

# Kolsky Blends Politics and Humor

By Tami Brunk

Mad applause burst from the bleachers, gawking New York Times reporters stepped aside and the "Great Sea" parted as Professor Thomas Kolsky entered the Science Center Theater on Wednesday, September 21. All right, All right, I'm exaggerating a bit, but only for the sake of humor; the major topic of Kolsky's lecture titled "Not so Odd a Couple: Reflections on the Marriage of Humor and Politics," demonstrated the vital role that humor has played in politics throughout the centuries.

Audience members were given handouts consisting of xeroxed political cartoons created throughout history, poking fun at such a variety of figures as King Louis XIV on up to Bush and even Perot. Kolsky began his presentation by bewailing the sorry choice of candidates in this year's election. "Clinton's biggest problem," complained Kolsky, "is that he never inhales."

"Bush, on the other hand, never exhaled." He also questioned the novelty of both Bush and Clinton's economic proposals.

"Basically, Bush wants to borrow and spend, and Clinton wants to tax and spend." In light of the obvious shortcomings of Bush and Clinton, Kolsky moved to nominate a new candidate. This man, Kolsky promised, was "a truly great American and humorist...Abe Lincoln."

According to Kolsky, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan were masters at harnessing the power of humor to win public favor. During their campaigns, both used a quick wit to cover up their flaws.

During Kennedy's 1960 campaign, he was often criticized for having come from a wealthy family. In response to that, Kennedy made fun of himself. "I received a telegram from my father today," he told a crowd. "He told me, 'don't buy one vote more than is necessary. I'll be damned if I'll pay for a landslide!'"

Reagan diffused criticism about his age during his campaign against Walter Mondale with this statement, "I am not going to make age an issue in this campaign. I will not hold my opponent's youth and...inexperience against him."

Perhaps because Clinton and Bush have not yet learned how to harness the power of humor, they have often become the target of it.

"Did you know the real reason that the U.S. Government so closely investigated Iraq's Department of Agriculture?" asked Kolsky. The answer, he asserted, was that they were secretly hoarding a huge stash of broccoli with which to bombard the White House.

"Thank God Bush caught it in time," Kolsky breathed with a sigh of relief.

Concluding his presentation, Kolsky assured Americans everywhere that "the marriage of humor and politics rests on solid ground. There is not much chance of a divorce." Finally, a return to family values.

Montgomery County Community College  
presents

# DR. TOM KOLSKY

"THE REIGN OF ERROR:  
OBSERVATIONS ON THE MARRIAGE  
OF POLITICS AND HUMOR"

Wednesday, October 13, 1993 12 noon - 1 p.m.  
Thursday, October 14, 1993 7 - 8 p.m.

Science Center Lecture Hall (Room 214)

Free Admission

(215) 641-6505 for additional information

Montgomery County Community College  
1994-1995 Lively Arts Series

THROUGHOUT OCTOBER 1994

*FOCUS ON POLITICS:*  
A 5-PART INTERVIEW/TALK SHOW AT  
MCCC

◆ **Wednesday, October 5, 12:15 p.m.**

**Dr. Kolsky** opens the series with his talk "The Reign of Error Continues: Humorous Observations on the World of Politics."

◆ **Wednesday, October 12, 12:15 p.m.**

**Dr. Carmen Mayer**, Professor of Political Science at Charles University in Prague, addresses the topic "Russia and the former Soviet Bloc Nations at the Crossroads."

◆ **Wednesday, October 19, 12:15 p.m.**

**Professor George Phillips**, of MCCC, expresses his views about the 1994 U.S. elections.

◆ **Wednesday, October 26, 12:15 p.m.**

**Dr. Thomas Ricks**, Professor of History at Villanova University shares his extensive knowledge of Middle Eastern history and politics in discussing "Israel and the Palestinians: The Difficult Road to Peace."

◆ **Thursday, October 27, 7:30 p.m.**

**Mr. Joseph Szabo**, editor of *The Finest International Political Cartoons of Our Time* (1994) and editor-in-chief of *Witty World*, an international journal of political cartoons, explores the world of political cartoons.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

presents

**FOCUS ON POLITICS: ELECTIONS 1996**

An Interview/Talk Show Spanning Four Sessions

***HOST: TOM KOLSKY***

**Schedule and Guests**

- October 16**      **The Issues and the Candidates**  
Guests: Professor Albert Mills  
          Professor Kevin Baird  
          Professor George Phillips
- October 23**      **Party Spokespersons Talk About the  
Issues and the Candidates**  
Guests: Ms. Rebecca Hunt, Executive  
          Director of the Montgomery County  
          Democratic Committee —  
  
          Mr. Frank Bartle, Chairman of the  
          Montgomery County Republican  
          Committee
- October 30**      **Political Humor: How Cartoonists in  
the U.S. and Abroad View American  
Politics**  
**Demonstration and Dialogue with Host**  
Guest: Joseph Szabo, editor and publisher of  
          *Witty World*
- November 13**    **An Assessment of the Elections of  
1996**  
Guests: Professor Richard Marshall  
          Professor Carmen Mayer  
          Professor George Phillips

**12:20-1:30 p.m.**

**Science Center 214  
Montgomery County Community College  
Blue Bell, PA**

***FOCUS ON POLITICS***  
**AN INTERVIEW/TALK SHOW AT MCCC**  
**OCTOBER 1998**

Dr. Tom Kolsky, professor of History and Political Science at Montgomery County Community College, will moderate *Focus on Politics: Elections 1998*, a four-part interview/talk show on political developments in 1998. The events are scheduled for three consecutive Wednesdays.

All will be in the Science Center Auditorium 214

October 7, 12:20 p.m. *The Presidency in Crisis*

Angela Ambers-Henderson

an attorney and director of the Criminal Justice program at MCCC

John J. Lawn

former chairman of the division of Social Sciences at MCCC

October 14, 12:20 p.m. *The Russian Crisis*

Carmen Mayer

a world traveler who has taught at the Charles University in Prague, and currently adjunct professor of History and Political Science at MCCC

Kevin Baird

professor of Economics at MCCC

October 14, 7:00 p.m. *The Presidency in Crisis*

Angela Ambers-Henderson

John J. Lawn

George Phillips

former professor of History and Political Science at MCCC

October 21, 12:20 p.m. *Back to the Issues in 1998*

George Phillips

Albert Mills

adjunct professor of Political Science at MCCC

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S  
LIVELY ARTS SERIES 1999-2000  
*MILLENNIUM MAGIC*

THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICE IN COOPERATION WITH  
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES DIVISION

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**ISSUES AND INSIGHTS:  
MILLENNIAL REFLECTIONS**

*OCTOBER 1999 INTERVIEW/TALK SHOW  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
CENTRAL CAMPUS*

HOSTED BY TOM KOLSKY

*PROGRAM*

**PART I - OCTOBER 6**

*TAMING THE BEAST: VIOLENCE IN AMERICAN LIFE*

GUEST PANEL

ANGELA M. AMBERS-HENDERSON, J.D.  
Director, Criminal Justice and Fire Science Programs, MCCC

MARTIN GELMAN, Ph.D.  
Professor of Psychology and Anthropology, MCCC

ROBERT P. SANDS, M.S.  
Police Sergeant and Criminal Justice Instructor, MCCC



**PART II - OCTOBER 13**

*THE UNITED STATES AS THE SOLE SUPERPOWER:  
THE GLORY AND THE BURDEN*

GUEST PANEL

RICHARD MARSHALL, Ph.D.  
Professor of History and Political Science  
and former Dean of Academic Affairs, retired, MCCC

CARMEN MAYER, Ph.D.  
Retired Professor of Political Science at Charles University, Prague,  
and adjunct Professor of History and Political Science, MCCC

**PART III - OCTOBER 20**

*RELIGION IN AMERICAN LIFE (I): OUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION TODAY*

GUEST PANEL

REVEREND TRUMAN THOMAS BROOKS III, M.Div.  
Senior Pastor, Christ United Methodist Church, Lansdale, PA.

SISTER ELLEN MURRAY, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Gwynedd Mercy College

RABBI DAVID RABEYIA, Ph.D.  
Specialist in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures and Professor of Hebrew and  
Judaic Studies, Bryn Mawr College



**PART IV - OCTOBER 27**

*RELIGION IN AMERICAN LIFE (II): THOUGHTS ABOUT THE MILLENNIUM*

GUEST PANEL

REVEREND TRUMAN THOMAS BROOKS III, M.Div.  
Senior Pastor, Christ United Methodist Church, Lansdale, PA.

MARTIN GELMAN, Ph.D.  
Professor of Psychology and Anthropology, MCCC