

Received in

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DEPT. OF PUBLIC WELFARE

Ref. to

April 20, 1973

Dear Sir:

The action taken against Dr. James H. McClelland, Jr. by the Secretary of Public Welfare is unwarranted and unjust. Dr. McClelland has served this institution faithfully since his employment here twenty years ago. Such an outrageous action can only take place when officials are either grossly misinformed or seeking selfish and shortsighted goals.

The charges leveled at Dr. McClelland were based on a biased, self-seeking, and vindictive group who do not mind using "character assassination" as a means to their end. The P.A.R.C. have managed to close Mrs. Wohlgenuth's eyes to the full truth about Polk State School and Hospital. The report that Mrs. Elkins submitted to the Secretary on March 27, 1973 entitled "A Visit to Polk State School and Hospital" is overly emotional, narrow-minded, and reeking of one-sided interpretation. In fact this report seems so grossly devoid of any objectivity that serious implications can be made that Mrs. E's report was simply a perfunctory bureaucratic document aimed at creating emotional appeal.

I am really at a loss to understand how such an action could take place. Although Mrs. Wohlgenuth has pledged publically that she will "clean up" the welfare department, and has done a good job in certain areas, it is beyond comprehension that she would allow the P.A.R.C. persuade her to take such drastic measures without conferring with professionals who are directly involved in daily programming.

In cases where serious accusations are made the Civil Service Commission based on the recommendation of the Welfare Department suspend pending an investigation of the allegations. Why did Mrs. Wohlgenuth deny Dr. McClelland a normal channel for resolution of the charges? Why did representatives from P.A.R.C. judge Dr. McClelland and the institution in such an incriminating manner? Why wasn't the Secretary aware of the playpens over two years ago? (Although playpens are unpleasant to look at, they are better than strait-jackets or drugs. The playpens have been in use at Polk for over ten years and were invented by Dr. Sydney Kaplan, who is now employed at Western State Hospital) These questions and many others should be answered by the Secretary and the P.A.R.C.

In conclusion, the action taken by the Secretary is disgraceful, self-defeating, negligent, dehumanizing and unwarranted. Come to Polk State School and Hospital and judge for yourself if it is the most depressing, dehumanizing and unprofessional place you've ever been. I think you will agree with me that Mrs. Elkin and the P.A.R.C have alot to learn.

Sincerely,

*Thomas W. Snyder*

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