

Opinion

"It is a newspaper's duty to print the news, and raise hell."

--Wilbur F. Storey,
Chicago Tribune

Grier's Duality

On the fourth floor of Russell House stands the door of Mike Grier, ombudsman. The curious thing about that door which opens onto Grier's suite of offices are the embossed words "University Ombudsman and Counsel."

Ombudsman comes from the old Norse word "umbodhsmadr" meaning a governmental official designated to investigate the complaints of citizens against the government or its functionaries, according to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. Another dictionary gives the definition "representative of the people."

These descriptions certainly fall under Grier's conception of the first part of his title. It is the second part with which we are concerned and thus its relation to the first.

As USC's legal counsel Grier is under the burden of a lawyer-client relationship. His first and foremost obligation in all situations, including those dealing with students, is to represent the interests of the university administration -- his boss.

It is not difficult to imagine a student with a legitimate complaint against the administration walking up four flights of steps to the ombudsman's office and having reached that door, balking at the thought of clearing his chest to someone who might well be his adversary in any litigation that could conceivably ensue.

A case in point might be that of the Chartering Commission hearings last spring when a gay liberation group requested a student charter. Grier participated in the decision process that eventually led to the denial of the gay libbers' request. The original constitution of the group more or less put them in a "promotion" role for their beliefs. According to the South Carolina Code, however, this was thought illegal.

However the gay group modified its proposal such that it would run an organization intended only to educate other students in the gay lib philosophy. Grier again advised the commission not to charter the group.

The question arises: Who is Grier working for in such a situation, the individual student with a complaint or problem, or for the institution and the continuance of the institutional norms?

Another example is the drive of student senator Robert Clarkson to find where student mandatory fees are spent. Grier advised the Student Allocations Commission Thursday not to reply to any of Clarkson's charges since the developments of the last week point to some sort of confrontation between Clarkson and the university in the courts. Does this sound like an ombudsman or a university lawyer? Wouldn't an ombudsman be more likely to be working with Clarkson to cut through some of the university red tape to answer the question of student fee spending, rather than working with an institutional body against him? What we are left with in light of these examples is a prima facie case, as Mr. Grier would put it, of duality of office holding. We suggest he drop one of them, or that the students call for another avenue of bringing their complaints to the administrative ear.

To continue the present system is to get the run around from both ends.

Who Is Who's Who?

Vice President Charles Witten of the student affairs division notified us Thursday of the results of the efforts of the WHO's WHO selection committee. This is not to be confused with "THE WHO'S WHO," a nation wide biographical reference to governmental scientific, media and business VIPs.

The WHOs with which the USC committee was concerned were those students from here WHO by their sterling character and WHO by their contribution to the Carolina Community are listed in the WHO's WHO in American Colleges and Universities.

Sitting on the committee were five administrators, and nine students from different organizations about campus. Of the 38 USC students chosen to be listed, nine of them were predictable those students WHO sat on the committee.

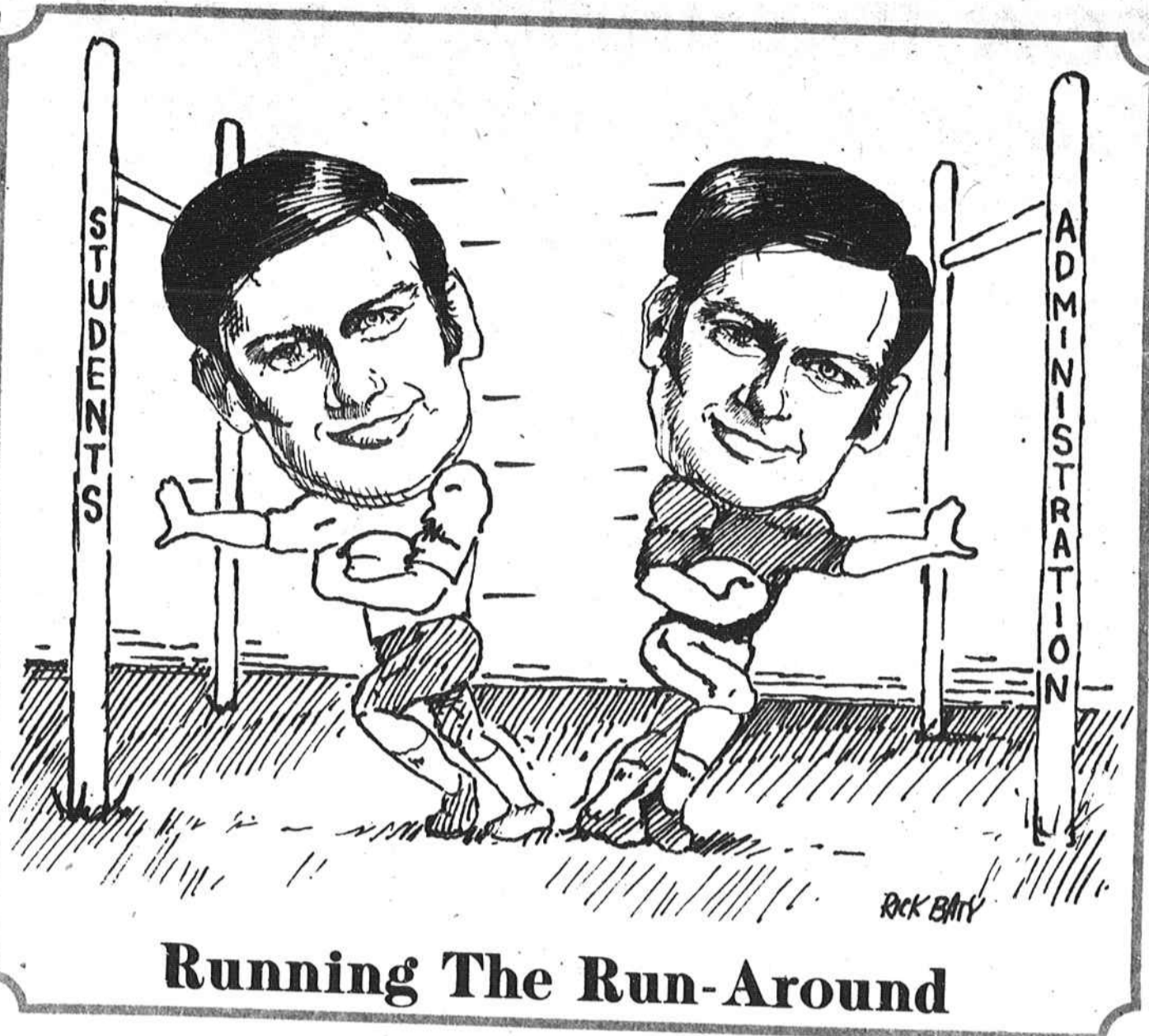
There are two observations to be drawn about this WHO'S WHO syndrome. First, why a WHO'S WHO for college students whose presence at a university is limited to a short time span in the first place and therefore, the validity of the reference angle of a WHO'S WHO is questionable? It is likewise interesting to note that those selected to be WHOS are immediately deluged with offers from the publisher to buy the volume in which their ego is supported at a cut rate price (around \$25).

Secondly the method by which one becomes a WHO is questionable since from past experience the first order of business of the committee is to nominate themselves leaving the remaining selections to be had by those WHO are in good stead with the selectors.

What this whole process of self-flattery leads to is an atmosphere of elitism which is ultimately perpetrated on the outside community when the WHO'S WHO grow up. Logic would dictate if a committee wanted a representative view of WHO the student body considers a leader in the campus community, it might consult that student body.

Elizabeth Clotworthy, dean of residence life WHO likewise sat on the committee gave the most searching comment during one of the committee meetings in favor of perpetuating the institution of WHO'S WHO -- "But you know, it does look good on the resume."

--P.E.T.



Running The Run-Around

Our Mail

No Lights No Operators

TO THE EDITOR:

I find it hard to believe that a school as large as ours has no lighted tennis courts. Those courts we have are not only unlighted, but are otherwise not particularly well-equipped (for example, no practice boards).

With such a great increase of interest in tennis as we have at USC, greater emphasis needs to be placed upon the maintenance of our facilities.

Why not take just a few hundred of the many thousands of dollars allocated for such a barbaric activity as football and put it to better use?

Robert G. Snite

TO THE EDITOR:

Boy, are we mad! A friend of ours was passing through town, and couldn't get hold of us because our lazy campus operators wouldn't get busy and answer the phone, and give him the number! He finally had to call my house long-distance to get my number!

Why doesn't the administration do something about this? I know I'm not the only one who is tired of trying to get someone's number, only to hear the phone keep on ringing because the operators are too busy to answer!

The administration ought to either fire these operators and hire some new ones, or add more operators to the staff.

One day there's gonna be an emergency and no one will know about it because our operators won't answer the phone!

C. J. Foxworth

No Editors

TO THE EDITOR:
I suggest that your staff acquire a dictionary in addition to someone who can edit!

Anthony Sas

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