

E-MAIL
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Viewpoints

QUOTE, UNQUOTE
"It was a very diverse crowd. It wasn't just a black thing. Everyone was out there."
Debra Mitchell,
English senior

The Gamecock
Serving the Carolina Community since 1908

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TAKE OUR WORD

Student turnout silences skeptics

USC deserves a pat on the back. What we thought was going to be a small gathering on Monday's Martin Luther King Jr. Day ended up being a major community event that was 750-strong. The Student Life staff was there to work with student organizers. College of Journalism and Mass Communications Dean Judy Van Slyke Turk was there, and perhaps other deans and professors. Members of the USC Student Government, the presidents of the Association of African-American Students and USC chapter of the NAACP, honor societies, and individual students participated in the event, making it one of the biggest events of this nature at USC in the past several years. Rarely do different races in the USC community work together

TOPIC
USC's participation in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.

OUR OPINION
The turnout was incredible and a true sign of the lives King wanted us to lead.

toward a common goal. It just goes to show that when all areas of the university back an event or goal, it's likely to be successful. *The Gamecock* gives credit where credit is due. On Friday, we were skeptical that many students would get out of bed to participate. However, we hoped that the event would prove that this day off was more than a free day. As the day's theme proclaims and as the participants proved correct, Monday was not a day off, it was a day on. USC students have finally proved that diversity, service and the memory of Martin Luther King Jr. are worth sacrificing apathy. We hope this passion for participation will continue through Student Government elections and into the next semester.

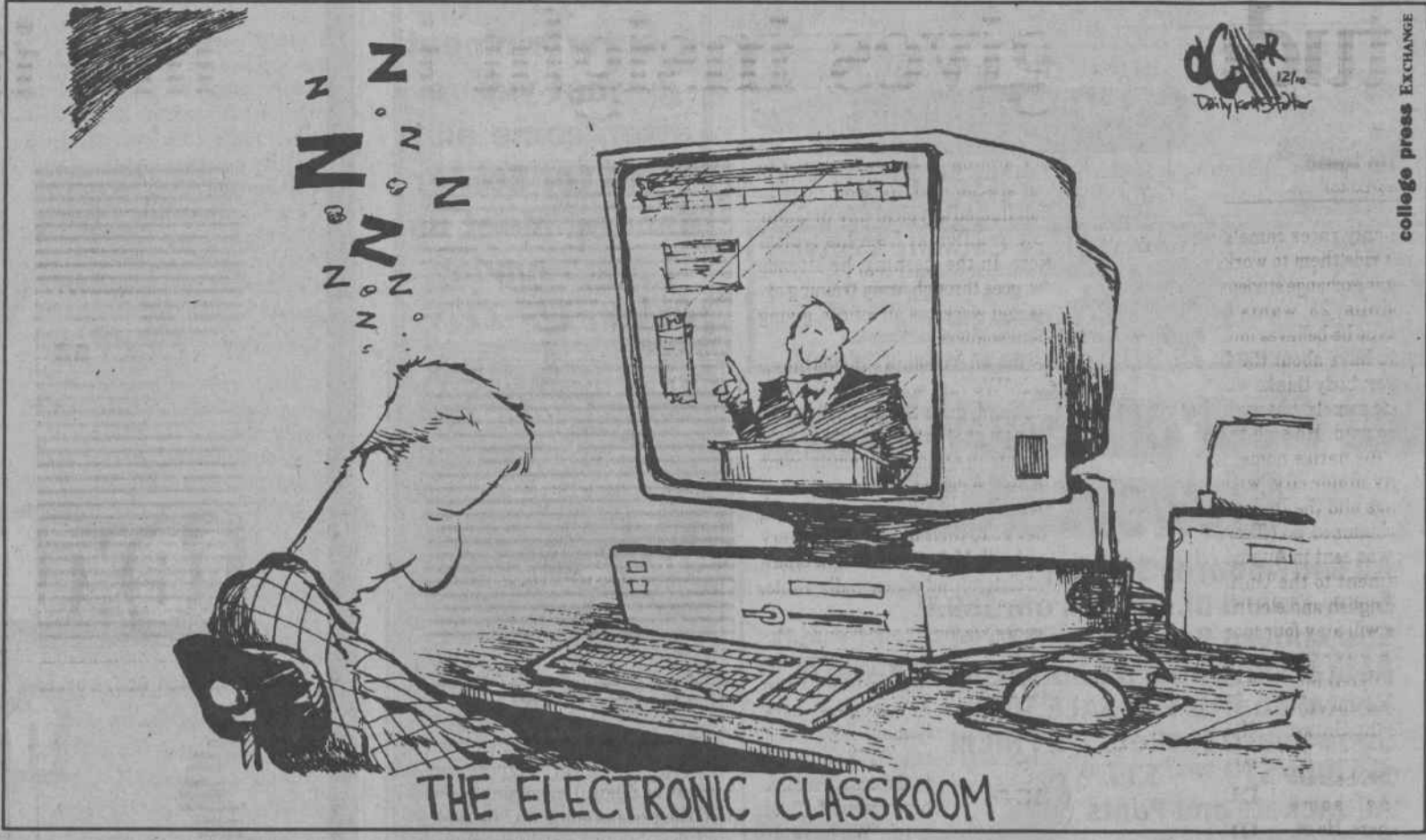
Clinton unfazed by controversy

Some questioned his timing, others the fact he was giving a speech at all (even though it's constitutionally mandated). But President Clinton came out last night with guns blazing in what was the most important speech of his life.

TOPIC
Clinton's State of the Union Address.

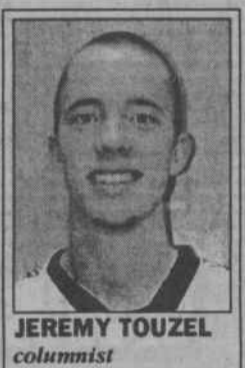
OUR OPINION
With the Impeachment Trial banging over his head, Clinton delivers the speech of his life.

how eloquent or caring, is still being tried for perjury and abuse of power in the U.S. Senate. Clinton's protestations about our successes and his hope for the future were thus marked with an air of surrealism. Here was our president proclaiming the state of our union is as good as it's been in years, while he's so close leaving the office in disgrace. The big question during the speech was whether Clinton would talk about the impeachment trial or anything to do with the Lewinsky scandal. Surprising some, he didn't go near the issue, rising above the scandalous details of his impeachment. Even though he has two years left Clinton acknowledged this could be his last address by giving a farewell of sorts. These last words and the overall theme of hope in his speech showed us how we lost out with Clinton. He could have been one of the greatest, but personal faults and bad decisions have led him and this country down the unfortunate road we're on.



USC outdoes Clemson on service holiday

In the past few months, the Clemson Tigers have had their way with the Gamecock teams in nearly every sport. But as a former Clemson student, I can say from experience that USC's involvement in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service far exceeded that of our in-state rival.



I attended Clemson University as a freshman and decided to participate in the Martin Luther King activities planned by the university. There was a rally and a march from one side of campus to the other. When I got to the rally, I thought I was early because there were only about 200 people, most of whom were not students. Once I realized I was on time, I was shocked to find that I was the only white person

in the crowd. I simply could not believe there were so few people who felt it important to recognize this American hero. The fact that there were no whites other than myself left me feeling disgusted and embarrassed.

So in the days before USC's inaugural Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, I was worried that the apathy, indifference and subtle racism I noticed in Clemson would show up in Columbia. Would the students of USC use the day to catch up on sleep? Would there be diversity among the people who did choose to participate?

When I arrived at the Russell House at 9 in the morning, I was shocked to see hundreds and hundreds of students of different races and nationalities. As I looked around, I saw young and old, big and small, black and white, as well as every color in between. It was a wonderful sight to behold. At one point during our march to the Martin Luther King Jr. Park behind Five Points, the marchers extended from the intersection of Pickens and Greene streets to the railroad tracks at Five Points!

After the march, we were split into groups and transported to various com-

community service sites. My group went to Denny Terrace Elementary, where we worked on a recycling project, cleaned the campus and restored an overgrown nature trail. The diversity of our group was amazing; Chinese, Russian, Philippine, African and European descendants worked together for the benefit of the community. In all, there were more than 650 volunteers who made the inaugural event a success.

We, as a society, are closer than ever to the vision in King's dream, yet there's still racism in communities, discrimination in the workplace and prejudice in the federal justice system. Even in 1999, as advanced and smart as we have become, there are steps we need to take. Here at USC, there are still all-white and all-black fraternities and sororities, and there are still students who aren't willing to learn how different,

yet how similar, we all are. We make jokes about Clemson's backward ways, but the same can be said about our university in this situation.

Two years ago at Clemson, I felt alone with little hope for the future. After Monday, I feel confident that we are making progress to fulfill King's dream. We should live King's dream every day of the year, not just the third Monday in January. So the next time you hear a racist joke, don't laugh. The next time you see an act of prejudice, don't ignore it because ignoring it won't make it go away. And next year, wake all of your friends who slept late on Monday, because the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service is a day on, not a day off.

King's vision carried out through service acts

The voice still echoes. It flows over every plain, through every valley and over every mountain across this nation.



"Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi, from every mountainside, let freedom ring!"

Even today, the words of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. vividly capture the hearts and consciences of the American people. That urgent, penetrating echo still challenges the emotions and feelings that every American possesses.

Many people know the basic story of King's life. As a Southern preacher, King was a leader in the struggle against the injustice of racial segregation during the '50s and '60s. From a boycott in Montgomery to a march to Selma to a

prophecy at the Lincoln Memorial, his leadership provided the needed catalyst to end the immoral precedent set by Plessy vs. Ferguson.

However, the means by which King carried out his goals serve as his service to humanity and demonstrate his greatest quality as a human. Unlike many other leaders throughout history who sought to achieve success through violent means, King promoted social protest through nonviolent resistance.

In King's article "Nonviolence and Racial Justice," he outlined the effectiveness of nonviolence used by Gandhi in India. Without the use of physical aggression, King's protesters bravely resisted injustice, while his method served to gain the fellowship and empathy of white segregationists.

Finally, King writes, "At the center of nonviolent resistance stands the principle of love. To retaliate with hate and bitterness would do nothing but intensify the hate in the world."

Love for fellow mankind was King's essential message to his followers and their oppressors. In the shadow of the Great Emancipator, Lincoln, King delivered the "I Have A Dream" speech on Aug. 28, 1963. In this well-known speech, he created the formula for a loving bond of understanding and acceptance between whites and blacks.

"The only way our nation can harness the optimism of old is through increased community involvement."

Yet, King's message of hope kept his followers faithful to the cause of justice. Despite the backlash from whites during the civil rights movement, King never surrendered. His determined will inspired the people to continue the cause even past his death. Our society could certainly follow the example of King today. A sense of hope for the future serves as America's greatest asset to its people and the world. Yet, poll after poll from this decade finds that a majority of Americans believe their children's futures are not bright. The decline of the middle and working classes along with continued racial inequalities buries the optimism shared by earlier generations in our history.

Today, Americans too often work to achieve only goals of self-interest instead of those of the community. Simply, communities across the country no longer serve as the cohesive building blocks of a positive society. The only way our nation can harness the opti-

mism of old is through increased community involvement.

Certainly, the turnout for the MLK Day of Service provided needed encouragement: nearly 750 students committed themselves to community service despite the early start and threat of storms.

The MLK Day of Service re-emphasizes what we as a society have to do to solve our problems. Through his subjective leadership, King fought against the accepted injustices of his day. Now, Americans should also refuse to accept racism as reality and rebel against injustices today by aiding their communities.

Finally, I overheard others on Monday discussing the legacy of King. So, what is the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.? Simply, he was a martyr whose patriotic dream allows us to truly be the leader of the free world. In other words, King was the greatest American ever to live.

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The Gamecock is the student newspaper of The University of South Carolina and is published Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the fall and spring semesters and five times during the summer with the exception of university holidays and exam periods. Opinions expressed in *The Gamecock* are those of the editor or author and not those of The University of South Carolina. The Board of Student Publications and Communications is the publisher of *The Gamecock*. The Department of Student Media is the newspaper's parent organization.

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SUBMISSIONS

Reader prays for columnist

To the Editor:
I read Erin Reed's column in the Jan. 13 issue of *The Gamecock*, and I was appalled by all her comments.

I really feel sorry for her that she will never know God's grace in her life. That she will never know a real peace. If you try to run your own life without God's guidance, you will always be running into a brick wall.

I will pray for her and hope that someday she can say she was wrong.

Kaye Coble
Parking Services

Hodges could learn from JFK

To the editor:
As I read Corey Ford's reaction to last week's inaugural address by James Hodges, all I could do was shake my head in disagreement. It just blows my mind that anyone in his right mind

could compare James Hodges to John F. Kennedy, especially in the aspect of delivering speeches.

James Hodges delivered one of the most boring, uneventful speeches I have ever heard. It was obvious that sections of his speech were labeled "pause," so the audience could applaud, but the audience was not clued in to these "clap lines," and did not always feel the need to applaud at those times; maybe because they had already fallen asleep or tuned him out.

The thing that made Kennedy great was that he used motivational speeches to instill excitement in his audiences,

and he implored citizens to do more for their country during a historical time.

James Hodges simply read a bunch of pointless stories about irrelevant people, while covering a long list of all the people he wanted to thank. James Hodges' acceptance speech was in no way comparable to anything related to Kennedy because it lacked the enthusiasm and excitement that surrounded Kennedy and his administration.

M. D. Princi
Political Science Junior