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13 January 1993

Dear Mr Lamb,

One is struck, when viewing a C-Span program with call-in feature, by the number of callers who prefix their remarks with "Thanks" for C-Span and, often enough, a kind personal word for Brian Lamb.

In all this I concur, very heartily, adding the hope that,-- if the C-Spans depend for support on the rest of the cable industry, they do not lose support by drawing audiences away from the considerably less worthy product the rest of the industry usually offers.

What finally got a letter out of me was the time and attention devoted to Oxford, that I was prepared to "pooh-pooh" when I first stumbled across it, and then stayed to cheer.

For self-promotion, I'll enclose a bit of an essay published when women were still barred by the terms of the Rhodes will. Within a year the terms were altered, but I will not claim (as an Oxonian might,) post hoc, propter hoc !

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

The Observer's Sounding Board of Current Opinion

Compiled by Terence F. Shea

◆ These varied points of view are selected from scholarly journals, public statements, and publications here and abroad.

Where Are Women's Protests Of the Rhodes Scholarships?

Every year 32 American males are chosen for scholarships that are called "among the most prestigious awarded to college graduates." These are the annual Rhodes Scholarships, for two years' study at England's renowned Oxford University. The grants have been given to graduates in 18 countries since 1902, under the will of Cecil Rhodes, the British empire builder who made his millions from South Africa's mines when that country was but one of England's numerous colonies.

Late last year the list of U.S. winners was once again announced by the Rhodes Scholarship office at Connecticut's Westleyan University. And again, as in every year since 1902, there was not one woman among the chosen.

Not because they have lacked the brains or other attributes necessary to qualify. It is just that the terms of Mr. Rhodes' will specifically declare that the scholarships shall be awarded only to "males, unmarried, between the ages of 18 and 24," who are U.S. citizens, domiciled here, and who have attained a certain scholastic standing. Where, to confront this sorry situation, are the woman activists?

Not only are these basic guidelines sexist in the extreme and totally at odds with the Fourteenth Amendment and the whole thrust of America's equal-opportunity statutes, but they also run counter to Federal and state laws barring discrimination because of age.

Legalities aside, Rhodes' whole concept of "male only" scholarships is unworthy of so ancient, renowned, hallowed, and, yes, revolutionary an institution as Britain's Oxford University.

This is the institution that challenged and curbed the powers of kings (Provisions of Oxford, 1258—a scheme of governmental reform—forced upon Henry III by British barons and that sought to limit taxing powers); this institution produced such women's champions as Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst and spawned the Fabian Society, which subsequently gave birth to the egalitarian Labor Party.

Apart from the legal challenge to American participation in the Rhodes male supremacism, there are other methods of protest available. Perhaps in the interests of all Americans, 16 of this year's recipients might consider voluntarily giving up their places in protest. Certainly something has to be done to demonstrate that even though Cecil Rhodes was a Victorian male chauvinist of the worst kind, America's crop of young manhood refuses to perpetuate his antiquated values.

—From an essay by [redacted] lawyer and author of [redacted] a book on the Fourteenth Amendment.

The "Observer" (a Dow Jones weekly) expired some years ago