

Dear Abby

## Greatness Is Unrelated to Sexual Choice

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: The question of Michelangelo's possible homosexuality was recently discussed in your column. Irving Stone, the biographical novelist, stated that he could not "find a scintilla of evidence to support the accusation that Michelangelo was a homosexual."

As an art historian, whose major focus has been on Michelangelo, I believe there is a great deal of evidence to the contrary.

For example, Michelangelo's own work is visual evidence that he was preoccupied with the nude male body. (Thirty-five of his nudes in "the Last Judgment" in the Sistine Chapel were given drapery in 1564 because they were considered "too suggestive.")

Michelangelo's contemporaries knew that he was more attracted to males than females. In 1533, when Michelangelo refused to take a new boy as an apprentice, he wrote, "If I were but to see him, I should pursue him not only into the house, but into bed."

All of this is irrelevant, of course, because Michelangelo was a great artist whether he was a homosexual or not.

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DEAR ABBY: I haven't the slightest idea whether Michelangelo was gay or not, but I was appalled by Irving Stone's "defense" of Michelangelo in which he re-

fers to that possibility as an "accusation," a "charge" and a "slander" — as though homosexuality were some kind of awful crime.

It is precisely because of this kind of bigotry that we will never know how many Michelangelos shared love with members of their own sex.

BOB IN BERKELEY

DEAR ABBY: How tragic that countless young men and women growing up gay are going to find out from Irving Stone's comments on Michelangelo that to be homosexual is something one is "charged with," and that one can be slandered by being called gay. And even in this day of liberation, the homosexually inclined 15-year-old has to decide whether she/he is: 1) criminal, 2) psychotic or 3) both.

Why did the "experts" Irving Stone consulted neglect to tell him that Michelangelo's nephew changed all the "he's" to "she's" in Michelangelo's erotic sonnets written to young men?

And how could Stone have not heard of Bracci, whom Michelangelo literally drooled for, is beyond me! Sign me . . .

AN ANGRY MINISTER WITH A DEGREE  
IN ART HISTORY

DEAR ABBY: Whether Michelangelo was a practicing homosexual we many never know, but what differ-

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ence does it make? If it could be proven that he was, then what? Should we paint over the Sistine Chapel? After all, it shows God reaching out toward Adam—two muscular male figures almost touching! Heavens!!

When will society accept the fact that homosexuals are people? They are doctors, lawyers, clergymen, judges, teachers, artists. They are approximately 10

percent of the population.

Michelangelo was probably the greatest artist the world has ever known, and frankly what he did after he put down his brushes for the day is of no interest to me.

DISGUSTED IN OREGON  
DEAR READERS: Alas, perhaps Irving left a few stones unturned.