

Of capital and conviction

Why Michael Jordan gets no love

In the film *Immortal Beloved*, a woman who was greatly wronged by composer Ludwig Van Beethoven immediately forgave him after listening to his "Ode to Joy". It isn't hard to see why. Who could possibly hate a person who writes music so beautiful, so moving, that it speaks directly to the human heart? You don't have to be an expert in classical music to see the genius in Beethoven's work.

Geniuses like a Beethoven or a Miles Davis often let their work, rather than their actions, speak for who they are and, as a result, are often forgiven for their faults (short tempers, drug habits, etc.). Other geniuses endear themselves to the public, not just through their work, but through their fusion of genius and humanity.

Albert Einstein was not only loved and respected for formulating his theory of relativity but also for, as author Robert J. Sawyer puts it, "his own knight-errant quest to put the nuclear genie he'd made possible back into the bottle".

Muhammad Ali, the Louisville Lip, may have thought he was called The Greatest for his amazing talent as a boxer. What truly made him great, however, was his character — his tenacity, his courage and his strength to stand by his convictions. For refusing to fight in Vietnam on religious and moral grounds, he was stripped of his heavyweight title. He also championed a civil rights cause that sought to give more rights to African Americans.

Why is all this talk of the character of genius relevant today? Well, one of our own twentieth-century geniuses decided to call it quits last week.

Yes, Michael Jordan is a genius. Whatever you may think of

him as a person, it is almost impossible to deny that Michael Jordan is the greatest basketball player who ever lived. His mastery of the game, which was tantamount to dominance, lead many to believe that he is perhaps the greatest athlete of all time.

B.J. Armstrong, once a fellow teammate of Jordan's, put it best by saying of Michael, "He's better than basketball."

One weakness of Jordan's which has come under scrutiny in recent years (*The Globe and Mail*

about whether those who have more talent than the rest of us are obligated to set an example by their actions.

These days people tend to be a little cynical — if the public's apathy towards the whole Monica Lewinsky affair is any indication. In the wake of the O.J. Simpson trial and other scandals involving people in positions to be role models, we are reluctant to hold even the head of the American state to a higher standard than the rest of us.

Michael Jordan should not be crucified for not doing more to help others. Depending on how you look at it, he's probably a better person for supporting causes through mere financial contributions rather than posing as an active, public supporter of causes his heart doesn't really belong to.

Anyone who witnesses injustice has an obligation to speak out against it, but starting a moral crusade, like the one Princess Di did to get rid of land mines, is one's own prerogative.

Is it really Jordan's fault if he isn't a philanthropist by nature? Other extraordinary people like Arthur Ashe, Muhammad Ali and Albert Einstein had strong moral convictions and made important contributions to society by asserting those convictions. Michael Jordan can dunk from the foul line but he doesn't appear to have that inner-desire to right society's wrongs. This is why those guys get love while Mike just gets respect.

At Jordan's retirement press conference, a reporter boldly asked "his eminence" whether he'd spend more of his new found free time doing charity work. Jordan responded affirmatively but added that it is impossible to fix all the world's problems.

Yet it certainly doesn't hurt to try.

KARAN SHETTY

EDITORIAL

ran a full page article on this topic) is his inability to take a stand on moral or political issues. As an individual who single-handedly adds billions of dollars to the world economy each year, Jordan undoubtedly has an enormous amount of power at his disposal, yet you never see him making public service announcements on T.V. His conspicuous silence on the emotionally-charged topic of race relations in the U.S. has led many people to believe that Michael Jordan is nothing but a corporate marketing tool.

In all fairness to Jordan, he probably does donate a lot to charity. His weakness lies in the fact that he doesn't go out and make himself visible, an act which would probably help a lot more than mere financial contributions.

Is Michael Jordan guilty of not using his power and stature to do more to help the community — or does his genius, his awesome God-given talent, excuse him for his faults? Ever since Charles Barkley came out with the "I don't want to be a role model" commercial, the debate rages on

LETTERS

Banks owe nothing

To the editor,

Regarding Shelley Robinson and Andrew Simpson's articles on student loans, I feel I must voice my opinion on this issue.

Both articles comment on student's concerns about how inconsiderate it is of the Royal Bank to have pulled out in New Brunswick, or considering pulling out in Nova Scotia. Banks often get a bad reputation in society and I think it is because people have lost sight with what banks are.

Banks are a business. They are out to make money, like the little corner store or the movie theatre. Banks are not a public service sponsored by the government. They invest in opportunities they think will bring in money for them. No sensible business would enter into a venture where they are guaranteed to lose money... it just doesn't make sense. People would be shocked if a retail store started giving away merchandise for free, however that seems to be what many students ask of banks.

As for making or losing money, I'm sure that the banks do lose money on student loans. I'm positive their overall huge annual profits are a result of other areas within bank. No one is getting rich off student loans.

I'm tired of listening to people complain about how banks are so cold and uncaring. I am in my sixth year of university and I have a substantial student loan. I feel lucky that there is an institution out there willing to take a risk on me so that I can get a good education. They didn't owe it to me. I couldn't have gotten to where I am today without the bank and for that I would like to thank them.

Julie Matthews

Bank on what?

To the editor,

This letter is intended to inform students of problems with the Royal Bank and their treatment of students.

I am a second year student who has jumped through all the hoops, dotted the 'i's and crossed all the 't's and has still not been able to get money into my account from the Royal Bank.

Yes, I have called their student loan centre numerous times, and have been told that "Yes, you have brought in all the necessary paperwork, but we are very busy now and will process your loan as soon as possible". I have spoken with supervisors and sent their complaint centre an email. The Royal Bank needs to stop treating students like second class citizens.

They have a legal obligation to process a student loan within 72 hours of receiving all the paperwork. I have received nothing but hollow promises and excuses.

I cannot emphasize enough how I have been greatly inconvenienced, been misled and have been taken advantage of by this bank. I have had to deal with the strategic incompetence of the Royal Bank for weeks now.

However, I can guarantee that this is one student who will not be treated as a second class citizen. If you are feeling this way also, you are encouraged to contact the Royal Bank at feedback@www.royalbank.com and let them know that abominable treatment of students is unacceptable. We are the future, not an inconvenience.

Leesa Beard

Fighting for grad students

To the editor,

Having recently reported on the CFS conference, I wanted to take the time to report to graduate students in particular on the Canadian Graduate Council (CGC) conference and the Canadian Association of Graduate Students (CAGS) conference, both of which I attended in Vancouver on the week of Dec. 5-12 as a delegate of the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Student (DAGS).

The most interesting (and frightening) event of the week was undoubtedly the anti-Chretien demonstration taking place outside the doors of the Hyatt hotel, where both of these conferences were taking place. I am afraid that out of cowardice and coldness I departed before the standoff between riot police and demonstrators came to a head. But from what I did see, the rally began as a normal one attended by people of all ages and social strata, and degenerated into another chilling example (after APEC) of the government's intention to use excessive brutality to combat popular opposition.

Inside the Hyatt doors, of course, debate was conducted on more civil terms. Most of the discussion at the CGC conference involved different Graduate Student Association (GSA) reps exchanging advice based on our experiences.

The most important issue on the table was how GSAs were building their profile so that they could successfully intervene on behalf of grad students on their campuses and in their communities. Some GSA campaigns involved getting graduate student representation on Boards of Governors and other key government bodies; others involved networking and media activities.

The president of one thriving GSA suggested that addressing more political issues in council has raised their energy level and ensured a better turnout.

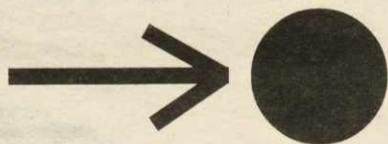
We also discussed how we can form regional coalitions of GSAs so as to give ourselves more leverage provincially and on our own campuses. In this spirit, I spoke with a number of Maritime University GSA reps, including Acadia, Memorial, and University of New Brunswick, about the possibility of forming a Maritime coalition of GSAs.

The CAGS conference was a meeting mostly of deans of Canadian universities; this year it was held along with the meeting of the equivalent American Association. These were partly business meetings, though lots of interesting topics relevant to grad students were discussed. On behalf of DAGS, I would like to thank Faculty of Graduate Studies Dean Ricketts and Associate Dean Wolfe for enabling me to attend both the CGC and CAGS conferences.

In the next few weeks, DAGS will be work-shopping to set our course for the next semester. All grad students who want to hop aboard this process should contact us at DAGS@is2.dal.ca

Suzu Waldman

**PRESS
HERE**



Congratulations!

You have ink on your finger!
If you like the feeling, come and write for
the Gazette, rm 312 SUB, 494-2507

THE DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

editorial board Volume 131, no. 15

Editor-in-chief: Natalie MacLellan • Copy Editor: Greg McFarlane • News: Shelley Robinson • Arts: Avi Lambert and Karan Shetty • Sports: Patrick Blackie • Focus: Brianna Johnston • Science & Environment: Andrew Gillis • Photography: Pascal Languillon • National News: Mark Reynolds and Phil E. Lewis • Opinions: Vanessa Owen • Dalendar: Mufaro Chakabuda • Office Manager: Janet French • Online Manager: Karen Parker • Art Director: William Roberts • Ad Manager: Dallas Shannon

contributors

Sumant Kumar • Daisy Kidston • Mike Davenport • Sally Thomas • Katie Tinker • Luke Dobek • John Elmer • Terry Hawes • Michelle Zurbrigg

Student Union Building, Dalhousie University, 6136 University Ave, rm 312, Halifax, NS, B3H 4J2.
editorial tel. 902 494-2507, facsimile 902 494-8890. e-mail. GAZETTE@is2.dal.ca

For advertising information, call 494-6532 or visit our ad manager, 9am to 5pm daily.

The Gazette welcomes letters to the editor and commentary. All letters will be printed up to four per week. The printing of additional letters will be at the discretion of the Opinions Editor. Letters may be edited for length above 300 words and we reserve the right to edit commentary.

All submissions must be typed double-spaced on paper, e-mailed, or on a Mac or IBM 3 1/2 inch disk, in a WP version not greater than Word 6.0 or equivalent. The deadline is Mondays at 4:30 p.m.

Founded in 1869 at Dalhousie College, the Gazette is Canada's oldest student newspaper. With a circulation of 10,000, the Gazette is published every Thursday by the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society, of which all students of Dalhousie University are members. The Gazette exercises full editorial autonomy and reserves the right to refuse or edit any material submitted. All editorial decisions are made collectively by the staff. To become voting staff members, individuals must contribute to four issues. Views expressed in the Gazette are not necessarily those of the editors or the collective staff. Unless otherwise noted, all text © 1998 the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society. ISSN 0011-5819

99