

THE CITADEL

THE MILITARY COLLEGE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29409-0100

OFFICE OF
THE PRESIDENT

Dear Citadel Friend:

August 7, 1992

You probably have heard that a lawsuit has been filed in the Federal Court in Charleston against The Citadel seeking to compel us to admit females into the academic day program. The fundamental question raised by this lawsuit is whether a single gender environment for a college educational program is in the public interest or achieves any legitimate governmental purpose. We believe our program does, and we are therefore defending the suit and urging the Court to uphold our admissions policy of limiting the day program to male students.

The purpose of my letter is to notify you of the legal challenge to the all-male day program, and to try to explain to you what our position is and why - not the legal position or justification, but the educational philosophy and reasoning for our policy - and to answer some of the criticism directed at the policy.

This suit seeks to compel The Citadel to admit three named female veterans into the day academic program, not into the Corps of Cadets. Among the arguments made in favor of the suit and against the policy are: (1) excluding women is illegal sexual discrimination; (2) women as well as men pay taxes and The Citadel programs therefore should be as available to women as they are to men; (3) women veterans served on active duty and serve in the military reserves equally with men and should therefore have equal treatment and access to The Citadel and its programs; (4) admitting veteran students into day classes will not have any substantial effect - it is "no big deal"; and (5) the "male only" program is nothing more than an historical anachronism keeping The Citadel from becoming modern and up-to-date.

Whether excluding females from an educational program is illegal is a question which will have to be answered by the Courts, not by us. Our admissions policy, however, has never been held to be illegal or improper, and I believe it complies fully with the law. Our all-male program was specifically acknowledged by Congress in its consideration of the Federal Education Law in 1972, and Congress' opinion, expressed in that law, was that our single gender program for males should be allowed to continue. That is an expression by Congress of the public policy of the United States toward college education in this country. It has never been revoked, reversed or modified. If the Courts now hold that such a position is unconstitutional, that will, of course, be a new position and a considerable change.



Although the day program and the Corps of Cadets at The Citadel have historical significance as all-male programs since the School's founding in 1842 and both are entirely legal, neither of these facts alone is the reason for continuing the policy. If those were the only reasons for any specific educational program, justification would be difficult. The reality, however, is that single gender educational programs, for men as well as for women, not only have a proper place in our society but they are desperately needed - perhaps more today than in the past.

There is not sufficient time and space here to describe the benefits of educational programs in a single sex environment; however, virtually all studies of single sex college programs, such as the studies of all-female colleges done by the Women's College Coalition, find significant benefits not only to the participants, but to society generally by the graduates of those programs.

We also are finding that a number of education experts nationally are advocating single gender programs as a necessary influence on the growth, development and maturation of today's young people. Some experts are advocating that social conditions today increase the need for single gender programs, and that such programs offer our best hope for reducing much of the violent anti-social behavior present in today's society.

Not only are there numerous indications that single gender educational environments provide significant benefits, there is ample evidence that the co-education system in this country has not resolved all of the problems existing in higher education today. A cursory review of college educations in the United States over the last two decades even raises a number of questions about the trend. Clearly, no one has all the answers to what is needed in college education in today's world.

By combining the fact that single-sex educational environments create substantial benefits for students and for the public generally with the fact that coed campuses do not resolve many of the problems existing today in colleges - or in society generally - we believe that having the choice between a coeducational college program and a single gender college environment is a freedom that should be preserved, not destroyed.

The fact that women serve equally with men in the military service does not address the needs and benefits of college educations in the United States. Many women also function equally with many men in the military reserves, in business, in government, and in college. In fact, many of those women attribute much of their success to having attended a single gender college.

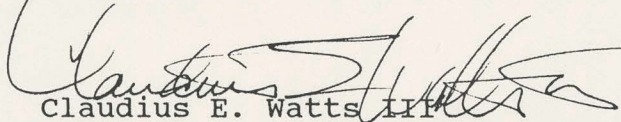
The argument that anyone who pays taxes must be permitted to participate in any program supported by tax dollars has never been accepted in this country. If that position were accepted, every taxpayer would be entitled to go to any college, because all colleges, "public" and "private," are assisted through taxes.

Further, childless people support schools with their taxes; non-drivers pay taxes for roads; and even those who are ineligible for admission to particular colleges (whether for lack of grades, test scores, funds, etc.) pay taxes to support those colleges.

The contention that admitting three female veterans into day classes will have no significant impact is simply untrue. First, this particular lawsuit seeks to require The Citadel to admit all female veterans who reside in South Carolina, not just the three plaintiffs who are named in the suit. Secondly, as I indicated above, Congress specifically acknowledged the benefits of single gender college programs by providing for the continuation of such programs which have always been only for one sex. The objective of this lawsuit is to terminate the all-male classroom in our day program, which is the condition on which Congress exempted The Citadel and VMI from being required to sexually integrate our all-male educational programs. The net result of that objective may very well prohibit The Citadel from maintaining any of its single sex programs, including the Corps of Cadets. Although we cannot know at this time what the full impact of this lawsuit might be if our single gender programs are declared to be unconstitutional, the ramifications of such an event could have a profound effect on The Citadel as we know it today.

In summary, we firmly believe that the day program at The Citadel conducted as a single gender program for males is valuable, not only to the students who attend it but also to our State and Nation. Destruction of choices in education is reducing diversity (long a hallmark of higher education) and eliminating freedoms, not preserving them. We seek to preserve that diversity and freedom. Finally, the elimination of single gender educational programs, as this lawsuit seeks to do, will affect those everywhere who prefer to obtain their college education in a single sex environment. Not only should the freedom be preserved, the benefits of single sex college programs are crucial to our Nation's and our society's well-being.

Our position in this lawsuit is much more than simply trying to preserve our tradition of educating the "whole man." Our program provides a freedom of choice to students and parents which we seek to preserve. While we do not claim to have answers for all of the problems present in higher education in this country today, we know that our program provides the answers for many. No one has all the answers, and the elimination or destruction of a successful college program, such as we have at The Citadel, is a loss to higher education generally and a significant step in the wrong direction. We will attempt to keep you advised of the status of this lawsuit periodically.



Claudius E. Watts III
Lieutenant General, USAF, Retired
President

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