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Letters to the editor

**'Virus crossed the spotlights and crowds'**

**AFTER HEARING** the news that Magic Johnson was HIV-positive, my first reaction was to clutch my chest and gasp for breath. Now I need something to strike out against. There is no way to make me understand this cold, malicious thief called AIDS. If this virus can cross the spotlights and the cheering crowds to affect Magic, then surely it can affect me in my cozy little corner of the world. God bless Magic; he is man enough to have come forward and announced his intentions of becoming a spokesman for AIDS. At a time when he needs support, he is still the hero trying to help others. Although he will still be seen in public and on television, that charming personality and easy smile will not be as warm to me as it was before. I am afraid that I will only see pain beneath the smile, and it will take a miracle to lift the depression that engulfs me at this moment.

DELORES F. PHILLIPS  
Cleveland

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## Nowhere to turn

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Gov. Michael S. Dukakis has left me with a sad choice this year. There is no cheek left to turn. He has rejected Jesse Jackson on one side and Sen. John Glenn on the other. I am more outraged by the way he has disregarded Jackson than by the fact that he has done it. He has totally disrespected the man and so blatantly that I am left to wonder about the integrity of Dukakis.

I have seen the, "I don't care who I step on getting to the top," attitude before. This time I am taking it personally. Dukakis has stepped on me, and George Bush has played the part of vice president so well that I am not sure who he really is.

In all due respect to those who struggled for my right to vote, this year I will bypass the polls.

DELORES F. PHILLIPS  
Cleveland

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# Linda Miller

## A life of love and sacrifice

Linda Miller was nominated by Delores Phillips. She wrote:

““Oh, yes you can” and “Sure, you do.”

It is possible that we would never have known the strength of our sister had we not found ourselves motherless and homeless on the streets of Cleveland. We were four children, ranging in ages from 5 to 16, and we did exactly what was expected of us. We scattered, dropped out of school, and became hostile and rebellious individuals. We would undoubtedly have gone through life that way had it not been for Linda and her philosophy of “Oh, yes you can” and “Sure, you do.”

At the age of 16, she was determined to get an education. She completed high school on a prayer, and nursing school on a stipend. Then she got busy. She reeled us in, one by one, and encouraged us to reach out to each other long after we had forgotten how to touch or feel anything positive. We were no longer children, but she held on with a grip so strong it did not allow for even one of us to slip back into the gutter.

It surely did not happen overnight, but in the long run she awakened a nurse, a building engineer and a police detective. Collectively, we remember distrusting the world, sleeping in doorways, and getting comfortable on welfare. We also remember Linda telling us to wake up, to which we each responded, “I can’t.”

—“Oh, yes you can.” Always that “Oh” for emphasis, “Yes, you can.”

To our, “I don’t want to,” came her, “Sure, you do.” And we did, because we did not know how to argue her philosophy, and we had a strong, loving hand to shake and wake us up.

The day Linda Miller’s mother died suddenly and unexpectedly of pneumonia was the day four children, ages 6 through 17, took on the world. “We became each other’s mothers and fathers,” said Miller.

She remembers her mother telling her several months before she died that if anything ever happened to her, she wanted them to stay together. Those words gave



MARK WILSON / ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHER

Linda Miller

Linda the drive to carry out her mother’s wishes, no matter the obstacles and regardless of the cost.

Their father had died a few years before. It was hard for the children. Close relatives were unable to care for all of them. As they grew, life became tougher, but Miller only thought about her family, their needs and how she was going to keep them together. At one time, all of them lived in her apartment. They needed to be together and away from negative influences. “My family is important,” says Miller, “they are my life, and all I think about is their happiness.”

At one point, during their struggle, the fabric had torn apart. They couldn’t feel, they didn’t hug, there was no closeness. It was Miller who never gave up. No matter what, she held her siblings together.

Miller’s job as a nurse transferred her to Maryland in 1980, but she was only a phone call and plane ride away. When her sister’s husband died, Miller flew to be by her side. One week wasn’t enough, and Miller lost her job due to the time she spent with her family when they needed her most. That’s sacrifice.

A constant flow of love has found its way from Miller’s heart to her pen. Her first ethnic romance novel, “Time Out For Love” will hit the bookshelves this year. “Romance novels reinforce family values, love and relationships,” says Miller, “they’re not only for women; men are beginning to read and learn from them. It’s the relationships that are important.” Her protagonist was her first romantic encounter in Cleveland.

How can you repay someone who has done so much, given so much? Eternity is not long enough. “She saved our lives. I could never pay her back for what she’s given me,” says sister Delores Phillips.

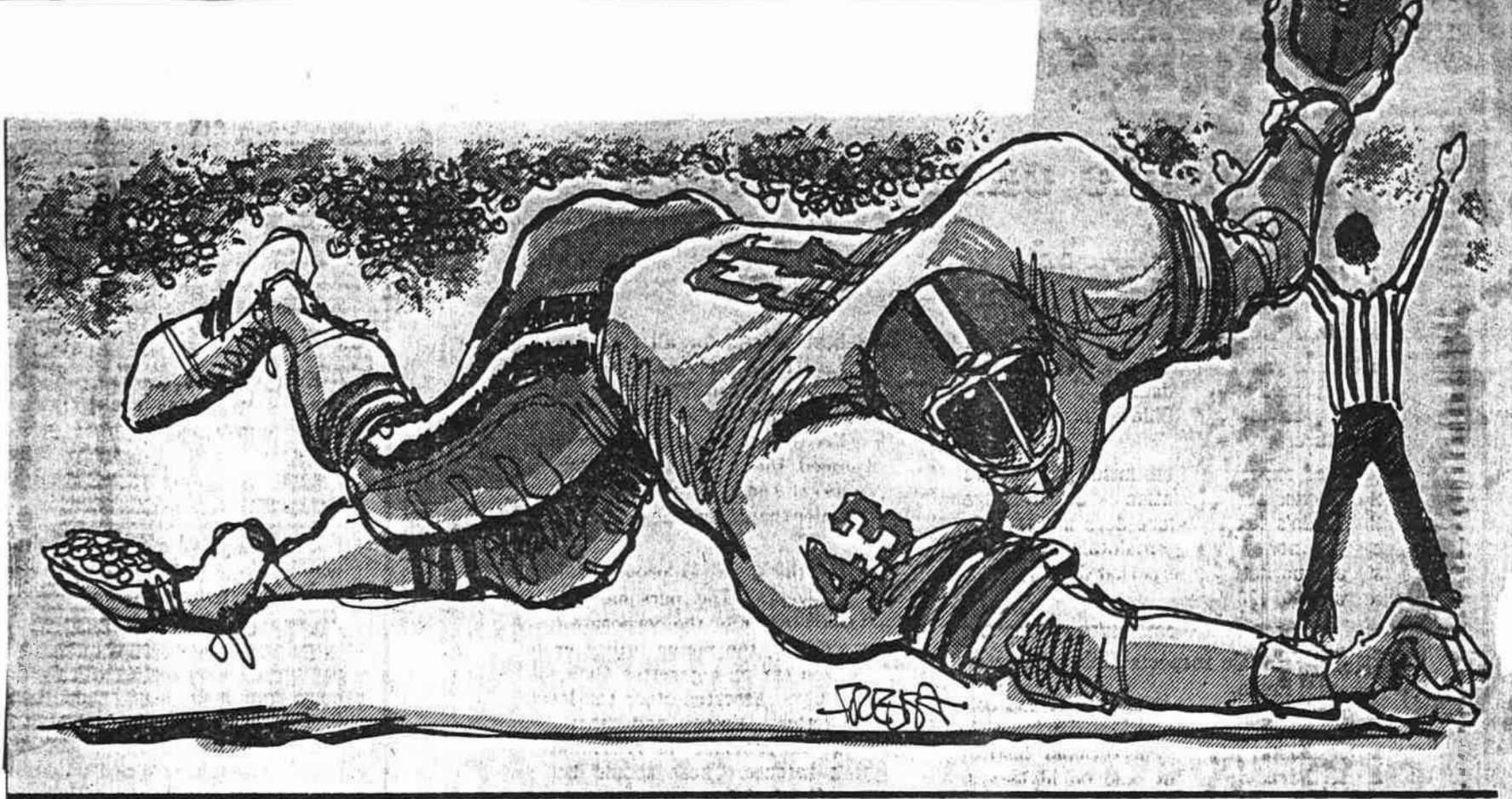
The title of her novel could be a quiet, personal testimonial of Miller’s resolve to always stop and take time out for love.

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## ***'Cleveland like Mudville after Casey struck out'***

Thanks to a great team. The game was football and there was no Casey for the team, but I'm sure Cleveland felt like the Mudville crowd on Sunday afternoon.

It has been more than just a great football season with hopes for the Super Bowl. The greatest miracle of the Cleveland Browns was in uniting the hearts of this city in a way that I have never seen before. For this season we were able to laugh, cry and hope as one. There was a positive feeling in the air that will not be soon

forgotten. In this cold season the Browns warmed our hearts and left us with a feeling of pride.

Look for us next season. We will be the orange and brown bodies in the stands with our heads held high, thanks to the Browns.

DELORES PHILLIPS  
Cleveland

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