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April 20, 1973

Received in
SECRETARY'S OFFICE

APR 25 1973

DEPT. OF PUBLIC WELFARE

Mrs. Helene Wohlgemuth
Secretary of Welfare
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg
Pennsylvania

Re: James H. McClelland, M.D.
Superintendent
Polk State School and Hospital
Polk
Pennsylvania

Dear Mrs. Wohlgemuth,

In the Wednesday, April 18, 1973 edition of The Evening Chronicle, Allentown, Pennsylvania, I read an article with the caption as follows; "Patient Cage Draws Firing Of Doctor." I am enclosing a copy of this article for your perusal. In the Thursday, April 19, 1973 edition of The Morning Call, Allentown, Pennsylvania, I read an article with the caption "Three Polk Playpen Patients Stage Unprovoked Outbursts." A copy of this is also enclosed for your perusal.

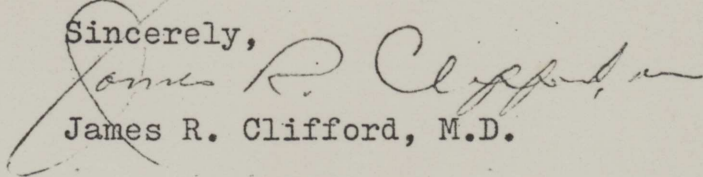
I have known Dr. James H. McClelland for approximately twenty three years. I had the distinct privilege of being a "Summer Intern" under Dr. McClelland at Polk State School during the summers of 1954 and 1955. I am now in the private practice of medicine in The Lehigh Valley where I have been since July 1958. Having been in practice for fifteen years I have met and been associated with a large number of physicians. I can honestly say that I have never had the privilege of knowing a more compassionate and concerned physician than Dr. McClelland. It is obvious that no one can be correct all the time, but I suspect Dr. McClelland has been wrong many times less than myself and many of my colleagues. It is with this in mind that I write you concerning these articles and the situation which provoked the writing thereof.

I strongly protest your action of dismissal of Dr. McClelland from his duties and strongly encourage you to reconsider the action which you have taken. It is rather obvious after reading these two articles, if they are in the least correct, that you have very little knowledge of the care of mentally retarded, especially those who become agitated. I am utterly appalled to think that you would fire a man of Dr. McClelland's ability, especially after his long tenure of handling this type of patient.

I would like to further inform you that I am an extremely dis-satisfied tax paying citizen, especially when I read quotes such as those attributed to you at a news conference following this dismissal. I quote from the article of Thursday, April 19, 1973, Morning Call, Allentown, Pennsylvania; "The rally was pretty much what we anticipated. He's been there a long time." This seems to be a rather juvenile response on your part. I would anticipate that anyone who has "been there a long time" would have at least as many, if not more enemies than friends if he were not doing an extremely adequate job. This obviously is not the case with Dr. McClelland, as his friends, I am sure far outnumber his enemies. Respect, certainly must be earned, not demanded. I respect Dr. McClelland. I am angered by Helene Wohlgemuth.

I sincerely hope, Mrs. Wohlgemuth, that you will respond to my concerns as voiced in this letter.

Sincerely,


James R. Clifford, M.D.

JRC:br
Encl.(2)