

The ALA claims to have "docu-

guage and profane words in a book —

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of taxes:

direction.

In defense of a great statesman — U.S. Sen. Patrick McCarran

"I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races — that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social or political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot solve, while they do remain together there must be the position of the superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race."

Who do you suppose made such a statement? David Duke? Mark Fuhrman? Nope. The great emancipator: Abraham Lincoln said it.

Recently, I heard radio ads talking about Harry Truman and what a great president and man he was. Yet, just a few years ago some of Truman's personal letters were made public, in which he spoke of how he "hated niggers" and "Japs." Truman, as you'll recall, was the president who authorized the use of the atomic bomb which resulted in the death of at least 150,000 "Japs."

Remember when Jessie Jackson got caught using racial slurs against Jews? He talked about going up to "Hymie" town, a word as offensive to Jews as "nigger" is to blacks. Jackson was never seriously challenged about being a "racist." Of course not — after all, only white people can be bigots. Image what would happen if, say, Phil Gramm got caught talking about going to campaign



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in "nigger" town. All hell would break loose. Talk about double standards.

This column is not, however, about racism. It is about character assassination through the media's selective use and application of the term "racist."

Recently, a local journalist wrote a cheap and sleazy smear against one of Nevada's greatest public servants, U.S. Sen. Patrick McCarran. He justified his attempts at defaming this great man by using the media's favorite smear tactic, labeling him a "racist." McCarran has been dead for 41 years; it's low enough to smear a living man, who can at least defend himself; but to defame a dead man sets a new standard of ugliness for the Nevada media.

The truth is, you can easily show that almost every leader in American history, from George Washington to Dwight D. Eisenhower, were "racists" from their personal writings and public comments. This changed in about 1960. Since then, it has become a social no-no to discuss differences in the races in any way that implies anything but total equality — or superiority — of the minorities. This taboo was recently breached by the publication of the book "The Bell Curve," and hopefully a more rational approach will result.

Applying 1995 racial standards to pre-1960 public figures is unfair and ignores the tremendous differences between social tolerance then and now. The odd thing is, even using today's standards, it would be very difficult to label McCarran a "racist." I've read many publications about him, including some very unflattering ones. Even his critics have failed to apply the "racist" label.

The only comments about another race that may be so construed were his personal comments in letters, late in his life, expressing concern over the increasing influence of Jews in national politics in the 1950s. At no time did he refer to them in racially negative terms. He used the word "Jew" in the same sense I would use the word "Catholic" or "Mormon" or "Scandinavian" — a description of an organized and identifiable body of people. Even though it was socially acceptable to do so in his day, I have not found any evidence of racial negativity in any of his writings including personal correspondence not intended for the public eye. McCarran was no "racist."

What Pat McCarran was, was a fighter — a fierce political warrior, one who made his mind up and then went in swinging for his side. With him — unlike so many two-faced politicians today — you knew exactly where he stood. He was your friend or your enemy — no gray lines.

McCarran was born in Reno in 1876 and was U.S. senator for four terms, from 1932 till his death in 1954. He died as he lived, "in the harness," a hard worker to the very end. He had his faults, but his one overriding virtue,

which (to me) covers whatever shortcomings he had, was his unswerving loyalty and devotion to the citizens of Nevada and his truly heartfelt love for this state. He had to fight the then dominant "Wingfield machine," which McCarran bitterly opposed, refusing to be subservient to anyone but the people themselves. Wingfield and his lackeys controlled both political parties in Nevada until almost WWII, and worked overtime to destroy Pat McCarran. But McCarran the fighter outlasted them all. He explained his success in a private letter to his daughter: "I owe my success to the masses of the people of this State and especially to the laboring element; to the toilers and to the men in the mediocre walks of life. They were my backers. They put me over in this (his successful Senate campaign in 1932). The powers that be, so to speak, those who placed themselves in high regard, were not, without a single exception, for me."

Pat McCarran loved the people of Nevada and the feeling was reciprocal. As Robert Laxalt, another of Nevada's sons (brother to former governor and U.S. Sen. Paul Laxalt), noted in his excellent book "Nevada": "No wonder then that when McCarran dropped dead of a heart attack in 1954, his funeral in Reno was attended not only by men of high station and great wealth, but by hundreds of his little people — prospectors, sheep herders, buckaroos and working men."

One of the McCarran's fiercest opponents, Las Vegas Sun Editor Hank Greenspun — himself a Jew — wrote a eulogy that fit McCarran well: "McCarran died as he lived — fighting.

He could fight in fierce anger, courageously, with the power of a lion or he could do battle shrewdly with the cunning of a fox. And it mattered not whether the cause be just or popular. If he had taken a stand to defend it, he fought. There are men who pass through life barely producing a ripple, neither strongly liked or disliked, while others can barely stay afloat in the mountainous waves created by the passionate loves and violent hatreds which mark their stormy existence. McCarran was a man of action."

For all you "critics" out there who feel some sort of God given right to judge "men of action" like McCarran, who with your morally superior perception of yourself, sit by the ringside casting aspersions on the warriors in the ring — never having the guts to step inside the ropes — I have a quote you should tape to your mirror:

"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again because there is no effort without error and shortcomings, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at best knows in the end the high achievement of triumph and who at worst, if he falls while daring greatly, knows his place shall never be with those timid and cold souls who know neither victory or defeat."

— Theodore Roosevelt

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