

Press Release

Fernandes quoted in today's *Chronicle of Higher Education* article

Tuesday, October 16, 2007, 10:30 am Eastern Time

Commentary:

Once again, Jane Fernandes is proving to the world that she was the wrong person chosen to lead Gallaudet in 2006. In comments made to *Chronicle of Higher Education* reporter Paul Basken Monday, Fernandes shows that she is far out of touch with findings in the respected fields of linguistics, anthropology and bilingual education.

As Dr. Robert E. Johnson said in [his 17-page essay](#) during the protest:

QUOTE (page 14, hyperlink added):

Her [Fernandes'] [list of publications](#), dominated by unpublished books and short pieces she wrote for PR publications of the organizations she managed and notably short on publications in peer reviewed journals, is that of a professional administrator, not that of an accomplished scholar. She is not, as the press has said, a scholar of ASL, nor is she an academic. That is fine, because she is not applying to be a professor or researcher, positions for which, in fact, her resume would be seen as somewhat weak. There is really no need to represent her as an accomplished scholar, except, again, to feed the lie that the protestors are shallow and unreasonable.

UNQUOTE

Dr. Johnson is quite correct. The truth is that Jane Fernandes was a part of a very small clique of pseudo-intellectuals, led by I. King Jordan, who were either intellectually incapable of understanding the findings of linguists and bilingual education researchers, or who were psychologically incapable of accepting such. Rather than the protestors being a small group, the truth is exactly the other way around.

Jordan was never a true academic. He barely made it through his PhD program, having had to rise very early in the morning each day and struggle with his studies. He rose through the ranks at Gallaudet due to his ability to speak and due to the fact that the powers that be during the 1970's and '80's at Gallaudet were audists and they placed an unfair value on speaking ability. In 1988, when he fell into the job of being Gallaudet

president, he was actually mostly interested in talking about sports with his friends and was far from being capable of handling the job.

Jane Fernandes, due to her personal friendship with Jordan, was able to worm her way into positions of administrative power at Gallaudet—positions which she did not deserve, did not earn, and was not qualified to fill. She forced herself onto the campus community and sneaked onto the world's stage by becoming Jordan's hand-picked favorite through back room deals and unethical administrative manipulations.

Fernandes' fifteen minutes of fame has now nearly expired. Rather than accept this reality, she is instead continuing to use inflammatory language, making the claim that Gallaudet's current bilingualism policies will not enhance the students' ability to be "gainfully employed." This is absurd. Every well informed educator in the land already understands that bilingualism is a plus in the world. Bilingualism enhances one's linguistic and cognitive abilities across the board.

It is a long-accepted fact that deaf students who grew up using ASL since birth do better academically. Yet Fernandes continues to ignore this well established, documented, and uncontroversial fact. We now live in the Information Age, and being successful in the work world entails possessing advanced cognitive skills. Gallaudet students, therefore, need ASL now more than ever, in order to be successful in their future careers.

Young pupils in the future—as well as university students, professors and members of the educated public at large—will read about Jane Fernandes' intellectually backwards claims of 2006 and 2007 and the the standard opinion will be that Fernandes was a flash-in-the-pan opportunist who used inflammatory language and divisive tactics, but was a failure.

[End commentary]

From the Chronicle of Higher Education:

A Year After Protests, Gallaudet Sees Progress, but Key Dispute Remains

LINK TO CHE ARTICLE:

<http://tinyurl.com/2gdqug>