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IN OUR OPINION

Will nominee really spell disaster for civil liberties?

Opponents of President Bush's latest nomination for the Supreme Court are probably overreacting when they voice fears about a right-leaning court that could threaten to overturn such landmark decisions as *Roe v. Wade*.

Washington politicians are now bracing for a brawl over Samuel A. Alito Jr., President Bush's new nominee to replace swing-voting Sandra Day O'Connor on the Supreme Court.

Harriet Miers, the president's counsel and his initial high court nominee, drew ire from both sides of the political spectrum before she withdrew last week, but the president's latest selection has hard-line conservatives cheering in the aisles. And it has Democratic leaders such as Senate minority leader Harry Reid foaming at the mouth.

With a man like Alito — who some lawyers have nicknamed "Scalito" because, they say, his opinions closely resemble those of conservative Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia — on the court, it's only a matter of time before hard-earned civil liberties come under fire.

But there's not much evidence to support that assumption. As a judge in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd circuit, Alito dealt with abortion rights issues in what has suddenly become a closely scrutinized case — and dissented that a woman should tell her husband before getting an abortion. On no occasion has he ever called for the overturning of the *Roe v. Wade* decision. On the contrary, his reputation as a strict constructionist indicates that he likely would never square off against such an important precedent.

And it should also be noted that while the judge has been likened to Scalia, his keen legal mind and pedigree (he graduated from Princeton University and Yale Law School) have prompted comparisons to newly appointed Chief Justice John Roberts.

While Alito is obviously qualified for the job, it's unfortunate that President Bush seems more concerned with mollifying his constituency than reaching out to moderate Democrats in the interest of greater national unity.

Scalito because, they say, his opinions closely resemble those of conservative Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia — on the court, it's only a matter of time before hard-earned civil liberties

While Alito has been likened to Scalia, he has also drawn comparisons to Roberts.



Cartoon courtesy of KRT Campus

Professors wield deadly monotony in lectures

Bring edge, flair back to class, toss out those humdrum PowerPoints

Here's a tip for professors: When the Gamecocks beat a team they haven't beaten in 12 years, at a place they've never won at, the victory makes a good talking point. It can wake students up.

But oh, no, no, we can't deviate from the syllabus. No talk of sports, or the real world, is allowed.

Recognize this? A professor's giving a PowerPoint presentation and reads the slides word for word, like riding a bike with nothing but training wheels. No deviation is allowed.

Then the day comes when we have to give a presentation. Here it comes:

"Remember guys, nothing is more boring to your audience than reading your slides verbatim. Don't do it, or I'll dock major points."

I want to stand up and scream some wordless profanity at the top of my lungs. You sick bastard.

Some professors try to phone it in. They think their knowledge is enough to sustain life in the classroom; not true. I want Bill Nye, not Albert Einstein. Show me what you have to show me, but do it with some humanity. Don't act like we didn't just beat Tennessee. Be a man. Be a fan. Try to relate



STEVEN VAN HAREN
Fourth-year mechanical engineering student

to class. I hate professors so business-minded and anal about the holy sanctum of the classroom that they run things like a well-oiled funeral. They smirk gamely at a joke but try immediately to make the old switcheroo back to the self-constructed monotony at hand.

Most students try to keep up. Usually, things aren't so bad. But profs should try to keep the engine thrumming.

This is not retaliation for any bad grades I might've gotten. I'm not one of those whiny jerks who screams, "He GAVE me a bad grade!" No matter how boring the class, most students always come away with something.

Want an idea of how good a prof can be? Sign up for History 111 (U.S. history to 1865) and accept no one other than Mark Smith. He made my fall 2004 semester much more enjoyable.

He can spin a good yarn, loves history and can crack a joke with all the dry wit one would expect from a Brit. He's unfailingly polite but not devoid of edge. He's not some fluffy, stuffy windbag.

With advanced warning of

substitutes, half the class wouldn't show up. On the last day of class, most of us stood and clapped. I swear. It was like "Mr. Holland's Opus." A round of applause for almost anyone else would be completely undeserved. The room doesn't burst into spontaneous applause for some humorless, player-piano regurgitator.

Yeah, it's butt-kissing. I'll kiss the rosy cheeks of anyone who makes me want to learn.

And then, there's the "other" guy. Let's call him Professor X, for libel's sake. We've all had him.

This guy was great when I had him last year. I'll bet he's completely unaware USC has a football, let alone that we beat a super-trained team of hicks Saturday. He wore the exact same clothes every day. No deviation.

One day, as a buddy of mine walked into class, he tried to crack a joke with Professor X.

"Please take your seat," he said with no trace of a smile. I can think of nothing that would be funnier than tossing a coconut cream pie into his face and watching his reaction.

Bring the world into the classroom, profs. Don't kill students with a soulless PowerPoint ballet.

Thank you, Rosa Parks, for fighting first battle

She inspired millions, made history during '50, '60s movement

Some say the civil rights movement started at the end of Reconstruction international recognition in the 1950s and 1960s. Others believe it began in the 1950s and 1960s.

I believe both accounts have merit and logic. There is no denying, however, that

Dec. 1, 1955, is an important date in the civil rights movement as well as in the history of the United States.

It was on that fateful day in December that Rosa Parks boarded a bus in Montgomery, Ala., and subsequently refused to give her seat to a white passenger.

Because of her refusal, Mrs. Parks, also known as the mother of the modern-day civil rights movement, was arrested that day.

Ironically, Mrs. Parks had been thrown off a bus a decade before (by the same driver) because she'd refused to enter through the back.

The date, Dec. 1, 1955, became famous in civil rights history because of the heroes that followed in Mrs. Park's footsteps.

It was at this point in history that the Revs. Ralph Abernathy and Martin Luther King Jr. rose to national attention because of their work in organizing the Montgomery bus boycott.

More importantly, the average African-American citizen living in Montgomery became crucial to the campaign for civil rights because of the sacrifices that 90 percent of them made by using taxis, carpooling and even walking for longer than a year until the country's highest court declared that the segregation of Montgomery's transportation system was unconstitutional.

As a result, the civil rights movement soared to unforeseen heights. Having witnessed the great accomplishment in Montgomery, disenfranchised people worldwide became empowered, and many others empathized. Soon there were sit-ins and protests all over this country — and it was all because of the efforts of this one courageous lady.

At the age of 86, Rosa Parks made history again when she was honored with the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor from former President Bill Clinton. Mrs. Parks died Oct. 24 at the age of 92. Since her death she has become the first lady selected to lie in state in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol where a crowd of 30,000 young, old, black, white, famous and not-so-famous people waited to make their goodbyes.

Today, flags fly at half-staff as we honor her on the date she will be buried in Detroit next to her husband.

It is because of Mrs. Parks' efforts that many people of color and/or humble beginnings have been able to etch out their own places in history. For this reason, I would like to say thank you, Mrs. Parks, for making the world a better place for me. You will not soon be forgotten.



STACY GREGG
Fourth-year interdisciplinary studies student

IT'S YOUR RIGHT

Exercise your right to voice your opinion. Create message boards at www.dailygamecock.com or send letters to the editor to gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu



CORRECTIONS

If you see an error in today's paper, we want to know. E-mail us at gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu.

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Davis makes light of Libby's indictment

Reading Monday's issue of *The Gamecock*, I was horrified by Jacob Davis' attempts to downplay the Plame affair in his column "Beating Bush, cronies can't save Democrats."

For readers unfamiliar with the controversy, let me explain it: The Bush administration tried to justify its war in Iraq with falsified documents about Saddam getting uranium from Niger; after investigating the matter for the CIA, Joseph Wilson revealed to the American public that the documents were forgeries; in retaliation, the Bush administration allowed Bush adviser Karl Rove and Cheney chief of staff Irve "Scooter" Libby to leak the secret identity of

IN YOUR OPINION

Wilson's undercover CIA agent wife, Valerie Plame, to the press.

Libby has now been indicted on related charges, and Rove's fate will probably be similar.

Davis plays damage control in his article. First, he idiotically assures his readers that "you can get anyone indicted for anything." Having already been indicted three times this week myself for an assortment of reasons, I totally agree. And, as of my writing this, it's only Tuesday, so I expect four or five more indictments by Sunday. Sometimes my friends and I indit each other just for the hell of it. Christ.

Second, Davis pretends Libby's indictment is no big deal because Libby is only "Cheney's Chief of Staff." He places "Chief of Staff" in

quotes, like he's deploying it ironically or something.

Jacob, here's a fun fact: The vice president's chief of staff isn't "the guy who picks up the VP's dry-cleaning." He isn't "low-level government personnel." Surprisingly enough, he's nearly as high up as one can get. Irve Libby has worked with Dick Cheney for about 20 years. He's like family to Cheney. His indictment is damning because Cheney likely knew what his buddy Scooter was up to.

MITCH FRYE

Third-year graduate student in American literature

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Online Poll

Do professors need to do more to engage students during class?