

OPINION: WHY IS



I readily concede that the style of humor has changed dramatically since 1982 and that the traditional boundaries on using profanity vanished long ago.

### **Four-letter words**

There were no prudes in the media or in political life in 1982; it was simply that we all exercised self-restraint (admirable or not) to avoid using the kind of language Wolf so casually employed in mixed company. We just weren't into self-embarrassment by drawing gasps from the audience at the shock value of four-letter words.

There were other limits recognized back then as well. Ridiculing the physical appearance of someone was forbidden, as was any reference to race, ethnicity, gender, or religion. Explicit comments or innuendos concerning sex were the greatest taboo of all.

It wasn't as if these qualities weren't discussed occasionally in private among a few, but building a speech around them and delivering it from a podium in front of a few thousand dinner-goers begged Tom Kean's question — "Why is this funny?" in

