

# LETTERS to the EDITOR

## Why Bulger was unfit for UMass job

SHELLEY MURPHY succumbs to the temptation to blame William Bulger's highly publicized employment troubles on his loyalty to his fugitive gangster brother ("Loyalty to 'Whitey' cost brothers, some say," *City & Region*, Aug. 11).

To many Massachusetts citizens, family loyalty is one of the "good" Bulger brother's more admirable qualities. In fact, what made him unsuitable for the state university presidency from the day Governor Weld chose him for this sinecure (a seat on the Supreme Judicial Court, rumored at the time, would have pushed the public's tolerance too far) were:

■ His venality (Attorney Thomas E. Finnerty, described in Murphy's article as having "once shared a law practice with" Bulger, also shared with Bulger the controversial "fee" received by Finnerty from 75 State Street developer Harold Brown).

■ Abuse of official power (Ask any public official who refused to give a Bulger crony a place at the public trough).

■ Lack of devotion to the liberty-grounded ideals essential to

higher education (One disagreed with the autocratic Senate president at one's peril).

■ Petty tribalism.

One trivializes Bulger's glaring weaknesses and lack of qualifications for the University of Massachusetts presidency by focusing on one of his few admirable traits: his refusal to assist voluntarily in the capture of a close blood relative. No decent society should fault familial loyalty, nor should it demean the office of the president of a major university by maintaining the fiction that Bulger was fit for the position but for his loyalty to his brother.

Bulger's rich severance package at the public's expense during a time of diminished resources proves that his priority is, and always has been, money and power hidden by a deceptive veneer of civility, culture, and public virtue.

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*The writers were co-counsel  
for Harold Brown in the 75 State  
St. litigation between Brown and  
Finnerty.*

## Compassion for Bulger brothers

WILLIAM AND JOHN Bulger have endured extreme media antagonism and may yet experience legal ramifications because of their unwillingness to compromise what has been deemed "loyalty" to their estranged criminal brother (*City & Region*, Aug. 11).

secret. If William and John have more information than they have shared with authorities, their failure to do so might stem more from a desire to protect themselves than their brother. Furthermore, William's degree of media exposure would make successful witness relocation a challenging

## Murray's honesty is refreshing

JEAN COLGAN GOULD's letter (Aug. 6) in which she decries Donald Murray's "whining" about his mother's disapproval was mean-spirited. As I read Murray's column each week, I am amazed by his ability to articulate what he is thinking in such an honest way.

Few of us at any age are able to do so — partly, I suspect, because it leaves one so vulnerable to the judgment of others and to charges such as Gould's. To be able to share deep feelings, fears, and emotions, to be able to trust others to understand — aren't these what it means to be part of the human family? I treasure Murray's letting us honestly into the trip toward old age that we will all take.

Especially offensive was Gould's comparing of her husband's approach and attitude about life with Murray's approach and attitude. Different people, different times, different situations — apples and oranges. Did no one tell her that life is not a competition for the best mental health? Did no one tell her that part of life is accepting that we all differ in very basic ways — from how we were raised to the biochemistry of our brains? And that no one way of integrating life and experience is the "right" way?

LINDY CONROE  
*Franklin*

## Innocence lost

"WHITE KORB loses his perfect