

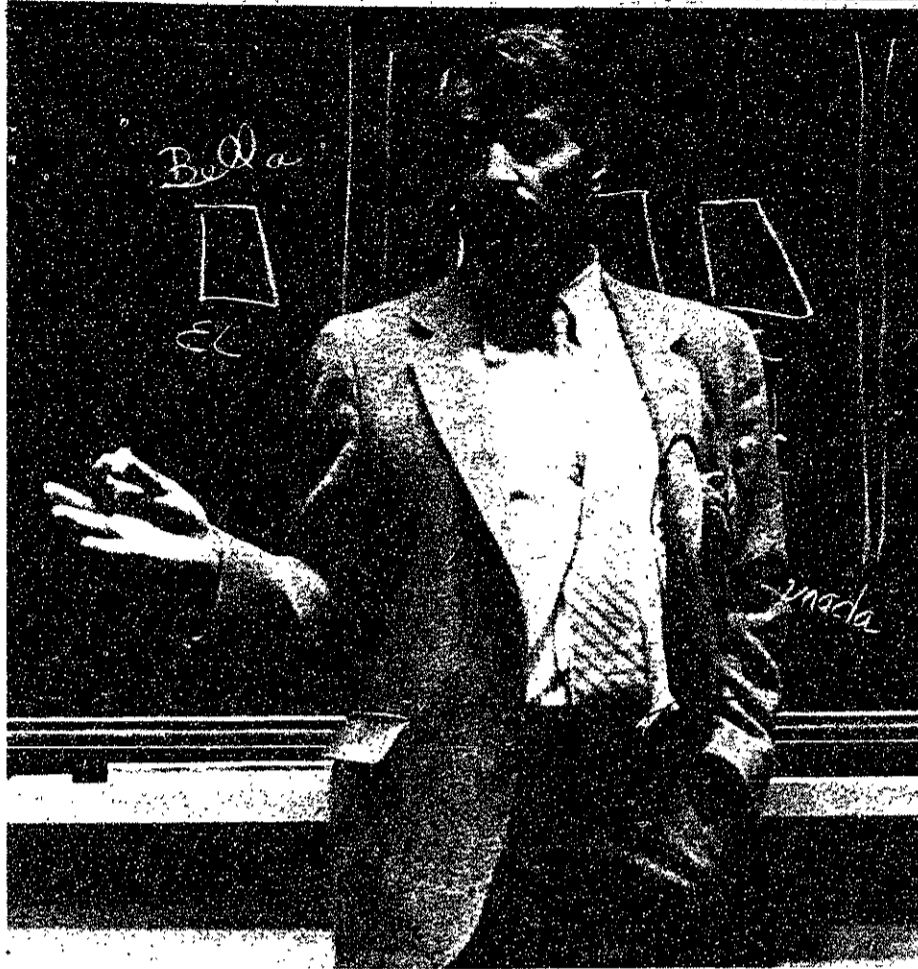
MIT
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Massachusetts

Tuesday, February 14, 1989

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Simson L. Garfinkel/The Tech

Former Senator Paul Tsongas, "one of the most able and respected citizens of Massachusetts," will speak at MIT's 1989 Commencement Exercises.

Dismissed prof sparks controversy

By Annabelle Boyd

MIT is guilty of hypocrisy in that it has issued dramatic statements about the importance of a racially-integrated faculty but has taken minimal actions to achieve that end, says Marilyn Richard-

son, former assistant professor of writing. Richardson, who was recently denied reappointment to the MIT faculty, has charged that her case illustrates this lack of action.

"While I will give credit to the

Tsongas to speak at Commencement

By Linda D'Angelo

MIT has named former US Sen. Paul Tsongas (D-MA) as the 1989 Commencement speaker, President Paul E. Gray '54 announced last week. The ceremony is set for June 5.

Tsongas was recently appointed chairman of the Massachusetts Board of Regents of Higher Education.

Born and raised in Lowell, MA, Tsongas received a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College and a law degree from Yale University. Following graduation he volunteered for the Peace Corps, represented Lowell on the city council, and served as Middlesex County Commissioner. His political career culminated in 1978 when he was elected to the US Senate.

Diagnosed with lymph cancer in 1984, Tsongas decided not to seek re-election to a second term as senator and underwent successful treatment for the cancer. He then became a partner in the Boston law firm of Foley, Hoag

and Eliot, and a strong voice against unrestrained development on Cape Cod.

It was this impressive record which led Gov. Michael S. Dukakis to describe Tsongas as "one of the most able and respected citizens of Massachusetts," according to a MIT press release. With this, Dukakis appointed Tsongas chairman of the state Board of Regents of Higher Education, which sets the policy that governs the 180,000 students enrolled in the state's 29 colleges and universities.

In his capacity as chairman, Tsongas has drawn a clear parallel between economics and education; "this country is facing a descent into second-class economic

status [and] the only way out of it is education." For this reason, Tsongas concerns himself with "the question of whether this state wants quality, first-class higher education," he said.

Tsongas' new appointment — coupled with his past commitment to education, economic development and social issues — made it "wonderfully appropriate for him to address" MIT, Gray noted in the press statement, since "MIT has been concerned with those same issues for more than 128 years." Like Tsongas, MIT "is credited with contributing widely to economic development generally and to the Commonwealth in particular," Gray added.

Gas explosion blacks out most of Cambridge

By Prabhat Mehta

A gas explosion in a manhole apparently caused Saturday evening's blackout, which left much of the Institute without power for over four hours. The blackout affected at least 30,000 of the 45,000 customers of the Cambridge Electric Light Co., whose lines were damaged by the explosion, according to *The Boston Globe*. Approximately two-thirds of Cambridge was left in darkness at one point.

On campus, the situation was exacerbated by a loss of emergency power in the central campus area. The largest campus generator, which would normally provide emergency power to, among other buildings, those surrounding Killian Court, was "off-line" on Saturday for repairs, Director of Physical Plant Paul F. Barrett said. As a result, many of those buildings serviced by the 1000

kW emergency generator were left without emergency power until Cambridge Electric gradually resumed normal service.

"As a matter of general Institute practice, there is emergency power for lights in exitways [corridors, stairways, etc.], selective elevator operation, telecommunications equipment, essential mechanical systems, health services, and for a limited number of bio-research activities such as freezers, etc.," Barrett stated.

A large temporary generator was started to provide emergency power to the central campus area, but since the temporary generator had to be brought on line manually, power to the affected areas could only be brought up slowly, according to Barrett.

Emergency power was eventually provided to the Central Utility (Please turn to page 9)

Bitek draws fire over poor service, late bills

By Eun S. Shin

Over 1000 MIT students have subscribed with MCI for long-distance service since last fall, but Bitek, the company MCI hired to take care of billing, has come under sharp criticism for late billing and short office hours.

Bitek's regional office, located in the MCI building on Boylston Street, is open for only four hours on business days and, until recently, from 9 am to 1 pm, when many classes are in session.

Some students have complained of late and incorrect billing, as well as inefficient business practices. Winnie Chan '90 termed Bitek "bad business people" after Bitek discontinued its service and never restarted the service even after her fees were paid.

Bitek, a telecommunications firm based in California, began servicing MIT as a result of a contract between MIT and MCI. The three-year contract may be terminated by either MIT or MCI, according to Director of Telecommunication Systems Morton Berlan, who was responsible for the selection of MCI.

"In the selection process, MCI was chosen because it met with MIT's demand to be left out of

the billing system," Berlan said. Due to collections problems in the student rebilling market, MCI in turn hired Bitek to be responsible for billing. In usual practice, the university is responsible for student's default payments.

The result of a third party may be higher prices for services. Acknowledging the issue, Berlan stated that "MIT was not pleased" with MCI's use of Bitek and reiterated that the contract is strictly between MIT and MCI.

Christopher Powers, major account representative for MCI, however, denied the possibility of higher prices because of MCI's use of Bitek. "The students are charged at regular MCI dial rates with a bulk rate going to Bitek from MCI," Powers said.

The \$50 deposit required by Bitek has also created some misunderstanding. Powers, referring to complaints on the deposit, stated that the terminology of "deposit" is wrong. Rather, the \$50 is a credit balance that protects Bitek against default payments. When the credit runs out, the service is automatically discontinued until a new payment is made. No warning is given prior to the invalidation.

In an attempt to improve its services, Bitek has moved its office hours to 3-7 pm. The late billing problems are due to "rough edges" in the new system and should be resolved as the arrangement is put more to practice, according to Berlan.

Both Powers and Berlan are optimistic about the system thus far. Asked about the success of the program, Powers replied, "By and large, it's been very good. There are some initial problems, but in a new system, there are bound to be adjustments."

Institute for its willingness to address racial problems in the *Racial Climate at MIT* report and others, the writing and literature departments at MIT have made less than a good faith effort to recruit and keep such minority faculty as they once recruited," she said.

In 1986, Richardson came up for a promotion and re-appointment review before a writing program committee which consisted of Associate Professor James Paradis, a science/technology writing specialist; Associate Professor Harriet N. Ritvo, a Victorian studies specialist; and Professor Elzabietta E. Chodakowska, a novelist.

(Please turn to page 10)

Institute commemorates King legacy

By Miguel Cantillo

The Institute commemorated the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. last Friday at noon in Kresge Auditorium.

Gregory Chisholm G, a PhD candidate in the Department of Mechanical Engineering and a candidate for the Jesuit priesthood, gave the keynote address to the audience of several hundred. President Paul E. Gray '54 also gave a speech at Kresge, amidst protest from a small group of demonstrators who came to protest racism at MIT.

Chisholm described the social situation at MIT and in the nation twenty years ago, and the civil rights movement's effect on the black community throughout the country.

The situation for black students at MIT was very different in 1965 from what it is now, as the faculty and student body was overwhelmingly composed by white males then, Chisholm said. Fifty-seven black students entered MIT that year, but only 25 of them graduated. Chisholm warned that racism is still felt at MIT now, and racial tension may rise in the future.

Chisholm believed that the problems of American minorities would not be overcome soon. In fact, the Supreme Court's recent ruling against affirmative action for contractors in Virginia poses a threat to the black community,

Chisholm said.

The overall situation for the black community is not encouraging, according to Chisholm. The African-American community, he observed, is being scourged by crack, white "hate groups" and a disproportionate incidence

of AIDS cases (25 percent of AIDS victims are black, while the black community represents only 12 percent of the American population). Even now, he added, there are more blacks in prisons than in colleges, and for every (Please turn to page 9)



Lisette W. M. Lambregts/The Tech

MIT President Paul E. Gray '54 leads Friday's march from Lobby 7 to Kresge in commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. as protesters demonstrate alongside. Keynote speaker Gregory Chisholm G follows Gray.

inside

Israel battles *intifada* on ground; PR war on airwaves. Page 2.

* * * * *

David Brinkley paints picture of pre-war Washington. Page 17.

Richardson: black studies ignored

(Continued from page 1)

The credentials Richardson took into the review included a published book entitled *Black Women and Religion*, several essays and reviews which had been printed in such publications as *The Dictionary of Literary Biography*, *The Women's Review of Books* and *Presence Africaine*, another book ready for publication concerning black political writer Maria Stewart, and a research project underway on black sculptress Edmonia Lewis. In addition, Richardson had lectured at universities both in America and Europe, and had served as a consultant on Lewis' work for the National Museum of American Art and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

According to Richardson, the review committee decided to wait to begin thorough deliberation on her case until it could obtain the galley of her book on Stewart. This decision coupled with an injury Richardson sustained in an accident moved the period of Richardson's review to mid-to-late 1987.

The committee claimed competence in the field of black studies and rejected Richardson's request "that brief informal inquiries be made of experts in black women's studies, history, and or in 19th century American art history" to ascertain the merit of her work.

But Richardson charged that "the committee was not adequately informed to evaluate my work sensitively." The committee failed to appreciate the distinction between the type of work written in an already established field, and the sort of work which is of basic significance to a developing field like black studies, she said.

Professor Kenneth R. Manning, head of the writing program, declined to comment on Richardson's charge. Manning, who is black, explained that all reviews of MIT faculty are confidential.

Richardson obtains copy of her file

Richardson suffered a concussion in an accident and was required to take a leave of absence during part of her review period. Because of the accident, she was involved in a civil suit which enabled her to subpoena her MIT file. It was in this file she discovered the committee's evaluation of her scholarship and teaching ability.

"It is very unusual that I have my file. It was really only through a fluke that I managed to get it," Richardson noted.

When Richardson read what the committee wrote about her abilities, she felt she "had to protest what had been said and to get something on the record to contradict their conclusions."

Richardson appealed the decision all the way up the MIT ladder: first to Dean of Humanities and Social Science Ann F. Friedlaender PhD '64, then to Associate Dean Philip S. Khoury, then finally to Provost John M. Deutch '61 and President Paul E. Gray '54.

"The document which the review committee eventually produced was a hatchet job maintaining that my book on Stewart was of little substance and that I was a bad teacher," she said.

According to Richardson, the evaluation of her ability as a teacher of literature was based upon a single classroom visit, by a professor of French, made in 1982. Richardson taught a wide variety of classes, and she claimed that her classroom door had always been open. Yet from a few out-of-context remarks made in that 1982 evaluation the committee deemed her a poor teacher, she claimed.

Manning did comment that many different aspects of a

teacher's performance go into the review committee's evaluation. He also stated that to the best of his knowledge, Richardson had a positive teaching record.

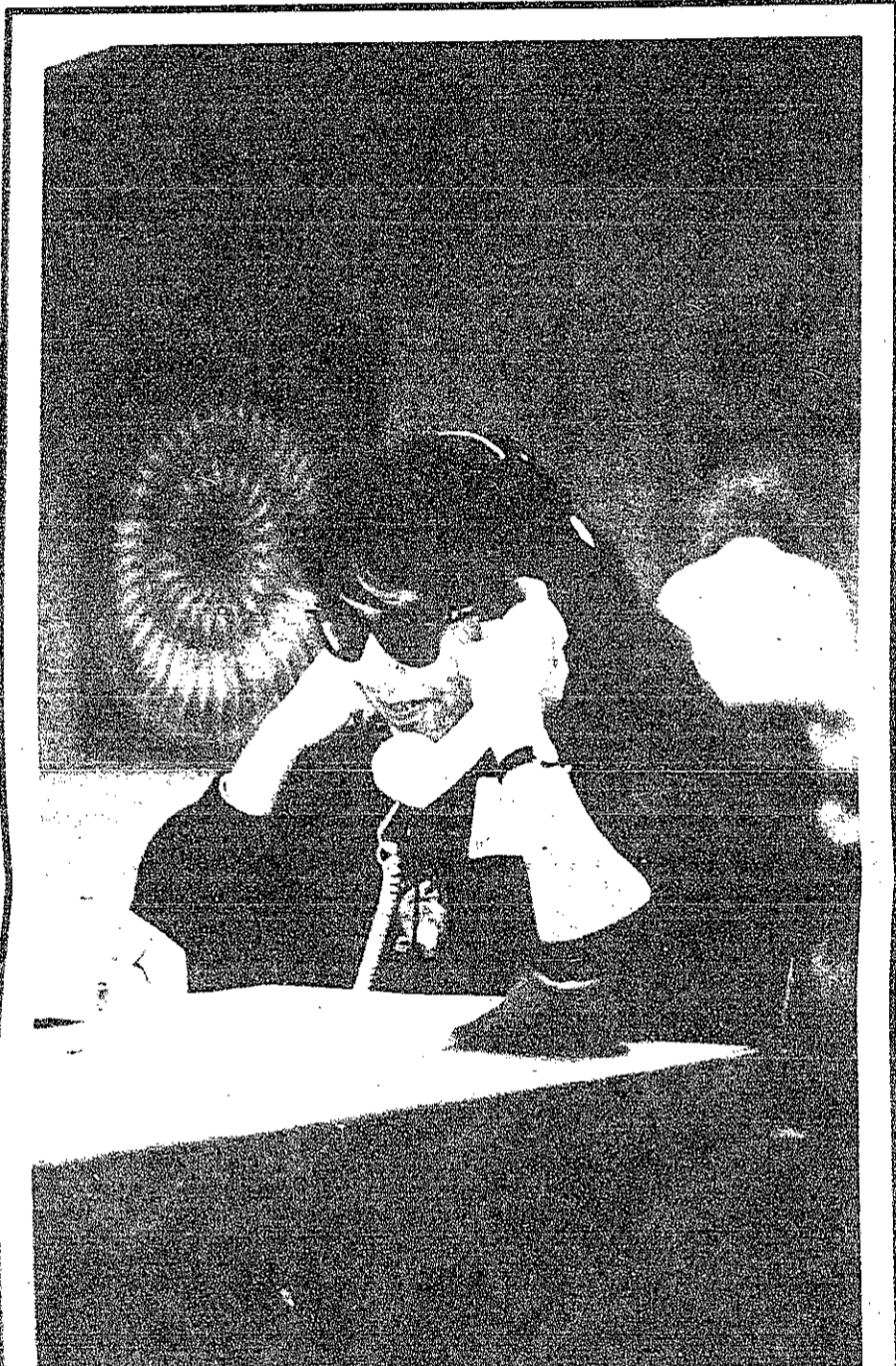
The committee produced the following evaluation of Richardson's work on Stewart: "Although these essays consider the arguments, and to some degree, the biographical context of Stewart's writing, members of the Review Committee felt that they failed to elicit the rich cultural and historical context of Stewart's life and work. Richardson's biographical portrait of Stewart is thin and unmemorable. There is no systematic analysis of the reading public Stewart is addressing; nor is there any systematic treatment of the textural qualities of Stewart's unique literary synthesis and its place in the tradition of American and black women's letters."

Richardson said she produced testimony from other professors responding to the criticism. Henry Lewis Gates Jr., professor of literature at Cornell University, in his letter to MIT wrote, "Indeed, I can think of very few critics in our field writing today who can match Richardson's impressive command of what some have labeled comparative black literature."

Despite Richardson's claims, Manning said he was "conscious and concerned about affirmative action and black studies at MIT."

"I probably will not sue MIT since mine was not a tenure case," Richardson said. "But I felt that the least I owed to the improvement of minority faculty hiring and recruitment procedures at MIT was to appeal my case to the very top."

Richardson is now working as a curator at the Afro-American History Museum in Boston.



Mike Franklin/The Tech
That's a \$1500 smile! Saadia Husain '89 receives a \$1500 pledge during last night's Student Telethon.

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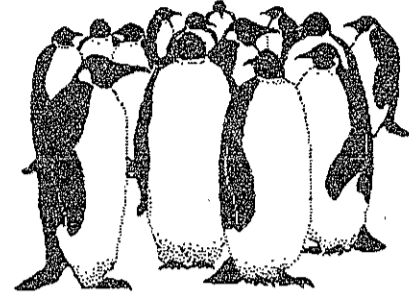
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