

WILLIAM J. CAVANAUGH

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302 MASONIC BUILDING  
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April 19, 1973

Governor Milton Shapp  
Governor's Office  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

In re: Doctor James H. McClelland, his dismissal

Dear Governor:

I deplore most emphatically the firing of Doctor James H. McClelland, superintendent at Polk.

I am familiar with the reputation of the Doctor. I have had numerous occasions to talk to Father John Kirk, Catholic Chaplain at Polk, doctors and psychiatrists, employees and patients at this outstanding Pennsylvania Institution and I am aware of the fact that all of these people invariably have nothing but the highest of praise for the Superintendent.

They view him as being humane and willing to spend countless hours of his own time in the interest of patients and employees; compassionate but fair in handling the problems of the Institution, and of being diligent in protecting the rights of all individuals falling within his authority.

Primarily and most important of all he is universally regarded as being a PROFESSIONAL. Both by training and experience he has a reputation of being knowledgeable in advancing the welfare of all people associated with the Hospital.

I also have had numerous occasion to personally observe the operation at the Hospital, having visited and toured the Hospital and it is apparent on the most casual of observations that the Hospital is efficiently operating with an over-riding concern for the health and emotional and mental stability of the patients.

To summarily dismiss this most competent of public servants is completely unjust.

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This matter must be resolved by you. To permit this arbitrary action to stand would be a dis-service to the patients of the Hospital; unfair to a dedicated professional and certainly one which would have a vast political repercussion to you.

Unfortunately this deplorable episode has occurred at a time when there are knowledgeable people saying that many of your Appointees to prominent State positions are below the caliber required of their positions; that you are showing a bias and hostility to professionalism and catering to mediocrity or less.

The instant case does much to validate this accusation.

You are the only one that can dispel this belief. I know that I express the feeling and sentiments of thousands of Eri-ites when I request the immediate reinstatement of this eminent doctor.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM J. CAVANAUGH

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cc: State Welfare Secretary, Helene Wohlgemuth  
Erie Senator, Quentin Orlando

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