

Opinion

Give Tim Walz his credit

By **LILLIAN CURTIN**
Opinion Editor

While many people recognize the hardship of former Vice President Kamala Harris's 107-day presidential campaign, we seem to forget that Minnesota Governor Tim Walz's campaign for vice president was even shorter.

A short campaign is barely enough time to get in the hearts of voters by interviews, get out the vote events and endorsements. A 91-day campaign is hard enough, but since then, he's been facing challenge after challenge, and he's not been given the credit he deserves.

Before his race, Walz served in the military for 24 years, going into the service at only 17 years old. He's been serving his country in different ways since then, improving healthcare for veterans and funding the National Guard, according to a list of his accomplishments by Democrats Abroad.

Despite this, he has been labeled an "unforgivable coward" by veterans featured on Fox News. During his campaign for Vice-President, the charismatic, kind father of two was harassed by right-wing media. That's something you can expect in a highly polarized presidential race. However, the attacks reached his children.

Walz's disabled son was mocked for being emotional, when he was simply proud of his dad. An emotional moment of pride and love was called "weird," as Ann Coul-

ter put it. Gus Walz has a nonverbal learning disorder (NVLD), ADHD and an anxiety disorder. Walz was thrown into the ring and then the media came for his family. It was just cruel.

He handled the loss of the race with class. But he's not out of the woods when it comes to MAGA supporters' harassment.

We are in the most politically divisive time that there has ever been. With division like this, political violence tends to follow. And it did.

Minnesota State Representative Melissa Hortman, her husband Mark and their dog were all assassinated in June of this year in an act of political violence. Instead of giving his support after the governor lost a colleague and a friend, President Donald Trump claimed that calling Walz would be a "waste of time." He went on to call him a "mess."

He was met with ridicule instead of support, the weight of his state on his shoulders and the president of his own country against him. The president of the same country that Hortman died serving as a representative.

On top of this, right-wing media followed the president's lead in turning their back on Walz. Many went as far as spreading conspiracy theories that Walz had a role to play in the assassinations.

That was only a couple months ago. Just this past week in Minneapolis, there was a

school shooting at Annunciation Catholic School, where two children were killed and 18 others were injured.

These are horrible tragedies that Minnesota families have had to face over the past year. As Governor, the responsibilities that come with the aftermath are on him. It seems he can't escape hardship since his bid for Vice-President. Some having to do with the race, some not. All are horrific and he's been dealing with it

gracefully, despite the odds against him.

Yet, it feels as though no one is paying attention to just how much Governor Walz is dealing with. We see it in the news, but he's the one dealing with it while being constantly brought down by certain groups of people.

You don't have to agree with his politics to admit that he is too good a man to have these cards dealt to him, and it's time we acknowledge it.



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Tim Walz at the Preston Veterans Home in Minnesota on June 27, 2024

When a show misses its mark... and its heart

By **NICOLE GEMMATI**
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With lavish parties, privileged teenagers and an impressive amount of scandals, The CW's "Gossip Girl" followed the lives of wealthy teens in Manhattan's Upper East Side. The television series was appropriately narrated by Gossip Girl, a mysterious blogger who chronicles the intimate details of Manhattan's elite.

Based on the novels by Cecily von Ziegesar, the series premiered in 2007 and was developed by Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage, both veterans of the television industry. The show quickly gained a cult following, ending in 2012 after six seasons. But as the series finale states, Gossip Girl never dies.

Viewers' introduction to the Upper East Side reveals that it's not as perfect as it's perceived to be. The first season serves as a social commentary on classism, with the majority of main characters looking down on households with a lower income.

Despite their carefully curated exterior, viewers get an inside look to the hidden complexities of the main characters. Blair Waldorf (Leighton Meester), the queen bee, suffers from an eating disorder brought on by her mom and societal expectations that heighten her insecurities. Golden boy Nate Archibald (Chace Crawford) struggles with a lack of autonomy in his own life, with his parents planning out every step for him.

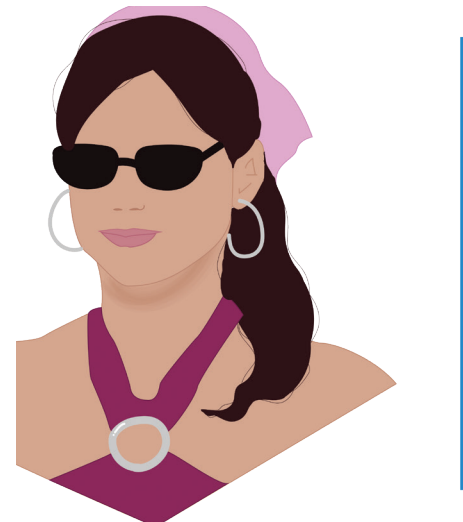
The show quickly deviates from this viewpoint in favor of soap opera-esque drama, leaving many characters to flail around with zero character development.

Much of this drama is contrived to gain more viewership, and while this is a good money-making tactic, the show ends up becoming exactly what the first season was making fun of.

Writers contrive convoluted plots to move the story along, instead of choosing what a character would actually do. This decision further alienates

viewers from the two-dimensional characters they see on screen, leading to a thin line of relatability.

The characters' actions show viewers that the rich and privileged offer no surprises, with the majority, if not all, doing whatever it takes to achieve their goals. They often show no remorse harming people in the process and hardly ever learn from their



actions. Without a morally sound character present, it is hard to find a single character to root for.

"The OC," Schwartz's and Savage's pioneer show, followed a similar plot, revolving around the lives of wealthy teenagers in Orange County, California. But unlike their predecessor, whose jokes are masked as an insult, "The OC"'s characters incorporate banter that reminds viewers of the family dynamic that makes the show so lovable.

The show focuses primarily on the Cohen and Cooper families. Parents are heavily involved in their kids' lives, especially when they are in trouble, and show genuine care for them.

Whereas in "Gossip Girl," parents are hardly present and are often too caught up in their own drama to reprimand and check on their

children, letting them run around the city, doing whatever they please.

Taylor Momsen, who portrays Jenny Humphrey, the youngest of the main characters, states in an interview that the Humphreys are "not a very traditional family, but when you look a little deeper, it's like a very loving family."

While this may ring true for the first season,



the family's dynamics quickly deteriorate, with the patriarchal figure showing double standards towards his son in later seasons. Jenny's mental state deteriorates due to constant bullying and a desire to fit in, but she is not offered anything other than a punishment.

Familial relationships are not the only ones ruined in favor of drama. "Gossip Girl" hinges on the friendship between its characters, who have known each other since kindergarten. But their constant fighting, betrayal of trust and insults establish that these are merely friendships of convenience and familiarity.

The show also pairs every character in a relationship at least once, which complicates the years of so-called friendship.

Blair and Serena van der Woodsen (Blake

Lively) are marketed as die-hard besties, though it wouldn't seem that way to the average viewer. The two are constantly up and down, dealing with cheating scandals, sabotaging each other's futures and acting with jealousy.

Summer Roberts (Rachel Bilson) and Marissa Cooper (Mischa Barton) from "The OC" are said to be best friends and act like it. They never date each other's boyfriends, and they are always there to lend a shoulder to cry on. The only fight they've had throughout the four seasons stems from Summer's concern over Marissa's toxic relationship, and in turn, Marissa's decline in mental health.

Aside from Jenny, the "Gossip Girl" characters rarely act their age, although they are in their junior year of high school when the story begins. Many storylines revolve around drama that has nothing to do with school, and the mention of college fades as the series continues, though multiple characters attend university.

It's not uncommon for characters to own real estate at the age of eighteen in "Gossip Girl," and they often dress in luxury outfits while running simple errands. While Marissa is known for her Chanel, she, as well as her friends, still look like they pulled their outfits from a closet and not a photoshoot.

The heart of "Gossip Girl" went out the window near the end of season one, most likely because of the writers strike of 2008. Blair turns into an even worse mean girl than before, with hardly any depth to redeem her, while Nate turns into a carbon copy of his parents that his season one self would despise.

With a well-acclaimed show like "The OC" as their starting point, it's eye-opening to see how Schwartz's and Savage's writing turned from poking fun at the rich to being fully ingrained with them. In a way, the further they were integrated into the world of stardom, the more they followed the "Gossip Girl" pipeline and became everything they ever hated.