

If memo was blunder, Posthumus is committing sin

So what are we to make of Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick's now-celebrated memo demanding certain high appointments for Detroiters and others for his city as the price for turning out a big vote for Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jennifer Granholm? Most of all, it reminds me of a saying attributed to the famous 18th century aristocratic French statesman, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand: "It's worse than a sin. It's a blunder!"



Phil Power

Political insiders, regardless of party, have been buzzing ever since the story broke big time last week in the Detroit papers and then became the focus of a TV spot for GOP nominee, Dick Posthumus. With respect to the blunder, perhaps the kindest comment I heard was to the effect that the 31-year-old mayor could easily stand for a little "adult supervision" in the conduct of his politics.

If he actually was serious in hoping that Detroit would get special treatment from Granholm if he turned out a big Democratic vote, his memo virtually guarantees that won't happen. No mature politician would ever dream of putting an enemy — much less an ally — into the kind of box Kilpatrick has put Granholm without knowing full well there will be a big price to pay for the error.

Sure, the draft memo was prepared back in August. It appears it was never actually sent to the Granholm campaign, and I have no reason to doubt Granholm's word that she never read it. And I am not at all surprised she disavowed the whole episode as "ridiculous".

If the Kilpatrick memo was a blunder, however, what the Posthumus campaign is doing with it is a sin. As the headline leading last Thursday's Detroit News paper pointed out, "Posthumus plays race card." It's been evident that Posthumus, who has been well behind Granholm for weeks, intended to manufacture "wedge issues" to run against Detroit and Black Americans in the closing weeks of the campaign.

First step was to slam the management and (Detroit-dominated) governance of the Detroit Water Department. Next came attacks on Granholm for supposedly favoring some form of reparations for the descendants of African slaves.

Now the Kilpatrick memo is the centerpiece of a \$500,000 TV campaign paid for by the Michigan Republican Party, showing Kilpatrick (in black and white, get it?) and Granholm (in full color) with the theme that

Granholm would "write a blank check for Detroit" if she gets elected.

There are two things to be said about all this. First, the TV ad is clearly overreaching in claiming the memo proves Granholm would write a check of any sort to Detroit even if she had received Kilpatrick's demand.

Politicians of all stripes demand all kinds of things every day without the faintest hope that any claim will ever be met.

The makers of the ad know that; Posthumus knows that; everybody who sees the ad should realize it.

Second, in playing the race card, Posthumus is committing an evil act in itself. No, no, he says; he's not introducing issues of race into the campaign, he's just pointing out a "pattern of conduct."

Whose pattern of conduct? One that starts with accusations about the Detroit Water Department is gouging the suburbs (factually inaccurate, as the suburbs mark up the water

Regrettably the standard reflex arc of losing campaigns throughout American politics is to introduce race into the mix and hope something dramatic happens.

prices they receive from Detroit) and moves on to talk about the old canard of racial reparations?

Regrettably, the standard reflex arc of losing campaigns throughout American politics is to introduce race into the mix and hope something dramatic happens.

Posthumus' campaign is merely following paths much trodden by other politicians who find themselves far behind less than a month before election day.

Even John Engler, who during his three campaigns for governor never displayed much affection for Detroit or its citizens, never went as far as his lieutenant governor has now gone.

I suspect that is so because at heart John Engler is more shrewd and far-seeing than Posthumus in realizing that after all the votes were counted he had to be governor of all the people in the state.

Over the years I've known Dick Posthumus, I had come to believe he is at heart a nice, decent guy. I'm sorry to say that I'm now going to have to reverse that judgment.

Phil Power is the Chairman of the Board of the company that owns this newspaper. He would be pleased to get your reactions to this column either at (734) 933-2206 or at ppower@homecomm.net.



Joni Hubred

Activist Oliverio leaves legacy of rabble-rousing

Someone once said, "It doesn't matter what people say about you, so long as they spell your name right." Ron Oliverio had mine

down to a "t". The news of his death came with the sudden, jarring impact of all bad news, in a Monday morning e-mail. For me — for everyone who has had any involvement in local politics — his passing marks the end of an era, albeit a contentious one.

I could not help but think back to last week's Council of Homeowners Association candidate forum, when he walked up to the dais and asked me why we hadn't posed any questions about drug crimes and how they relate to our crowded prison system. And then he said something that surprised me a little.

"I almost didn't recognize you. I really like what you've done with your hair."

You have to understand, Ron and I didn't have a friendly relationship. On more than one occasion, he'd write letters to my superiors telling them what a lousy job I was doing and decrying the newspaper's continued liberal bias. But when I did what he felt was a good job on a story, he also took the time to write and tell me so. Didn't happen often, but I know he paid my writing a few compliments.

I don't remember what he said. The unfortunate truth is that I would more likely remember a negative comment than anything positive.

Why is it we spend so much time holding onto the insult, the barb, the slam and so easily let go of the light people share with us?

The last massive I received, a bilious diatribe against the publisher and editor of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Gazette, was signed: Ron Oliverio, Defender of Individualism, Utterly and Totally Politically Incorrect.

For all his negativity and bluster, all of his ranting and raving, Ron made absolutely no bones about who he was, and who he wasn't. He knew his views weren't popular, and he knew some people wouldn't like him, based on those views.

After two unsuccessful shots at city council, Ron decided to give that race one more try in 1999. In an interview with the Observer, he cited what could best be described as his mantra:

"There's an incremental trend by government to control more and more of our lives. I think the less government, the better."

He believed local officials were far too chummy and doggedly pursued what he believed were incidents of mismanagement and even collusion among city officials, with regard to the 11 Pines project.

City officials approved the purchase of land in the 11 Mile and Halsted area a few years back, with the idea of expanding Sun Mart's golf course and properly capping an abandoned landfill, so it didn't cause serious environmental problems.

The project still has several strident critics, even though ground has already been broken for the nine-hole golf course expansion. For years, Ron needed officials about the land purchase, accusing them of lying and collusion after he learned the wife of District Court Judge Fred Harris was among those who had ownership in the property, through a family trust.

He believed officials knew that all along and kept the information from the public. He also railed against a purchase agreement that required the city not to disclose any information about potential contamination if the sale didn't go through.

In the last mayoral campaign, Ron's opposition of incumbent Nancy Bates included an attack against the mayor's pet project, the after-school youth program, which he claimed wasn't used as much as program statistics indicated. "Every one of us is for kids," he said, "but who is for waste?"

Never one to mince words, he accused Bates of having a "queen complex" because she'd been in power too long.

That, of course, was his little persona. I'm not going to even pretend I've ever known the real Ron Oliverio. Still, every once in a while, I'd catch a glimpse of something outside his political life.

He was an enthusiastic advocate for the rights of fathers in parental custody issues, to the point of traveling to Lansing three years ago to testify in a legislative hearing.

And then there's the book, "From Wingfield to Wood, Three Hundred Years in America" tracks Oliverio's Revolutionary War ancestors and even a few royal descendants. On his genealogy Web site, he claims common ancestry — admittedly way, way back — with President George Bush and Princess Diana.

Genealogy, he said, is a hobby for those with "the calling." While that may have been his avocation, politics became his vocation when ill health forced him to retire from active employment.

Ron's health problems didn't show in the strength of his words or in his passion for the work of a watchdog. He rubbed people the wrong way, but he did it for essentially the right reason — he believed in what he was doing, so firmly there was no room for doubt.

He leaves behind friends and most importantly, four young sons who will mourn his loss. Hopefully, they will also one day be able to celebrate his memory and legacy as a rabble-rouser.

The world needs more people who have the fortitude to pursue a cause, whether we agree with them or not.

Joni Hubred is editor of the Farmington Observer and welcomes your comments and story ideas. Contact her at 3341 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335; by phone (248) 477-5450; by fax (248) 477-9722; or via email, jhubred@oe.homecomm.net.

EXERCISE EQUIPMENT BLOWOUT!

Take advantage of **0% interest** for **12 months** or **24 MONTHS**

OR...

SAVE 10% ON ANY PURCHASE

GREAT PRICES! FANTASTIC VALUES! HUGE SELECTION!

SALE ENDS OCTOBER 31st!

THE FITNESS EXPERIENCE

Your Fitness Solutions SuperStore

TREADMILLS • HOME GYM • ELIPTICALS • EXERCISE BIKES • STAIR CLIMBERS • FREE WEIGHTS • BENCHES • MORE

ROYAL OAK 31372 Woodward Ave (just north of 13 Mile Rd) (248) 549-3700	TROY 846 E. Dix Highway Rd (at Rochester Intersection) (248) 526-9000	WEST BLOOMFIELD 6180 Maple Rd (just north of Maple Rd) (248) 926-5500	AUBURN HILLS 4197 Baldwin Rd (across from Great Lakes Crossing) (248) 451-6000	CANTON 42432 Ford Rd (1 mile west of I-275) (734) 844-0500
---	--	--	---	---

www.fitnessexperience.com

*Total purchase price based on 12 equal monthly payments over 24 months. If balance not paid in full at the end of 24 months, deferred finance charges will be applied toward the account. Financing offer subject to credit approval. Sale prices not valid with any financing offer or other price discount. Offer expires 10/31/02.

AS SEEN AT OTHER FURNITURE STORES AND EXPRESSES!

Introducing...

ComfortFlex

The Mattress That Conforms To You™

OUR INTRODUCTORY LOW PRICE \$697 queen set

reg. price \$1999 competition price \$999

★ No Interest ★ No Payments
★ No Money Down ★ For 12 Months
*with approved credit

NeverTurn DREAMSCAPE PLUSH BACK SUPPORTER			
	REGULAR	OUR PRICE	CLARITY
Twin	\$699/set	\$297/set	\$347/set
Full	\$799/set	\$347/set	\$417/set
Queen	\$899/set	\$397/set	\$497/set
King	\$1299/set	\$597/set	\$697/set

NeverTurn DREAMSCAPE IT BACK SUPPORTER			
	REGULAR	OUR PRICE	CLARITY
Twin	\$799/set	\$297/set	\$347/set
Full	\$899/set	\$347/set	\$417/set
Queen	\$1099/set	\$497/set	\$597/set
King	\$1499/set	\$697/set	\$797/set

NeverTurn EMPIRE PLUSH OR FIRM PREMIUM BACK SUPPORTER			
	REGULAR	OUR PRICE	CLARITY
Twin	\$699/set	\$297/set	\$347/set
Full	\$1099/set	\$497/set	\$597/set
Queen	\$1299/set	\$597/set	\$697/set
King	\$1699/set	\$797/set	\$897/set

NeverTurn NEWPORT XTREM OR PILLOW TOP PREMIUM BACK SUPPORTER			
	REGULAR	OUR PRICE	CLARITY
Twin	\$1199/set	\$497/set	\$597/set
Full	\$1299/set	\$597/set	\$697/set
Queen	\$1499/set	\$697/set	\$797/set
King	\$1899/set	\$897/set	\$997/set

★ FREE DELIVERY ★ FREE SETUP ★ FREE PICKUP ★ 30 DAY HOME TRIAL
Call store for details

\$87 reg. \$249 take with

\$147 reg. \$399 take with

\$247 reg. \$699 take with

\$297 reg. \$749 take with

*Pillow Top Back Supporter available in Twin or Full only.
*Black Metal Frame with 6" mattress.
*Twin Full College Pairs Backed available in Twin or Full only.
*Metal Wood Frame in Twin Full with 6" mattress.

THE MATTRESS SUPERSTORE

Grand Rapids Bedding Co.

TROY WAREHOUSE CLEARANCE CENTER 12101 Stephenson Hwy 1-800-668-MATS	ROCHESTER 2123 ROCHESTER RD. 1-800-579-MATS	WATERFORD CLEARANCE CENTER 4895 Dixie Hwy 1-800-929-MATS	ROYAL OAK 32222 Woodward 1-800-339-MATS
--	---	---	---