

Letters to the Editor

Memphis, Sunday, January 28, 1973

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Section 6

Expressway Decision Blasted

To The Commercial Appeal:

With the assurance that that the machinations of his decision will not reach him due to the termination of his tenure of office, Secretary John Volpe has reversed his previous approval of the route of Interstate 40, through Overton Park, again indicating that government of the people, for the people, by the people, is perishing from this nation and that a vociferous minority will overcome the demands of the silent majority.

Too late we are learning that the United States is no longer the government by the consent of the majority, when a public servant of the Government backs down as a coward capitulating to a very small minority.

To satiate the claims of the so-called 'environmentalists,' Volpe has seen fit to side with those whose provincialism continues to thwart the progress of Memphis, this city whose potential prosperity has been hampered so many times by a few 'peanut brained' citizens whose future outlook is no farther away than the tip of their very short noses.

Memphis is being held up to ridicule by millions of Americans who have watched with interest, the childish blocking of a major trans-continental highway by less than a mile of uncompleted construction wholly within the City of Memphis. Nearing completion, a magnificent bridge spanning the great Mississippi, bringing to Memphis an unparalleled opportunity to take her place as the "Metropolis of Mid-America," we who desire progress must sit back and wonder with amazement that such purile obstructionism can block our future prosperity.

RICHARD H. KEECH.

1904 Linden

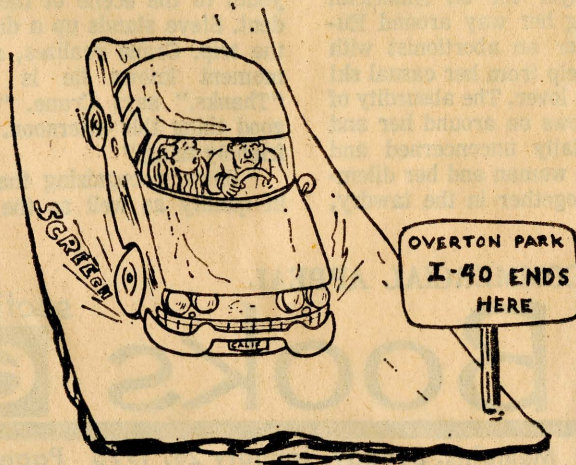
ALREADY USED

To The Commercial Appeal:

For years the overhead electric trolley wires and street car rails have been using this route through the park, and at the present time the gasoline bus of the Memphis Transit Authority is using this very same route, and it is therefore absurd for Volpe to say that this is inconsistent with environmental laws. Certainly the "clang-clang" of the trolley, and the MTA's gasoline operated bus are more noisy and more polluting.

The Committee for Preservation of Overton Park succeeded: President

"OH JOHN, ... DOESN'T MEMPHIS HAVE SOME BEAUTIFUL TREES."



To The Commercial Appeal:

This one picture expresses all the shame and dismay I have concerning what has become over the "Overton Park Expressway" and the national reflection on Memphis than I could ever give in a full letter. Why is it always Memphis? Why?

ELVIN M. SLEDGE

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Dr. Arlo Smith, vice president Mrs. William Deupree, and most especially the attorney who received the travel expense money and the fees. It would be most interesting to know exactly how much money has been spent by the committee. They were able to avoid the will and desire of the majority of the people.

It would be interesting also to know if any of this group would spend one dime to feed a hungry down-and-out human person in need of food, etc.

Yet this Committee for Preservation of Overton Park will waste the tax dollars by choosing a route other than the present route which has been used for years.

STEWART B. SCOTT

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VOLPE UPHELD

To The Commercial Appeal:

Your editorial said the decision of Transportation Secretary John Volpe to reject the Overton Park expressway was a "deep disappointment." To whom and why? To you — because you wanted a different ruling? Would you have had him ignore the will of Congress and the Supreme Court because their desire to protect

parklands and our total environment does not coincide with your wishes?

Completion of the northern I-240 will obviously provide not only "some relief," but the obvious alternative to I-40. Comparing environmental impact statements on the two routes, you will see that the right-of-way on I-240 will be twice the width of the park route. It is projected to carry from 74,930 to 170,570 vehicles per day. Do you think that number of vehicles should be fed into the paralleling east-west I-40 Park route projected to carry 77,000 vehicles per day and this traffic to merge into a midtown interchange with still another interstate highway, I-255, headed for a bridge that could never carry that traffic?

Or, as the planners estimate for 1985, if only one per cent of this is through traffic, where would all those automobiles go or park?

I-240 north may not be the direct east-west expressway some people want, but it is only 2 or 3 miles longer than the park expressway from interchange to interchange, and Memphians have not shied away from the southern I-240 with its circumferential sweep serving a great area of Memphis and adding to its growth.

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