

# INbasket

## Stage Presence

Christine Yackel's article "Stage Struck" (Spring 2003) inspired me to comment on the excellence of the presentations at the Syracuse Stage and the Archbold Theatre and on the unique partnership between Syracuse Stage and the SU Department of Drama.

I return to campus several times a year for WAER and Library Associates activities and for SU sports events. In March, I saw Syracuse Stage perform Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. Two days following, I attended the drama department's production of Shakespeare's *Othello*. Each was excellent and stood on its own merits, but to have both in the same building and running simultaneously was wonderful beyond any theater-goer's dreams. Most memorable was witnessing the Syracuse student performers delivering *Othello* lines with such gusto throughout one of Shakespeare's more difficult works. I was thrilled to be in Syracuse to see two of English literature's best plays performed so professionally.

In an age of dumbed-down, commercialized productions, it is truly uplifting to know there are still theaters doing the classics in such authentic ways and that two are—Bravo!—at my alma mater.

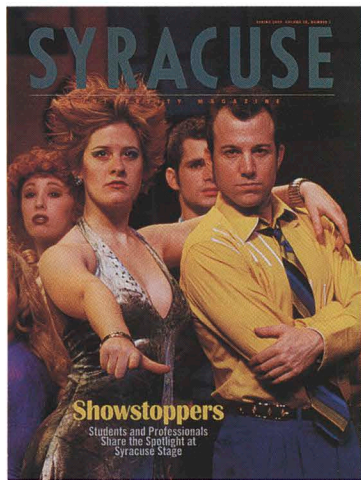
Robert G. Ortwine '72  
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## Recognize Individuals

It was disappointing to learn that Syracuse University submitted a friend of the court brief to the U.S. Supreme Court supporting college quotas (Quad Angles, Spring 2003). This University sadly tends to worship politically correct dogma at the expense of individuals.

The support for quotas—the term we should be using as opposed to the biased, loaded term "affirmative action"—is on shaky ground. Set aside the patronizing view that blacks need a jury-rigged system to find success. Forget the immorality of taking a cam-

pus spot from an achiever who is more than the color of his skin, so it can be presented to a middling student in the name of "diversity." Ignore the tremendous gains in black-earning power since



desegregation. Disregard divisive leaders such as Jesse Jackson who reinforce negativity by blaming an allegedly oppressive country for problems properly remedied with sweat and study. And look past the delusional view that 18th-century inequalities contribute to the economic disparities of the 21st.

The most distressing thing about the University's stance is the obsession with race. What this school does not seem to understand is that every student who attends SU, including whites, is an individual who brings unique perspectives and experiences to class. We need to commit to bringing together the most talented and brightest kids, instead of attempting to have as many hyphenated Americans on campus as possible. Unfortunately, the same issue of the magazine contained a feature story ("A Multitude of Voices") that detailed the school's attempt to improve faculty diversity. Instead, shouldn't Syracuse be focusing on improving faculty quality?

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Syracuse University supports affirmative action in collegiate admissions as a way to achieve a diverse educational environment that will benefit all students. The value the University places on recruiting a diverse student population is at the very core of its institutional mission to prepare students to understand, live among, and work in an inherently diverse country and world made up of people with different backgrounds and cultural traditions. By promoting a culturally and socially diverse climate, SU supports the*

*development of each and every member of its community. The University does not support so-called "quotas."*

## Civil Obedience

This is in response to "Is Civil Disobedience a Form of Terrorism?" (Perspectives, Spring 2003) by Professor Don Mitchell, who calls for civil disobedience in answer to the USA PATRIOT Act. The First Amendment also allows for "the willingness of the audience to hear the message, and also protects audiences that are unable to avoid messages." Thus, it would seem that, as in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the antiwar protesters who blocked streets and entrances to public buildings and workplaces were running afoul of the First Amendment, in that "audiences" trying to go to class, attend concerts or lectures, or even go to work were unable to avoid the "message."

Today, we again see protesters blocking public roads, buildings, and workplaces. One is hard-pressed to excuse this interference with the rights of the public by attacking the PATRIOT Act, a hard-hitting response to the despicable 9/11 attacks on the American public.

Civil disobedience may be considered by some as a legitimate means of protest, but it inevitably tramples on the right of the majority to avoid the message.

For the greater good, common sense would dictate that the security, safety, and rights of the majority supersede any "right" to illegal protest and confrontation that may hinder the public safety in any way. Political dissidence in America is alive and well. The PATRIOT Act in no way restricts the peaceful, lawful exercise of anyone's free speech. It merely gives police and firefighters, first defenders against another terrorist attack (or even a major accident or fire), another tool with which to protect the public safety.

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