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Letter to the Editor:

Confirmation of Judge Alito Wrong Way to Celebrate Dr. King

That one can smile and smile and be a villain – William Shakespeare

Underlying Samuel Alito's innocuous and placid demeanor lies a whirlpool of right-wing ideology that bodes ill for people of color. His endorsement by Republicans on the U.S. Senate Judiciary, coming as it did during the week in which the nation celebrated Archon Martin Luther King's birthday, and his confirmation just two weeks later, was ironic indeed. Judge Alito's dispassionate lack of concern for African Americans and his consistent record of conservative judicial opinions constitute yet another blow by the Bush administration to the aspirations of people of color for a society with justice for all.

No matter Judge Alito's dissembling before the Senate committee, nothing he said can erase a depressing stream of decisions hostile to the disadvantaged and the disfavored. His confirmation by the Senate endangers the stability of a number of 5-4 opinions by the Supreme Court, including *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the affirmative action decision; *Easley v. Cromartie*, a decision rejecting an attempt by white voters to unseat an African American congressman from North Carolina; and *Virginia v. Black*, in which the court banned cross burning.

Space does not permit mention of the numberless decisions in which he voted against workers and supported corporate power, the decisions in which he affirmed governmental power to execute prisoners no matter the violations to their constitutional rights, and the cases in which he affirmed the government's power to exercise untrammelled power to search and seize citizens under outrageous circumstances, including the search of a ten year-old for tasting a French fry without paying for it.

The NAACP president put it succinctly: "[Judge Alito] is diametrically opposed to all that the NAACP has worked for..."

Nor is Judge Alito's depressing record on the court of appeals the only evidence that his appointment disserves the goals of the continuing struggle for racial equality. In the early 1970s, when many, many whites were fighting side by side to widen the horizon of opportunity, Samuel Alito, a student at Princeton, joined an organization – Concerned Alumni -- the leader of which grumbled, "Is the issue the percentage of alumni children admitted or the percentage of minorities? I don't see the relevance in comparing the two, except in a racist context."

A pamphlet issued by the conservative group suggested that "racial tensions" were leading to an increase in crime, and warned, "The unannounced goal of the administration, now achieved, of a student population of approximately forty percent women and minorities will largely vitiate the alumni of the future."

Thus, Samuel Alito, of undoubted working-class origins, born in Italy to parents of a nationality that has suffered from discrimination and prejudice, has consistently identified with the powerful and the privileged. His brief, written when he was in the Justice Department, challenged efforts by African Americans to desegregate the leadership of the Cleveland Fire Department. Another brief, among many, opposed legal action to desegregate a Sheet Metal Union local, even though a lower court had already established that the union engaged in consistent and egregious race discrimination in the admission of members who were not white.

In short, the confirmation of Samuel Alito as a justice of the United States Supreme Court was an inappropriate way to celebrate Archon King's birthday – to say the least.

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Alpha Omicron Boulé
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Archon Burns,

The recent receipt of issues of THE BOULÉ JOURNAL for 2005 was a most gratifying experience. Thus I write to express to you my appreciation for the thoughtfulness and generosity of your office. THE JOURNAL has become a publication of impressive proportions in size and substantive content. I congratulate and thank you and the staff.

Sincerely,

Archousa Frances J. Stafford
(Widow of S. Tanner Stafford)
Alpha Zeta Boulé