

# ★ VIEWPOINTS



Daniel Lee with a portrait of Marshall "Major" Taylor. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY DANIEL LEE

## LESSONS OF ENDURANCE, FORGIVENESS

Imagine, for a moment, Indianapolis back in 1895. The bicycle business was booming. Automobiles were in their infancy. That year, African-American teen Marshall "Major" Taylor faced overt and unrelenting racism. Yet he was a world champion bicycle racer in the making.

On June 30, 1895, 16-year-old Taylor won a 75-mile race from Massachusetts Avenue in Indianapolis to the town of Matthews in Grant County. Taylor's participation was kept secret because of segregation. (The next year the U.S. Supreme Court in Plessy v. Ferguson upheld segregation policies.)

In those days, a horse-drawn coach traveled about 50 miles on a good day, so 75 miles by bike was extraordinary. Taylor started last among the roughly 20 competitors and endured threats and torrential

rain on his way to victory, according to Andrew Ritchie's biography of Taylor.

On June 30, 2014 — 119 years after Taylor's victory — I plan on riding my bike from Mass Ave. to Matthews to pay tribute to Major Taylor and his legacy. Taylor remains unknown to many in Indiana. My goal is to pay homage to Taylor's accomplishments and character so that we may better appreciate him. During my ride, I will Tweet photos, observations and Major Taylor trivia using the hashtag #HonorMajorTaylor (@dlee hoss). I hope others will Tweet a tribute or thought about Taylor on June 30 using that hashtag.

Taylor's Indianapolis-to-Matthews victory helped launch his remarkable cycling career, in which he competed in France, Belgium, Italy and even Australia. He defeated many national champions before their home audiences. Tay-



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Guest columnist

lor confronted slurs, physical attacks and bullying from rivals and promoters alike. Despite such obstacles, he retained the steely determination that would make him a world professional sprint champion. He was among the first to cross the color line in pro sports.

His story is inspiring but sad. Taylor died in 1932 at 53 in the charity ward of a Chicago hospital. Yet, even in decline, he refused to be bitter. He was generous, caring. A good friend of mine, cycling author and historian Peter Nye, owns a prized first-edition of Taylor's autobiography. In it, Taylor in 1929 handwrote this wonderful inscription to the book's original owner:

*Many pleasant recollections of the good old bicycle days in around Indianapolis.*

*Yours very truly*  
*Major Taylor*

Given such an inscription, it is no surprise Major Taylor's best-known quote is as follows: "Life is too short for a man to hold bitterness in his heart."

★ Lee, of Carmel, is an avid cyclist and history buff and is the author of "The Belgian Hammer: Forging Young Americans into Professional Cyclists."

## Free speech at abortion clinics

By Carrie Campbell Severino

Eleanor McCullen, 77, is a grandmother who regularly visits her local abortion clinic to offer help to pregnant women who feel they have no choice but to have an abortion.

On Thursday, the Supreme Court struck down Massachusetts' attempt to create a no-speech zone on sidewalks within 35 feet of clinic entrances, vindicating Mrs. McCullen's First Amendment right to peacefully advocate for her beliefs. The court rightly insisted that Massachusetts enforce existing laws barring harassment and violence instead of creating new ones that literally draw lines on the ground to criminalize speech.

As the court concluded, "the prime objective of the First Amendment is not efficiency," but

protecting the free exchange of ideas.

Women aren't just voices in the abortion debate; they are also listeners. I filed a brief in this case on behalf of 12 women who wish they had known, before they had abortions, what they now understand: the mechanics of abortion, the biology of fetal development, and the availability of assistance to pregnant women in crisis.

These women are the real winners today.

The court should have gone further on one point: Massachusetts' law exempts clinic representatives from the no-speech zone, effectively taking their side against peaceful pro-life advocates when they reach the clinic.

But the First Amendment means the government may not discriminate between viewpoints simply because it favors one side.

This neutrality applies across the spectrum, from labor unions to gun rights advocates.

The alternative is chilling. A city controlled by industrial firms could allow management but not picketing workers to speak in front of striking businesses. A state fighting civil rights laws could refuse to issue licenses to marchers seeking racial equality. The 20th century is riddled with such examples; courts should never shy away from protecting the citizens' right to speak.

At bottom, this case isn't really about abortion at all. It's about whether the government can restrict speech it dislikes. The Bill of Rights answers that question unequivocally: of course not.

★ Severino is chief counsel and policy director of the Judicial Crisis Network. This article first was published in USA TODAY.

## No respect for pay TV industry

The pay television industry has become the Rodney Dangerfield of the corporate world. It gets no respect at all. Unlike Rodney's audiences, however, nobody is laughing. The cable and satellite TV industry has well earned its disrespect by a long-running pattern of customer abuse.

Pay television prices continue to climb much faster than the rate of inflation. Most subscribers have seen their bills increase up to 6 percent each year during the last decade. Cable and satellite television distributors force new channels into the lineup and charge subscribers for each additional channel. According to Nielsen Media Research, however, the average consumer watches only about 18 of the 180-plus channels he or she pays for. That 18-channel figure has remained the same for a decade, while distributors have added an average of 50, mostly unwatched, channels to the average customer's monthly bill.

Customers are tired of paying for content they don't want and don't watch. Yet, the pay television industry refuses to move toward a la carte programming in which consumers could select and pay for only those channels they prefer.

This is not a technical issue; the technology that would allow for a la carte pricing has been available for more than 20 years. Cable and satellite TV companies have no trouble blocking premium channels such as HBO or Showtime now.

The pay TV industry has long suffered from low consumer ratings, and the evidence keeps piling up. The American Customer Service Index researched 43 industries by polling consumers nationwide. Pay television was rated second from the bottom, with only Internet providers being ranked worse. Of course, for many Americans, TV and Internet services are provided by the same company.

The May issue of Consumer Reports featured a front-page headline that read "Break Free from Cable," and an inside article on customers' concerns about their cable distributors.

The number of Americans who pay for cable or satellite has dropped about 5 million in the past five years. A study by nScreenMedia shows 47 percent of these cord-cutters are "pretty happy" with their decision, and 37 percent are "extremely happy."

The primary motivation for cord-cutting is economic, with price increases forcing low-income consumers out of the market. The industry's response to make up lost revenue from cord-cutters has been to increase prices on the remaining customers, which will surely push even more consumers to ditch the service. Even though the pay television powerhouses are still flush with revenue for now, this can't be a sensible economic model for the long haul.

The industry should be troubled by the growing number of people now classified as cord-nevers, young adults setting up homes who have no interest in using their limited paychecks to pay for television. Many can satisfy their video needs through free over-the-air television or through their mobile devices.

The industry has acted in such a high-handed manner for so long simply because it could. Americans love television, and getting it through a provider made sense at one point. Many providers have operated in low-competition environments over the years.

Then there is the lobbying muscle the pay television industry brings to bear on Congress and the FCC. The huge money spent for lobbying by cable companies and associations makes the health care, gun and tobacco lobbies look like pikers. This helps explain why legislation introduced in Congress a year ago to force cable companies to offer consumers a la carte pricing went nowhere.

Gavin Bridge, director of media insight for Ipsos market research, said in a recent report, "Now is a critical time for providers to act preemptively if they want to win over new customers and hold on to their viewers." According to Bridge, a la carte pricing would be such a preemptive move. That, however, would assume that the pay television industry cares about consumers, a trait that has been little in evidence historically.

★ McCall is a professor of communication at DePauw University in Greencastle, and author of "Viewer Discretion Advised: Taking Control of Mass Media Influences." Email him at jeffmccall@depauw.edu. Follow him on Twitter: @Prof\_McCall.

**Jeffrey McCall**  
Columnist



Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

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