

Tuesday, 10/10/06

Letters to the Editor

Gee's claims need to be checked into

To the Editor:

Thanks to The Wall Street Journal's Sept. 26 front-page story, we know that Vanderbilt University paid \$6 million for renovations to the chancellor's residence in Belle Meade, that Chancellor Gordon Gee makes \$1.3 million per year and spent \$700,000 last year entertaining. And we know that Gee's wife, Constance, a Vanderbilt associate professor, smokes pot in the newly renovated mansion.

After the WSJ story appeared, the chancellor released a message to the Vanderbilt community addressing spending reforms that have now come about. In it, Gee made it sound as though he spearheaded the reforms, rather than having made them necessary.

The story did not mention that Vanderbilt has many low-paid employees: housekeepers, groundskeepers and others, while funding the Gees' opulent lifestyle.

Many people, including Vanderbilt divinity student Diane Faires, ("Gee is paid a lot while many at VU aren't paid enough," Oct. 6, Nashville Eye) think that is unfair. I agree. Surely Vanderbilt, an institution that champions human rights while holding a \$3 billion endowment, ought to address this.

Why do local media not question the Gees' claim that Constance Gee uses marijuana to relieve symptoms of "an inner ear ailment," when an expert on that ailment says he's never heard of that?

What would Vanderbilt do to one of its lowest-paid employees who admitted smoking pot on Vanderbilt property?

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