

# THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

## Berkeley marks long-ago protest for free speech

**Michelle Locke**

Associated Press

Oct. 9, 2004 12:00 AM

BERKELEY, Calif. - Forty years ago, Free Speech Movement protesters at the University of California-Berkeley were hauled off in handcuffs. On Friday, they were welcomed back with open arms.

A noon rally featuring former presidential hopeful Howard Dean was the highlight of a week of events that included lectures and teach-ins commemorating the long-ago protest against a ban on political activities on campus.

"There has been a complete change," says John Cummins, Berkeley's associate chancellor.

The Free Speech Movement began in October 1964 when police arrested activist Jack Weinberg for handing out leaflets about civil rights.

It's hard to imagine that rule today. Sproul Plaza, where Weinberg was arrested, is the site of campaigns promoting everything from opinions on the Middle East to the merits of affirmative action.

Back in 1964, police put Weinberg into a squad car but couldn't go anywhere because thousands of students surrounded the vehicle in a 32-hour protest.

Several students scrambled up on the car to speak, after considerately removing their shoes. The 1964 protest was a well-dressed and polite affair, unlike the upheaval that came in later years. Among the speakers was the late Mario Savio, who electrified the crowd with his call to "put your bodies on the gears . . . upon all the apparatus" and change the system.

This time around, police lent a squad car to the erstwhile protesters to add authenticity to Friday's rally.

"We were surprised that they were so readily amenable to it," says Michael Rossman, one of the leaders of the movement and an organizer of the 40th-anniversary commemoration.

Other scheduled speakers included student body President Misha Leybovich, Chancellor Robert Birgeneau, and state Assemblywoman Jackie Goldberg, who was a Free Speech Movement leader. The rally was to be followed by teach-ins focusing on civil liberties issues.

The Free Speech Movement culminated on Dec. 2, 1964, when 1,000 students marched

into Sproul Hall for a sit-in and nearly 800 were arrested. Soon after, the faculty voted to drop speech restrictions.

But the movement went beyond that, becoming a catalyst for the Vietnam War protests that followed.

For years, that was a distinction that Berkeley administrators found hard to embrace. In the early 1990s, a memorial to the movement was installed on Sproul Plaza but was forbidden to contain the phrase "Free Speech Movement."

But over time, attitudes mellowed.

Cummins, who was a student in Wisconsin in the 1960s, thinks administrators back then "simply were not ready or prepared to deal with a group of young people who had very strong feelings about a range of issues."

Rossman is pleased to see administrators cooperating with the commemoration but says the fight for free speech isn't over.

"It's easy at this point to wear a cloak of respect for the heroic victory 40 years ago of the Free Speech Movement," he said. "But it's more difficult to actually act in stalwart support of free speech. And that's worth mentioning because free speech and civil liberties in general are under more vicious and broader attack than they've been for at least 50 years."

<http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/news/articles/1009freespeech09.html#>