

Subj: [Alpha Pi Boule] How Affirmative Action Helped George W  
Date: 1/25/03 3:09:16 PM Pacific Standard Time  
From: wchapman@cox.net  
Reply-to: alpha-pi-boule@yahoogroups.com  
To: alpha-pi-boule@yahoogroups.com, jhatcher@neighborhoodhouse.org, realks@prodigy.net  
Sent from the Internet (Details)

Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2003

## How Affirmative Action Helped George W.

The President might ask himself, "Wait a minute. How did I get into Yale?"

By MICHAEL KINSLEY

George W. Bush is all for diversity, he explained last week, but he doesn't care for the way they do it at the University of Michigan. The Administration has asked the Supreme Court to rule the Michigan system unconstitutional because of the scoring method it uses for rating applicants. "At the undergraduate level," said Bush, "African-American students and some Hispanic students and Native American students receive 20 points out of a maximum of 150, not because of any academic achievement or life experience, but solely because they are African American, Hispanic or Native American."

If our President had the slightest sense of irony, he might have paused to ask himself, "Wait a minute. How did I get into Yale?" It wasn't because of any academic achievement: his high school record was ordinary. It wasn't because of his life experience prosperous family, fancy prep school which was all too familiar at Yale. It wasn't his SAT scores: 566 verbal and 640 math.

They may not have had an explicit point system at Yale in 1964, but Bush clearly got in because of affirmative action. Affirmative action for the son and grandson of alumni. Affirmative action for a member of a politically influential family. Affirmative action for a boy from a fancy prep school. These forms of affirmative action still go on. The Wall Street Journal reported last week that Harvard accepts 40% of applicants who are children of alumni but only 11% of applicants generally. And this kind of affirmative action makes the student body less diverse, not more so.

George W. Bush, in fact, may be the most spectacular affirmative-action success story of all time. Until 1994, when he was 48 years old and got elected Governor of Texas, his life was almost empty of accomplishments. Yet bloodlines and connections had put him into Andover, Yale and Harvard Business School, and even finally provided him with a fortune after years of business disappointments. Intelligence, hard work and the other qualities associated with the concept of merit had almost nothing to do with Bush's life and success up to that point. And yet seven years later he was President of the U.S.

So what is the difference between the kind of affirmative action that got Bush where he is today and the kind he wants the Supreme Court to outlaw? One difference is that the second kind is about race, and race is an especially toxic subject. Of course, George W.'s affirmative action is about race too, at least indirectly. The class of wealthy, influential children of alumni of top universities is disproportionately white. And it will remain that way for a long time especially if racial affirmative action is outlawed.

Monday, January 27, 2003 America Online: JEOUTLAW