

Received in April 25, 1973  
SECRETARY'S OFFICE

APR 26 1973

Mrs. Helene Wohlgemuth  
Harrisburg, Pa.

Dear Madam:

DEPT. OF PUBLIC WELFARE

Ref. to

I am writing regarding the firing of Dr. McClelland  
at Polk State School and Hospital.

My sister, Adrienne Tomko, age 40, has been a resident of Polk for the last 24 years. She is severely retarded, not able to speak, and requires constant supervision. She is allowed to come home for holidays and summer vacations and appears to look forward to these visits. However, she is always anxious to return to Polk after the holiday is over. In all of our trips to Polk, we have found there is a lot of love and care shown toward the patients. In spite of the over-crowding, the institution is immaculate. The staff does a job that most of us would find appalling--the care of the retarded is one of the most frustrating--my sister was kept at home the first 16 years of her life and we know all the difficulties.

I think the publicity over the so-called "cages" is horrible. They were intended as play-pens for adults who will always be children. My parents, aged 70, agree that if it were necessary for their daughter to be restrained, a play-pen would be more desirable than heavy drugs or strait-jackets.

The persons in this matter who should be investigated are the law-makers who allowed the budget cuts resulting in the over-crowding and understaffing of Polk and similar hospitals. Also, I think if you were truly interested in the welfare of the patients at Polk, Dr. McClelland should have been retained until his successor (I hope temporary) had a chance to acclimate himself to the job. My parents returned Adrienne to Polk after the Easter holiday and spoke to Dr. White regarding the Medicare program and he was very honest



in admitting that he was "lost" --the job is too big to take over at a moment's notice. He is receiving calls from concerned parents who think their child may be mistreated or is being moved to another location. Many patients have aged parents who have been at peace knowing their child is being cared for at Polk, you have disrupted all of this.

I have yet to see anything in our local paper, the Herald, to agree with your thinking in this matter. Surely, all of us can't be wrong, there are 158 Mercer County residents at Polk and not one has spoken out against Dr. McClelland or Polk. Somehow, many of us feel this a purely political move, and it is very sad.

Sincerely,

*Mrs. Daniel L. Thanos*

Mrs. D.L. Thanos