

8 Little Pine Pl.
Franklin, Pa.
April 18, 1973

Received by
SECRETARY'S OFFICE
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DEPT. OF PUBLIC WELFARE
Rm. 10

Ms. Helene Wohlgemuth
Dept. of Public Welfare (?)
Harrisburg, Pa.

Madam:

This letter is being written in protest to your recent action concerning the dismissal of Dr. James McClelland as superintendent of Polk State School and Hospital. It is also a protest of so-called reasons cited by you, "the cruel, degrading, and inhumane conditions."

It is amazing to me that in a brief two hour visit you were able to make a sweeping judgment of an institution caring for two thousand eight hundred residents and employing one thousand eight hundred persons. The visit was obviously a token gesture to appease the PARC and the officials whose credentials to judge institutions for the retarded have yet to be revealed. The enclosed article reflects my feelings about the woman who is obviously "running the show" at the Department of Welfare.

The action taken by you was not aimed at helping the residents; it was merely an appeasement--one man became a scapegoat. Unfortunately you chose someone who has spent his life trying to meet the needs of the retarded and who is highly respected by residents, employees, and those in the field of mental retardation.

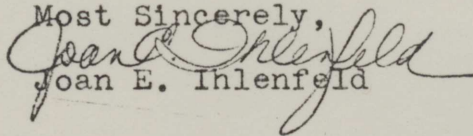
It is disgusting to me as a woman that you as a woman in position of authority should render such an outrageous and ludicrous decision based on twisted facts and half truths. I have made many visits to the institution and was aware of many inadequacies as are present in all aspects of human society. I was also aware though of the obvious efforts and strides made by Dr. McClelland and his staff in improving the institution. It is disgusting that you did not even take time to observe Polk and its programs and at least send a qualified, impartial committee to observe and make positive, definite recommendations for improvement.

In closing I must say that I can not believe you had the nerve to base your decision on the report of a woman whose judgment is highly questioned and a brief two hour tour by yourself. This is not a democracy when truly good people can be defamed by those who twist the facts for

what they feel to be some high purpose. It is unfortunate that they (PARC) are so busy "burning witches" that the real welfare of the retarded has been forgotten.

I would strongly suggest you revoke your "irrevocable" decision.

Most Sincerely,


Joan E. Ihlenfeld

copies:

Governor Milton Shapp
Senator Richard Frame
Representative Alvin Kahle