

THE DOMINION

Post[®]



Morgantown, West Virginia

THE DOMINION POST SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 1998

Morgantowner set to go to the mat for classmates at Yale

Zach Kaufman set to grapple with the issues

BY KIM ORIOLE

The Dominion Post

He campaigned the old-fashioned way — shaking hands and talking to people — and he plans to fulfill his presidency the same way.

Zach Kaufman is the Morgantowner who went off to the big city, or rather the big college, and made his mark.

Kaufman will return to Yale University for his junior year this fall as the president of all 5,500 souls at this Ivy League school in Connecticut.

He believes he was the first West Virginian elected student-body president at Yale, but that didn't impress him much.

What has impressed him?

The fact that he and his cohorts in the school's student government, the Yale College Council, could persuade Yale administrators to change the way they figure financial aid.

Kaufman, 19, said the new plan is better for poor and middle-class students and foreign students. It will cost the school money, although they wouldn't say how much, but the president still did it.

"This showed that students have a strong voice," he said. "A lot of people say, 'This should change.' But they don't put the research and thought into it. We worked to get student support to change financial aid. The fact that it was changed shows that a student-led initiative can really have an effect."

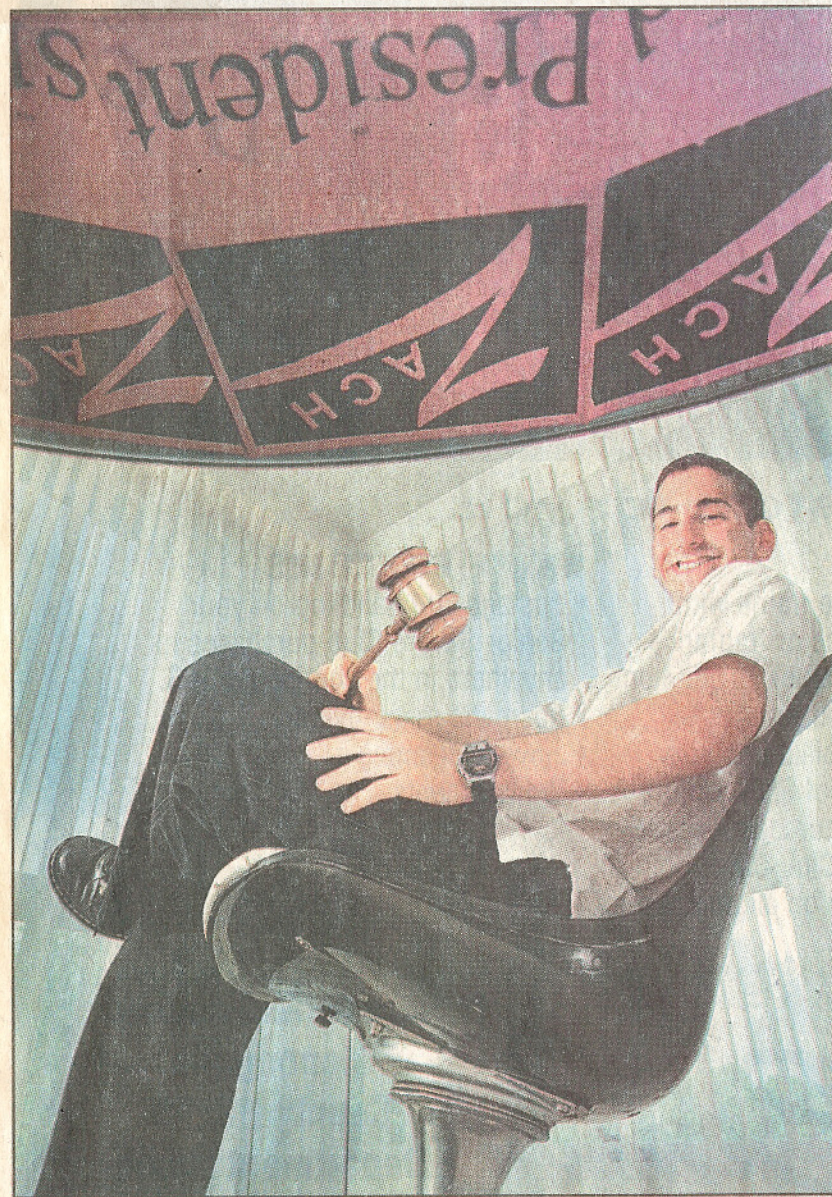
And it caught the eye of a lot of people.

His hard work helped vault Kaufman from treasurer of the student body to its top office.

Though Kaufman never joined student government in high school at Shady Side Academy, in Pittsburgh, his mother wasn't surprised that he dived in and was elected president in his sophomore year.

Romaine Kaufman is a master of understatement: "He's very determined."

He's already shown that in wrestling. He went out for the sport in high school and was terri-



John Bright/The Dominion Post

Zach Kaufman vows to get two-ply toilet paper into the dorms at Yale University, where he is student body president. "Harvard Has This" his campaign literature said this spring.

YALE

FROM PAGE 1-A

ble at it for two years, "then something just clicked."

Kaufman stuck with it, and earned all-America honors in the National Collegiate Wrestling Association last winter at Yale. He came in second in the nationals among college club teams behind a University of Georgia wrestler.

Now, Kaufman's taking the devotion he learned from wrestling and aiming it at his new pursuits.

Though he loves the power of wrestling, he's giving it up this year to dedicate 50 hours a week to his presidency.

"I really want to focus completely on student government," Kaufman said. "I figured I was elected to this serious post, and I ought to take it seriously.

"It was very symbolic, too," he said. "I wanted everyone to realize how serious I was, how much time I want to spend."

He plans to go around at dinner time to the cafeterias on campus to ask for students' ideas and opinions. He'll be at lots of different student events so they'll know he is accessible and wants to work for them.

"Being student-government president is a sacrifice," Kaufman said. "You're on call 24 hours a day. But the more time you put into it, the better it will be."

Kaufman will take only three classes each semester next year, but he said he'll still graduate in Yale's required four years because he took summer classes last year and will again this summer.

Kaufman hits the books hard enough to succeed at Yale, but he's no bookworm. Besides being

a wrestler, he's a rock climber, runner, water skier, downhill skier and drummer.

One of his campaign promises makes most adults laugh, but he says it's an important detail to students. He vows to get two-ply toilet paper into Yale dorms.

Like any 19-year-old, Kaufman jokes and often laughs, but his thoughts run deep.

He wrote a fascinating guest column for the *Yale Daily News* about the difficulty of finding love in the high-pressure, beer-drinking world of an Ivy League school.

As president, he wants to push to get more women and minorities in tenured professorships at Yale.

He hopes to get at least one dining hall open so students can get late-night food.

And he will push to get bus service from campus to area malls and outlets to help students without cars.

All this will take work, but Kaufman said he's ready for it.

And he's had a good example in his dad, Dr. Howard Kaufman.

Dr. Kaufman is a brain surgeon at the WVU School of Medicine. But, nearing 60, he wanted more, so he signed up and also became a WVU law student.

Zach hopes to go to law school after Yale, and he said he just might catch up to his father and they could graduate together.

"My dad is one of my closest political advisers," the younger Kaufman said. "We talk about law all the time. I talk to him probably every day. He's one of my role models."