Lending a Hand: Construction nearly spoils senior year

Construction sucks. It does. This year my room was probably the worst place to live on campus because there’s now a “pod” right on top of it. I cannot see out past the lovely gray cinder blocks that the construction workers have slammed down so diligently.

Last summer, I listened to both presentations on construction and reassurances that it would not start until 8 a.m. each morning. That was the biggest bunch of crock I have ever heard. I have been woken up to the sounds of a construction worker cutting down and shredding trees at 5:59 a.m. I am convinced that this is why people grow! Granted, this didn’t always happen, but occasionally I would get up around 7:30 a.m. anyway, so this wasn’t too big of a deal. But heavy morning noise if I wanted to sleep in one day. I was lucky, I could forget sleeping at any time during the day because it just wouldn’t happen. Or maybe I wanted to sleep in on a Saturday. Nope, they apparently work on Saturdays too, and their favorite spot is outside my window.

I am paying a fair amount of money to live here. I feel as though Rider should be cutting me a break for dealing with this all year. It should suck it up and do something for those of us who live around the construction, as our quality of life has really been unbearable over the past couple months.

Not a day goes by that I am not awoken to the sounds of pounding, sawing, drilling and hammering. My bed shakes as they connect the future hallway of the pod into the wall my headboard faces. In fact, as soon as I leave, my room will most likely be junked and the hallway will be built.

So yes, whoopsie. The pods will be great places to live, I am sure. However, I will not be here if I want to sleep in one day! If I were sick, I could forget sleeping at any time during the day because it just wouldn’t happen. Or maybe I wanted to sleep in on a Saturday. Nope, they apparently work on Saturdays too, and their favorite spot is outside my window.

The Explained Issues: Conservatives claim suppression

Research suggests that 72 percent of faculty members at American colleges and universities lean to the left, politically speaking. Conservatives complain that their free speech is suppressed on college campuses across the country because of the large population of liberal thinkers in colleges. ABC anchor Charles Gibson introduced this movement by saying that he saw “too much” suppression of conservative thought on campus in the past. Therefore, he called “war on speech.”

ABC correspondent Dan Harris reported, “Many academics say conservatives are blowing a few isolated incidents way out of proportion in order to launch a McCarthy-esque witch hunt, which is designed to intimidate professors, limit academic freedom and promote a sort of affirmative action for conservative professors.”

Yet, “many academics” were not included in the report. Harris stated an example of the conservatives being threatened at Foothill Junior College, “where a freshman, Ahmad Al-Qoushi, who edits the journal Strategic Insights at the Naval Postgraduate School, read Al-Qoushi’s essay and said that it was “an incredibly poorly written, error-ridden, papalum-filled essay that essentially

ly ignores the question put forth by the instructor.”

The conservatives’ claim that their free speech is suppressed because more people happen to be liberal thinkers at colleges is absurd. Regardless of the political affiliation of a college, everyone has the freedom to have his or her own opinions. It just so happens a large majority of American universities are homes to liberal arts colleges. Conservatives claim that they are being dominated by liberal thinkers in the classroom, but the college classroom is supposed to be a safe learning environment where one can freely express his or her own views. It is understandable that conservatives could feel uncomfortable expressing their views in the classroom. Professors should not be using their classrooms to push their own political agendas. Discussions should be left up to the students.

Conservative students who feel that their school and its faculty are too liberal can always transfer if they’re too uncomfortable expressing their views in the classroom. But it seems that the conservatives are starting this movement against mostly liberal colleges just because they are frustrated by the fact that they can’t change the way other people think. If this is indeed the case, then this movement is a losing fight for the conservatives in the United States.

The World Observer: Cochran deserves praise

Arguably one of the most important lawyers of the 20th century, the legendary defense attorney Johnnie Cochran Jr. passed away a few weeks ago.

Cochran’s death received widespread coverage on the day that he died, but his legacy was overshadowed by the deaths of both Terri Schiavo and Pope John Paul II. One should take a stroll down memory lane and look at the many lives Johnnie Cochran touched.

Undoubtedly, Cochran will be remembered primarily for his role on the defense team for the O.J. Simpson case. After all, most people can quote Cochran’s own words, “If it doesn’t fit, you must acquit.” Besides his crowning victory in the Simpson case, Cochran also represented Elmer “Geronimo” Pratt in a battle to gain his rightful innocence for a murder he did not commit. Twenty-seven years later, and with the help of Cochran, Pratt gained his freedom. Cochran, on the release of Pratt, exclaimed, “[It’s] the happiest day of my life practicing law.”

Yet, Cochran did so much more during his life. He was a champion for victims of police abuse. Cochran also worked on cases where clients had their civil rights violated. Most of all, he cared about fighting for the common man. Cochran stated, “The clients I’ve cared about the most are the No Js, the ones nobody knows.” He also emphatically believed in the Martin Luther King Jr. quote that said, “An injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Nancy Grace, a former co-host with Cochran, remarked, “He won my respect. Before then, I wouldn’t give defense attorneys the time of day.” The Rev. Al Sharpton added to the outpouring of praise for Cochran when he stated, “Johnnie was to this era what Thurgood Marshall was to the era before him.” Los Angeles city Mayor James Hahn said, “He didn’t love justice or admire justice— he did justice, he fought for justice, he made it happen.” Most fittingly, Jesse Jackson pointed out that Cochran was “the tallest tree in our legal forest. The national stage did not make Johnnie, it revealed him.”

Diagnosed with an inoperable tumor in December 2003, Cochran died March 29, 2005, at the age of 67. Cochran was the first to admit, “It was the knowledge that put me squarely in a position to make a difference. And that was precisely the reason I became an attorney.” Most of all, as Cochran explained in his book, A Lawyer’s Life, it was the Simpson case that “gave me the platform to try and change some of those things that needed to be changed in this country.” Indeed, Johnnie Cochran lived a life dedicated to the pursuit of justice for all. Overshadowed? Possibly, but the life and legacy of Johnnie Cochran stand alone as a testament to and a reminder of his significance and importance.