.

"Then we received a 20 percent discount off the full price of admission and later we were

pleased to be able to pay full price for the tickets. Now it seems that faculty should get them free again. The thing has gone the full circle."

Neumann received his Bachelor of Science from Jamestown College in business administration in 1960. He received his Master of Science in accounting in 1962 from the University of North Dakota. And he received his Ph.D. from Arizona State University in accounting in 1974.

He received an award in 1992 for Outstanding Accounting Educator and one in 1985 for Outstanding Accounting Professor. He has published various articles in accounting journals and has been an income tax consultant for a number of years.

Neumann is just beginning to look at what the future has in store for him. He said he is going to enjoy his retirement and not rush into anything immediately.

"One nice thing about being retired, is you don't have to make plans," he said.

Neumann said he would like to go to Europe or Japan one day to teach or start up a tax practice.

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