On Student Government...

The Bell Tolls

Ed. Note: This is the first of a series of articles on student government at Rice. Beginning with a problem which brings many basic questions to a focal point, the columnist will proceed to explore such realms as student apathy and student rights in future commentaries.

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A problem exists — the Campanile. Agreed.

Has the problem ever been approached or broached before? No.

Then why was administration censorship selected as the first and only way?

Why not:
A general directive to the editor: Clean up the yearbook.
or:
A presentation before the Student Senate of the necessity for a clean-up of the book — and a proposal for a student-faculty censorship board.

If these things had been done and had failed, then justification would have been obvious and indisputable. But since they were not done, the student body asks but one question: Will there be justification?

It Tolls For Thee

Or in the intensifying, undermining tradition of the Immovable Absolute Administration to become permanently codified in this royal decree and irrevocably branded in the minds of students, dooming student government, student spirit, student independence?

Of course the administrators of the Institute have heard students get fired-up before and make great statements about the fall of government, the demise of spirit, and the trampling under of the great intellectual catalyst, student independence. And why should this time be different from any other... another student... another Grand (but we know temporal) issue... another day...

But not so. Never before has administration action been so arbitrary, so sudden, and so close to home (that is, out of mother's sight) in its effect.

"Students Can't Be Trusted"

Was it the need to guarantee no repetition of such a yearbook that prompted such action? But this rests on the assumption that Students can't be trusted: no one student editor, working independently of the student body — but student government — Better: A student-faculty government with faculty having two votes to one.

Still No! But Why? We still can take on chances... on students, on student responsibility, on student maturity... on student emulation and practice of the Grand Principles they learn through education... and censorship clearly implies no faith in the people; no faith in the people produces apathy; and apathy is what we need more of?!!!

Progress?

No empassioned cry, no brazen denouncement is found in the Student Quest for justification... just a skeptical but more than slightly wistful wondering about how far we've come since the opening day of the Institute, when Dr. Edgar Odell Lovett said of the student body:

"It owns the college, the college, runs the college..." 

"Let this be the spirit of Rice."

Next Week: The Facade of "Spirit." Faulty Fundamentals.