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**Received(Date):** 11 JUL 2002 17:55:29  
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**Subject:** : Dallas Morning News Editorial

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RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)  
CREATOR: Brett M. Kavanaugh ( CN=Brett M. Kavanaugh/OU=WHO/O=EOP [ WHO ] )  
CREATION DATE/TIME: 11-JUL-2002 17:55:29.00  
SUBJECT: : Dallas Morning News Editorial  
TO: [REDACTED]  
READ: UNKNOWN  
TO: Matthew E. Smith ( CN=Matthew E. Smith/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [ WHO ] )  
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READ: UNKNOWN  
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Justices denied: Attacks on Judge Owen are unwarranted 07/11/2002

There's a great saying about how everyone is entitled to one's own opinion, but not to one's own facts. Those intent on undermining President Bush's nominees to the federal judiciary need to remember that. In this free country, they are entitled to voice their concerns. And if they do so in a mature and constructive way, the nomination process and the country will be better off for it. Unfortunately, these days, that rarely happens.

It is not so surprising that the Senate confirmation process has, in the last two decades, gotten so destructive, hyper-partisan and downright nasty. It is terribly disconcerting.

Some say this whole trend started back in 1986 when Democrats savaged Robert Bork, President Reagan's nominee to the Supreme Court. Soon after, the word "Borking" made its way into the political lexicon. The shorthand definition: to do personal damage to the other guy's nominee for political gain. Both parties do it. Slander passing for political dissent.

It has to end, and now seems a good time to do it. After all, we have a popular chief executive halfway through his first four-year term and still the Democratic Senate continues to play childish games and hold up consideration of many of President Bush's nominees to the federal bench. They won't even give many a hearing, but their stalling tactics have served to give the left just enough time to devise the vile and shameful smear campaigns.

The latest target is Texas' Supreme Court Justice Priscilla Owen. A nominee to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, Ms. Owen is a well-liked and highly respected jurist. Her legal colleagues, in both parties, call her fair, reasonable and "smart as a whip."

A coalition of liberal groups reportedly planning a caravan to Washington

say she is a judicial activist who is ) in their words ) anti-consumer, pro-business and hostile to civil rights. If any of that were true, one suspects Texans might have caught wind of it during Ms. Owen's eight years on the Texas Supreme Court. Those who know her record best say she is being unfairly subjected to partisan mudslinging and misinformation

A typical example of distortion: Critics claim her opinion as a state high court justice in favor of Enron showed bias because of a campaign contribution from the Houston company. In truth, the ruling involved a technicality and the entire Texas Supreme Court concurred. The contribution had been made years before when she was a district judge.

For all this abuse, Ms. Owen has not even been given the courtesy of having a hearing date set. That is unacceptable. She should get a hearing at once. And her critics should hold their tongues until the president's nominee gets a chance to be heard.