



Francisco Krolseth - The Salt Lake Tribune
Demonstrators gather in support of Palestine and to defend the right for students to assemble and protest during commencement ceremonies at the Huntsman Center on the University of Utah campus on May 2.

As university faculty and administrators, we should be mentoring — not vilifying — student protestors

For many months, students and faculty in Utah and across the country have been horrified by the unending violence and humanitarian crisis still unfolding in Gaza. While we do not all share the same perspectives on the conflict, the harrowing images emerging from Israel and Gaza have shocked our collective conscience.

All year, the Middle East Center at the University of Utah has sought to facilitate difficult, but sober conversations. We've striven to create a culture of moderation and sensible dialogue, studiously avoiding provocation and extreme rhetoric. We've offered roundtables to educate our faculty and staff to approach these issues with sensitivity. We've worked hard to build a curriculum deeply grounded in the history and languages of the region. We've also been frank in our presentation of the roots of the region's conflicts, traumas and injustices. We've brought world-class experts to Utah. We've given our platform to rigorous, hard-hitting scholars who've been able to navigate these complexities and nuances with integrity. We've given our students the space and guidance to wrestle with the big questions that define this seemingly intractable conflict. Instead of accelerating into confrontation and protest, we've done the slow, methodical, incremental work of education. And we've operated from a foundational belief that peace is not a slogan; that it takes hard work, sensitivity and intense self-reflection; that it can only be attained by asking ourselves what rights and freedoms we must accord each other in order to safeguard our own.

While it might not be glamorous, the slow work of education should be the way forward for our institution and others like it.

This approach, grounded in real expertise, stands in stark contrast to the leadership vacuum on display across the country. In recent days, I have been shocked by television and print media outlets vilifying student protestors. Instead of blaming 20-year-old students, it is, perhaps, more appropriate for the so-called adults, politicians, university officials, faculty and society at large to do some soul searching. To see the honorable calling and vocation of higher education blamed as the source of our current societal ills has been deeply upsetting. It has left me asking: How did we get here and what could we have done to have averted this crisis?

From the outset of this conflict, President Joe Biden has failed to restrain Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli leadership from pursuing a bloody campaign of revenge. Biden has always possessed the leverage to stop the conflict, but he has chosen not to exercise it. The result has been the slaughter of some 35,000 Gazans, including an appalling proportion of children, and the displacement of 1.7 million Gazans, leaving some 75% of the population as refugees. By placing virtually no limits on American military support for Israel, the United States has aided and abetted this humanitarian catastrophe, tipping the Middle East to the brink of a larger regional war with Iran and its proxies. Regardless of one's feelings toward either side of the conflict, Israel's campaign against Hamas has exacted a toll on Palestinian civilians that has pushed beyond the international legal boundaries of proportional response and into the realm of ethnic cleansing and even consideration of genocide by the International Criminal Court. These are the events

stocking student protests across the country.

Do I always agree with protestors? No. I frequently feel that their actions merely give ammunition to their opponents. Do I sometimes cringe at the crudeness of their slogans and chants? Yes. On the other hand, the very real violence in the region and the United States' role in it is hardly a figment of their imaginations.

As the carnage in Gaza unfolded over the past several months, university presidents from Harvard, MIT, University of Pennsylvania, and Columbia were dragged before Congress to give testimony about antisemitism on college campuses. In each case, these presidents of the world's most elite institutions displayed varying degrees of incompetence, but all showed cowardice and a craven instinct to genuflect before Congresswoman Elise Stefanik's "gotcha" questions. By refusing to address the underlying crisis in Gaza and accepting the premise that antisemitism is rampant on college campuses, our leaders let us down. They should have vociferously challenged the premise of the questions and defended their faculty and the noble work that is done by professors all over the country. Is there antisemitism and other forms of racism in our society? Yes, of course, there is. This is a shameful feature of American society, present on and off campus. At the same time, however, each of these university leaders could have refused to accept the dangerous premise that criticism of Israel's war conduct equals antisemitism. They also should have directly addressed the implicit Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism inherent in this narrative. Instead of showing intellectual and moral clarity, they cowered and allowed these issues to be weaponized for

political gain.

As universities across the country prepare to hold graduation ceremonies, I hope that the "adults" of America, including faculty and staff, university presidents and administrators, and parents might be able to take a step back from their social media accounts and television screens.

I would ask the grown-ups to reflect on what college means to you. For me, it was a ticket to a better, richer life. These are the hopes that I carry for my own children. I want that for my students, too. As I watched police laying siege to college campuses from Columbia to UCLA at the behest of university presidents and trustees, outfitted in military-grade vehicles with weapons more suitable for war and counterterrorism operations, I would ask our leaders to reflect on how we arrived here.

This crisis is not the work of some insidious force of outside agitators. These are our children. They are not terrorists. They are ours. We made them. They have learned from us. Now, they are holding up a mirror to reveal our brokenness and flaws. I urge our local and national leaders to not lose sight of our mission to shepherd and mentor them, especially when they make mistakes. If we get back to that guiding moral principle, we can all hold our heads a little higher.

Michael Christopher Low, assistant professor of history, directs the Middle East Center at the University of Utah. He is the author of "Imperial Mecca: Ottoman Arabia and the Indian Ocean Hajj" (Columbia University Press, 2020). He is currently working on a new book, "Saltwater Kingdoms: Fossil-Fueled Water and Climate Change in Arabia," under contract with University of California Press.

Obituaries

Gerard "Jerry" Koontz 1938-2024

St. George, UT—Jerry passed away on April 27, 2024, following a long battle with metastatic melanoma cancer. He was born on February 7, 1938, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Jerry attended night classes at Penn State University for thirteen years for mechanical engineering. After becoming a professional engineer, he moved to Salt Lake City, Utah with his wife Phyllis Alexander (deceased); his son Douglas Koontz; and daughter Diane Colvin. Jerry later married Carolyn Ireland (deceased) in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerry held senior management positions in the steel industry, including being President of Natter Manufacturing, Mark Steel, and Rocky Mountain Steel where he retired in 2008.

Jerry was also active in many organizations including UMA (chairperson, Utah Society of Professional Engineers, Oakridge Country Club (President in 1976), and Bloomington Country Club.

Jerry and Dixie Korcuz Anderson were married in 2007 in Springville, Utah, then later moved and made their home in St. George, Utah. They were active golf and social members of the Bloomington Country Club where they enjoyed the association of countless friends.

Dixie was the pride and joy of Jerry, Jerry and Dixie loved to travel, taking trips to Europe, Australia, and other foreign and domestic locations. They loved spending time during the summer at Flat Head Lake, Montana and Heber, Utah in their '45 motorhome.

Jerry is being laid to rest in the Heber City Cemetery, located at 680 North 550 East, Heber City, UT 84032, on Tuesday, May 7, 2024 at 12:00 p.m.

Arrangements entrusted to the care of Metcalf Mortuary, (435) 673-4221. Please visit our website at www.metcalfmortuary.com for condolences, complete obituary, and funeral listings.

Metcalf
MORTUARY

Lilia Pack Martindale 1928 - 2024

Lilia Pack Martindale was born in Chicago, IL, on May 13, 1928, to Walter Douglas Pack and Ruth Mildred (Fisher) Pack. She died April 24, 2024, Salt Lake City, UT. Lilia married "Ellis" Martindale Nov. 8, 1946, in the Salt Lake LDS Temple. They later divorced May 15, 1978.

Lilia is survived by her children Stephen E. Martindale (Karen), Christine Martindale (Glen Watkins), Lisa Hansen (Corey), and Lynette R. Sanjurjo Salgado (Pedro), siblings Wallace D. Pack (Madeline), Annette P. Frederickson (John), and Mona J. Pack (Paula); grandchildren Angela, Katie, Wesley, Melissa, Nichole, Tyler, Christopher, Alex, Spencer, Dillon, and Elizabeth; great-grandchildren Gage, Trinity, Amy, Rachel, Jeffery, Matthew, Zack, Canyon, Tegan, and Logan; and five great-great-grandchildren. Lilia is also survived by cousin, friend and alleged twin sister Elaine Barker. Many of their early years were traveled together and Lilia missed catching up, not from want but rather ability.

She is preceded in death by brothers Douglas and Eldon, sister Lucile, Mildred, and Donna, daughter Karen, son Douglas, granddaughters Tara and Tiffany, and great-granddaughters Nichole & Sioni Metcalf Jr.

A special "Thank You" to Home Instead and their amazing staff, particularly Linda, Bri, Angela, and Sonnet. They made Lilia's final days as comfortable as humanly possible.

Services will be provided by Larkin Mortuary on Monday, May 13th, 2024, at the University Warehouse, 951 E. 100 S., Salt Lake City, UT. Viewing 3:00-6:00 PM, service 4:00 PM. Interment at Holladay Memorial Park, 4900 Memory Lane, Holladay, UT. This would have been Lilia's 96th Birthday.

Larkin
MORTUARY

Manfred Hans Hennig 1935 - 2024

Murray, UT—Loving husband, father, brother, and friend. Manfred Hennig died April 29, 2022. He married the love of his life Roswitha (Rose) Maria Sigrid Schwandt. They were married March 23, 1961 in Heilbronn, Germany. They had four daughters, Simone, Sonya, Evelyn, and Nancy. In 1968 he opened his own business, Ability Cabinets. He is survived by his daughters Simone, Evelyn, and Nancy Hennig and his sons Renato, Rii, and Helga Munaro. He is preceded in death by his wife Roswitha (Rose) Maria Sigrid Schwandt Hennig and his daughter Sonya Hennig. His viewing will be held Saturday May 4, 2024, from 12:30-1:30 at Jenkins-Soffe, 4760 South State Street in Murray. A graveside service will be held at 2:00 at the Murray Cemetery, 5690 S Vine St in Murray.

Please visit Manfred's obituary page at www.jenkins-soffe.com.

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