

Lawless case hurts American

To the Editor:

I have another feeble fable on the ATL issue for Mr. Baldori, one which I suspect from reading his views in last Wednesday's State News he has not been informed of. I think he should have the information, as should any other interested parties, including especially those American Studies majors who will be taking AMS 411 during winter term.

For the past year I have been executive secretary of the American Studies Committee which administers the American Studies interdisciplinary program in the College of Arts and Letters. One of my functions in this capacity has been to recruit faculty to teach the six American Studies courses offered each year. The main source for faculty has been the ATL Dept., and for this reason, among others, professor T. B. Strandness serves as a member of the committee.

The recruiting procedure has been to send out a blanket request for course proposals to the faculty of the university at large, then to go over the submitted proposals in committee to determine which are suitable and for which course level (i.e., the 300 level, intended for non-majors, or the 400 level, required for junior and senior American Studies majors).

The committee met late last winter term to choose the faculty for the 1966-67

school year. I chaired that meeting. We went over each proposal carefully and managed to choose six faculty members without a single dissenting vote. Among the six was Robert S. Fogarty, whose proposal we felt was well suited for the 400 level series. There was some discussion, introduced by myself, of the fact that Mr. Fogarty did not as yet have his Ph.D.; but since his dissertation was completed and in the hands of his major professor, so that the degree seemed imminent, and since Prof. Strandness was willing, nay, eager to vouch for his qualification ("A good man! A good man!") the committee voted unanimously to let him teach our advanced majors along with Dr. Don Hausdorff of ATL and prof. Gilman Ostrander of History.

During spring term, Dr. Strandness was asked in his capacity as ATL Dept. chairman to release five of his faculty members to teach American Studies courses this year. . . the same five which included Mr. Fogarty. Dr. Strandness granted the releases without once calling up doubts concerning the qualifications of any of the five.

The courses were set up, and are proceeding, and Mr. Fogarty will teach AMS 411 to a class of American Studies majors next term. There has been no suggestion from any member of the American Studies Committee (we met Wednesday, Nov. 17 and all members were

present, including Prof. Strandness) that Mr. Fogarty or any other of our faculty members in unqualified for any reason to teach his assigned course. No one asked Dr. Strandness his opinion, perhaps someone should have; but clearly, if he felt that Mr. Fogarty is unqualified -- and if he is unqualified to teach ATL, his qualifications to teach advanced American Studies must be doubted -- he should have volunteered the information and an explanation. Or so, at least it seems to me.

I do not pretend to speak for the committee here. Having put in my stint as executive secretary, as of Nov. 16 I stepped down to simple membership. Nor am I concerned with the situation in ATL except as it touches upon the American Studies program, as it clearly does in the case of Mr. Fogarty. I don't know Lawless and have no firm opinions concerning him. I do know Groat and I could care less about his case -- as I could care less about Prof. Strandness.

But that is hardly to the point. I do care about the American Studies program. It is a fledgling, struggling to gain academic altitude, and I am angered by anything which pulls out even one of its tail feathers. I think the Fogarty case threatens to pull out more than one, both by giving us a discredited lame duck faculty member for our advanced course, and in being symptomatic of the sort of irrational behavior which can keep the program on the ground.

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