

## SMELL OF MONEY IS MERELY A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

By Thoman G. Palaima

SPECIAL TO THE *AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN*

Monday, December 2, 2002 p. A11

"They like to take all this money from sin,  
build big universities to study in  
Sing 'Amazing Grace' all the way  
to the Swiss banks."

-- Bob Dylan, "Foot of Pride"

Twenty years ago, members of the overseas school that officially sponsors all American archaeological work in Greece heatedly discussed whether to accept funding from the Getty Trust for a research facility in the agora or civic center of Athens. The debate swirled around the school's ethics. The Getty funded another center suspected of acquiring stolen antiquities, so members worried seriously about guilt by association.

One distinguished professor proclaimed: "Their money has an odor." The longtime director of the agora excavations countered: "I remember that Mr. Rockefeller's money stank in the 1920s. One reason it doesn't stink today is that we took it and used it." From the 1930s onward, Rockefeller money helped pay for U.S. archaeological work in the Athenian agora.

How much does money have to stink before we refuse it? And whose nose judges the smell? These are two questions raised by University of Texas President Larry Faulkner's recent recall of university directories that included a pictorial ad for an Austin men's club. The ad contained no nudity.

Should the president of a public university unilaterally impose moral standards that students in one undergraduate class I polled consider out-of-date and their business, not his? Last year's directory contains a listing for a gay bar. How would gay and lesbian students and citizens of Texas feel if a UT president, agreeing with the Christian right's condemnation of homosexuality, banned this listing? Why stop with men's clubs or gay bars in considering the decency or morality of funding sources and their effects on UT's image or its students?

Put another way, why doesn't Rockefeller money stink? The Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies at UT uses such money to sponsor the Rockefeller Postdoctoral Residency Program. Does the institute, or UT's president, know that John D. Rockefeller's fortune was acquired through vicious anti-union labor policies, the most infamous example being the Ludlow, Colo., massacre of 1914? Through corrupt influence upon Colorado state officials, Rockefeller managed to have a sham "National Guard" force appointed: "328 special deputy sheriffs who were gunmen and thugs" gunned down and burned out striking miners. Fifty-three people were killed, including 13 women and children. Rockefeller later testified before Frank Walsh at hearings of the federal Commission on Industrial Relations. The records of the hearings are full of "horror stories of brutality and rapacity" culminating in cold-blooded murder.

Walsh was convinced that the coached and composed Rockefeller was ultimately responsible for these murders. He accused Rockefeller of what everyone knew: "(You) close your eyes to the crime at Ludlow" and "sit back in your offices in New York and say 'I uphold the executives'." Walsh asked Rockefeller if he wanted to see a postcard of a little boy murdered at Ludlow while cradling his sister protectively in his arms. Rockefeller did not. Rockefeller testifies that he would be willing to pursue the "great principle" of non-union miner camps even if it "costs all (his) property and kills all (his) employees." Speaking "in extenuation of the deaths" Rockefeller asserts "that the evidence seemed to show that many lost their lives from being smothered, rather than shot."

UT-Austin also accepts funding from the Mellon Foundation, whose fortune was amassed by following Richard B. Mellon's secret of success: "You can't mine coal without machine guns."

That was then. This is now. If President Faulkner thinks the Crazy Lady is in bad taste, he should read about the major human rights and environmental violations of mining company Freeport-McMoran in publications such as "Social Development and Human Rights in Indonesia" (Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center 1998).

He might then pull the name of Freeport CEO James Robert Moffett and Freeport itself right off UT's Molecular Biology Building. Moffett's and Freeport's money, to some informed noses, still has a strong odor.

Palaima is Dickson Centennial Professor of Classics at UT-Austin. [tpalaima@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:tpalaima@mail.utexas.edu)