

31st & Pearl

Words to Remember

David Halberstam, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, died recently in an automobile accident. Halberstam, 73, was famous for covering the Vietnam War and sports, topics that captivated the American consciousness for very different reasons. In a recent speech, Halberstam stated,

The crueler the war [in Iraq] gets, the crueler the attacks get on anybody who doesn't salute or play the game, and then one day, the people who are doing the attacking look around, and they've used up their credibility.

Reflect on Halberstam's statement for a moment. Sure, he was talking about the War in Iraq, but he was also speaking of the evils of fascism and the very real problems that arise when the ability to question authority is removed.

When dissenters speak out, they are inevitably met by attacks from those who make policy but who refuse to provide reasoning, logic, or facts to the public. Eventually, the public realizes just how the authority has been abusing its powers and the tide turns against it.

Look a little closer to home. Look to USM, to the CoB. For nine months, www.usmnews.net and www.usmpride.com have been calling for greater accountability, greater transparency, and greater explanation of policy from CoB administrators, primarily recently-resigned dean Harold Doty, recently-resigned associate dean Farhang Niroomand, Barry Babin, George Carter, Stan Lewis, and Rod Posey.

Facts have been presented. Opinions have been aired. As is usually the case, authority figures have been offended, and these individuals have chosen to lash out at dissenters. Now, the CoB is abuzz with rumors surrounding Doty's resignation. The more the authoritarians lash out, the more they are seen as the automaton bullies they are – robotic, moronic, self-serving, and anti-intellectual.

Their credibility gone, these bureaucrats are left to fight a battle they cannot win. Maybe 20 years ago, they could have contained the facts about their ill deeds. In this, the Age of Information, people from nearly all fifty U.S. states and many foreign countries tune in to this website to learn about academic corruption in the CoB at USM. As the World watches, Halberstam's statement is no truer anywhere than it is in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

31st & Pearl is a series housed at usmnews.net that features commentary on aspects of life in the CoB from a variety of columnists.