

## Gallaudet Rebuffs Black Presidential Candidate

On April 13, the Gallaudet University Presidential Search Committee (PSC) announced the selection of three finalists for the position of University President. The finalists were: Dr. Jane Fernandes, Ronald Stern and Stephen Weiner, Ed.D.

The announcement that Dr. Glenn Anderson was eliminated as a candidate sent a resounding shockwave throughout the Black Deaf Community and other communities of color. This wave has quickly reverberated to include non-minorities who are aware of Dr. Anderson's tremendous achievements and contributions to the deaf community.

Dr. Anderson has served on the Board of Trustees of Gallaudet University for a period of 16 years. In this distinctive position, he also served as Chairman of the Board. Dr. Anderson, along with other members of the Board of Trustees, was essentially responsible for supervising the president of the University, I. King Jordan.

In addition to his work on behalf of Gallaudet, he serves on the Board of National Black Deaf Advocates. Dr. Anderson has over 35 publications to his credit and has presided over more than 150 workshops including the International Congress on Education of the Deaf and at the World Federation of the Deaf.

Within the framework of its strategic goals, Gallaudet University has made public its strong commitment to diversity and inclusiveness. Clearly, the April 13th announcement of the finalists for president falls far short in its effort to publicly communicate to the University's stakeholders, on and off-campus, that the PSC is strongly committed to diversity and inclusiveness in its search process.

By failing to respond to inquiries and concerns regarding the process, the PSC has opened the door to accusations of "racism, favoritism and concerns of White privilege." We believe, at this time in Gallaudet's history, the underlying message that emanates from the Search Committee's announcement has damaged the University's credibility and reputation in the eyes of its many stakeholders throughout the nation.

*"The real question is whether you mean to make good to us the promises of your constitution."*

*-Frederick Douglass*

The issue is not about an African American that did not make it as a finalist. It is about a highly qualified applicant, with a proven record of service and educational credentials that was bypassed for an individual with lesser qualifications.

The overriding issue here is: why a man who was entrusted to successfully lead the Board of Trustees for a period of 16 years is not qualified to serve in the position that he supervised. Additional controversy has arisen regarding the position announcement indicating the desire for the applicant to possess a terminal degree, which Dr. Anderson does have but that another finalist lacks.

Gallaudet has vested considerable time and money in addressing the issue of diversity. Indeed at least three of the University strategic goals address the issue of diversity, inclusiveness and multiculturalism. It is paradoxical that the Presidential Search Committee has managed to eradicate both Strategic Goals #5 and #6. These goals state that Gallaudet promotes an environment where every member of the community is included, valued and respected. Moreover, the goals state that Gallaudet University nurtures and strengthens its position as a global educational and cultural center for people who are deaf and hard of hearing people everywhere.

Along with a growing constituency, the National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA) is shocked at the actions of the PSC for excluding Dr. Anderson as a finalist. We believe his exceptional experience and education make him well qualified to become a finalist for the position of Gallaudet University President.

*Thomas Samuels is president of the National Black Deaf Advocates*

neocolonialism," she said.

\* According to Woods, Ayittey uses the same arguments "put forward by White conservatives who say everything Africans do is wrong."

You gave Ms. Emira Woods the opportunity to comment and discredit my position. Was that fair? Worse, you allowed her to demonize my position by linking it to White conservatives. I am perfectly capable of thinking for my own and I don't parrot what White conservatives, liberals or communists say about Africa.

I look forward to a correction.

*George Ayittey  
Washington, D.C.*

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ditor