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I want to begin with a disclaimer for this column. Many of you know I am a Stillwater native and truly an OSU Aggie. Yes, that is right, my allegiance runs so deep it stretches beyond Cowboy to Aggie. Despite this enthusiasm, I am happy with the actions of University of Oklahoma President David Boren regarding the racist acts of a few OU students. If you haven't seen a recent video of the students chanting an obviously rehearsed racist rendition of "If You're Happy and You Know It", you might want to visit Youtube. The students were members of a fraternity on the OU Campus. President Boren closed the fraternity and had the property vacated within 48 hours of the video being posted on the internet.

This brings a greater issue to the conversation. I thought the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964 and we had long ago put this item to rest. I was fortunate to be raised in a very diverse elementary school setting where most of the children of international students at Oklahoma State were my classmates. This included students of African-American and Native American heritage as well as students from Pakistan, Iran, India, China, Thailand and Nigeria. We had cultural tasting days where we enjoyed the food from other countries and cultures. I was innocent and assumed all others were as accepting as my classmates. My parents were also key supporters of a multi-cultural education. My father was a self-confessed redneck racist but they decided when I was born (during the civil rights movement) they had an obligation to raise me in an environment that understood racial diversity. I knew little of racism until I attended college at Oklahoma State. I was a student-manager for the basketball team. Our coach as well as many of our players were African American. I will never forget a road game in 1987 where the racial slurs were truly unbearable. These were my close friends and mentors whom I respected. The ignorance was overflowing and eye opening to this young student.

I will never understand what it feels like to be African-American but I know education must be the conduit by which we remove barriers for all. The truly sad part of this story is the students in the video knew this chant too well and chose to participate based on a belief that it was acceptable. Creating a welcoming environment for all cultures in a public school is not an optional task and cannot be achieved without help beyond our walls. The video, which was called "disgraceful" by President Boren, reflected a behavior that would have been considered unacceptable in the 1960's and is abhorrent in 2015.

Back during the time of my career when I was a High School Basketball Coach, I told my team, "Everyone on this team knows the difference between right and wrong. If you see something going on with this team that isn't right and you fail to act, you are as guilty as the person who is doing the misdeed." The social responsibility of what is right must begin with parents. They will always be the first source of teaching right from wrong. And parents, please remember your

children are always watching you. I wonder if the parents of the University of Oklahoma students in the video are wishing they had exercised better judgment with their children.