

Saturday, September 15, 2018

Media Advisory

Note: John McCain had no involvement in the [Deaf President Now protest](#) at Gallaudet University in March 1988.

Commentary on IKJ's GU-Community self-identification/non-identification

An [article appearing online](#) dated August 18, 2010 by Janet L. Pray and I. King Jordan is accompanied by a footnote on the authors' names which states (emphasis added):

"Prior to retirement, Drs. Pray and Jordan were affiliated with Gallaudet University."

Yet, Jordan was awarded "president emeritus" status and is listed to that effect on the [Faculty and Administrator Emeriti](#) webpage of Gallaudet.edu.

Emeritus status is not simply an honorific category with no other consequences or implications, which seems to be what Jordan thinks by including that non-affiliation footnote with his name. (And that has to be *his* authorized inclusion of that footnote, since he is a co-author of the article. An editor would not be permitted to add it in without his full authorization.)

Emeritus/emerita status means that the individual has been specially recognized by the Gallaudet Board of Trustees to be considered *officially* a continuing (i.e., active and involved) member of the University community, continuing *into* and *through* retirement (and this includes some continuing benefits, such as library borrowing privileges, campus parking privileges, etc.) In other words, "retirement" for an emeritus or emerita member is considered to be a *status technicality*, indicating only a reduction in number of courses taught (typically even a total reduction to no classes taught), and/or indicating stepping down from an administrative position (including those administrators who did not have faculty appointments), etc., and of course when a person retires then they switch over to retirement pay (which, thanks in large part to the efforts of [Benjamin Schowe, Sr.](#), has been covered by the Federal Government since the Truman Administration).

Universities by their nature are primarily intellectual communities, inviting participation on an *informal* basis as well, hence the active involvement of alumni members, both "ex" and also those who graduated with degrees, as well as retired professors *without* formal emeriti status (including those who did not seek official emeriti status for whatever reason), retired staff, family members of current and former professors or staff members, administrators, etc., even just interested citizens who develop an interest and choose to participate (including those whose participation mostly or solely includes designating Gallaudet as a beneficiary in their will, contributing to the intellectual

community indirectly in that manner, by providing funding). It is in this sense that can speak of “the larger University Community,” or sometimes “the greater University Community.”

Historically at Gallaudet, “ex” status has not carried any type of strong stigma (“ex-” meaning “from before” or “formerly” – someone who was formerly a matriculating member of a class, but left that status before graduating, thereby attaining a qualified alumni status without an undergraduate degree from the institution in question). There are currently and have been many honored “ex” students, including Ben Soukup, E-’74, H-’00, James Macfadden, E-’62, Dr. Bobbie Beth Scoggins, E-’77, H-’16, Jeff Rosen, E-’82, Suzy Rosen Singleton, E-’88, Pauline “Polly” Peikoff, E-’36, and many more.

Even students who were “preps” – preparatory students – who did not matriculate into their freshman year, are considered to be honored (“ex”) members of the University (and former College) Community. As evidence for this, see pages 65 to 67 of the [1915-1916 Gallaudet College catalog](#), which gives a complete list of all alumni members up until 1915, including “ex” preps (names listed in italics) as well as “ex” undergraduates (names listed in regular, non-italic type – to distinguish ex-undergrads from those who graduated, the reader can consult printed pages 54 to 59 in the same 1915-1916 catalog.)



Anna Szymanoskie Smithson
June 18, 1847 – Nov. 9, 1871

The illustrious list of ex-preps of our beloved institution includes [Anna Szymanoskie](#), E-’70 (1870), who was the *first-ever student* of our institution (i.e., first enrolled in [Kendall School](#)), she was also the first deaf person to be married in Chapel Hall, and the [first-ever deaf woman to work in the US Federal Government](#). Tragically, Annie passed away at the young age of 24, due to illness. She was a member of the very first class of prep students – students who were admitted as preps in the very first year of operation of the College in 1864-1865. In those days they were allowed to stay more than one year, if needed or desired, in prep status – “intermediate class” status, as it was then called.

Another category includes ex-Kendall School students (including up to grade 12, before MSSD was created) who did not become prep or college-level students. This category includes Bobbi Cordano's grandfather, [John Cordano](#).

In light of Jordan's act of *non*-identification vis-a-vis the current GU Community (or lack of proactive claim of official community status), the question must be asked: Why does Jordan insist on inserting himself (via confederates) into University communications? A case in point is the recent quotation in President Cordano's communication regarding John McCain. The note was most likely written by a staff person acting as ghost-writer, since university presidents are incredibly busy and only have time to supervise such types of letters, without writing them out line by line. So we shouldn't cast too much doubt on RC's grasp of or interest in GU history, but rather more to the ghost-writer who was entrusted to be faithful and accurate to true history.

It simply is not true history to emphasize a putative connection between McCain and DPN proper. Making a last-minute "cameo appearance," as it were, in the Year of DPN, in December 1988 (as the [photo](#) accompanying the statement showed, which was apparently taken from an issue of *On the Green* and was not even published in any newspaper) is hardly to be considered taking an active interest and role in DPN itself or in the "movement." Rather, it represents a typical politician's over-commitment, time-wise, taking stage directions from aides and playing "catch up," i.e., McCain realizing that he missed the boat in March 1988 and that he wanted to hurry and retroactively attempt to associate himself with it. The truth is that he was not involved in DPN and knew very little about it until after it was over.

We remember how the 10th president nearly fell over himself, attempting to give public praise to Paul Kelly in the beginning of his presidency in 2010. There's a reason why we see this type of thing (that is, offering grudging praise or acknowledgment of characters on the scene who have previously forfeited their moral standing within the community by committing egregious, even [criminal acts](#)). The reason is that these disgraced actors want to attempt to remain politically viable and increase their potential for political and rhetorical maneuverability in the future – especially when financial considerations are involved, such as in prospective cases of being associated with ex-Members of Congress becoming lobbyists and related considerations where being in the orbit of such a person promises pecuniary gain (or illusory psychological gain, for narcissists).

Forcing a conciliatory mention in a current University communication is a "show of strength." The culprit is, in effect, sending a message to the Community via the sub-text of the communication, saying: *Here I am putting my foot on the neck of your current leader. How do you like it? Don't you see who is still in charge here? You better get used to it, because I'm not going anywhere.*

Along similar lines, does anyone doubt why No. 10 was forced out? It's because you-know-who (our defacto president since 1988, whose office is on the first floor) didn't want his defacto authority challenged. Woe to the merely *ostensible* leader who pushes the foot away and asserts control! AH!

It was a very little known fact that Jordan and Fernandes (supported by Kelly, obviously) had massive plans for restructuring Gallaudet to, among other things, turn our beloved institution into an “upperclassmen institution,” that is, one for mainly juniors and seniors, where underclassmen would be rarely admitted and would be expected to first complete an associate’s degree before applying to become transfer students in their junior year. [Fernandes made brief reference to this](#) during her candidate talk in 2006. This being the case, we should have no pity for JK due to the way her situation unfolded. Jordan and Fernandes knew what they were doing, they did it deliberately, and they brought the inevitable consequences (that is, political disgrace and vocational displacement) on themselves. They have no one to blame but themselves. What else could we do?

We do not practice any form of *damnatio memoriae*, and so the customs of the Community require that Jordan, as a disgraced personage, be allotted some standing room, though it might properly be just a small square to stand on. Therefore, we don’t begrudge RC for needing to occasionally include the bygone hero in some item of public communication. We can easily tell the difference between allotting a small square versus allotting the entire green. Still, we must guard against the inevitable “frog in boiling water” effect and occasionally submit a reminder in public to please pay attention to the temperature of the metaphorical water. That, in fact, is the political effect/process which corrupted him. We cannot allow that to happen again to our current promising leaders.

LINK TO PRIOR PRESS RELEASES AND MEDIA ADVISORIES:

http://gallyprotest.org/press_releases.pdf

SEE ALSO:

<http://gallyprotest.org>

Follow-up Media Advisory (September 16, 2018):

Question: One of the high-ranking leaders alluded to in the Sept. 15th media advisory has announced their retirement. That being the case, is it necessary to criticize this person for their past performance? Isn't it "water under the bridge" at this point?

Answer: Nudging a problematic administrator such as this person to retire is only the very first step in what is going to be a very long and drawn out process in reversing the long-standing harmful influence of this person's long tenure as an administrator. As a case in point, this administrator could have been fired long ago for incompetence, even

if solely on the basis of a single issue, which was [the closing down of the School of Preparatory Studies](#) in May 1995. As then-President Jordan characterized the closing, during [a March 1997 Congressional committee hearing](#):

"...as the result of program reviews, we have terminated some programs, including undergraduate preparatory and associate level programs, which did not appear to fit well with our vision."

(Translation: *We had philosophical differences with some of the professors in the School of Preparatory Studies, because they strongly supported ASL-English bilingual education.*)

The closing of the School of Preparatory Studies constituted [a major violation of the principle of academic freedom](#). It is not the prerogative of administrators to decide whether or not they agree with a professor's philosophical or pedagogical views and then decide to fire (or ostensibly "lay off") that professor on that basis. This is a long-standing norm in higher education in the United States, and though the Jordan administration cloaked their actions somewhat in attempting to describe the firings as due to "vision plan" differences, the cloaking amounts to a thin pretext. Had the American Association of University Professors been fully apprised of the situation at the time, the university most likely would have been subject to AAUP sanctions, and been the subject of scandal within the field of higher education.

(It cannot be claimed that these were simply preparatory students and not actual university students. In fact, [prep students had full status as university students](#), and although they were taking remedial courses, the professors teaching them, although they did not have tenure, were [actual university faculty members](#), not merely staff. Therefore, all the norms and [principles of academic freedom](#) applied in full.)

After being promoted to vice president in 1988, this individual embarked upon a clear course of [seeking power over intellectual activities at the university](#), which was outside of his purview. [Disastrous consequences](#) soon followed.

Question: How do you really know that that particular administrator was the culprit in all of this?

Answer: It is exceedingly obvious to those who have a basic familiarity with the people and issues involved. During the 1997 House of Representatives committee hearing, [Jordan was obviously reading crib notes](#) written by this particular administrator. This actually follows that administrator's modus operandi of manipulating people and situations from behind the scenes. When [negative consequences inevitably followed](#), as they always did, then that administrator escaped blame and was able to hold onto his

high-paid position. To use a popular illustration, the real (unseen) culprit acted like the seemingly innocent child who stole the cookies from the metaphorical cookie jar, while shifting the blame to someone else. Dogged persistence is required to collect evidence of the administrator's doings over the years to be able to present evidence and allow others to make their own judgments based on the totality of the circumstances. Even beyond that, people found it necessary to put their own lives at risk by waging a major protest, in order to intervene and foil the accomplishment of that person's goals (i.e., discarding his 18-year marionette and replace him with another one).