

Community Leader:

The recent appalling and racist photos in Virginia are just another example of despicable actions by elected officials on the big stage, undermining our faith in the system and those we trust to lead us and represent us.

Many of us have sat in fear for years now after a prominent African American female showed true courage, spoke up and voiced in writing her disgust over the repeated public use of the "N word" by George Hartwick III, a county elected official from our own community. Her words were silenced, her crying employees tears were wiped away by the discarded tissues of time. That elected official is still holding office.

Where is the outrage? What you gonna do? We are watching.

The bully tactics of the silver tongued man need to be called out. Has anyone ever spoken to Dr. Marcia Sturdivant since she wrote attached letter up? No! No investigation if nobody never talked to her. Shame!

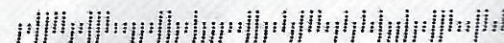
Stop Racism!

HARRISBURG PA 171

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Honorable Steve Todd
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June 10, 2008

Honorable George P. Hartwick, III
Dauphin County
Board of Commissioners
P. O. Box 1295
Harrisburg, PA 17108

Honorable Hartwick, III:

I had the pleasure of attending the National Conference on FGDM (Family Group Decision Making), sponsored by the American Humane Association, in Tucson, Arizona, June 2, 2008 to June 6, 2008. I have attended these conferences for the last eight years or so and each one becomes remarkably more enjoyable and educational. Unfortunately, at this year's conference my experience and the experience of two of my Allegheny County colleagues was marred by a very disturbing event. I am sure by now you are aware of the event that occurred on the evening of June 5th. For those receiving a copy of this correspondence I will briefly summarize the offensive behavior you displayed. It is my hope that you are made aware of the impact that your divisive and racially offensive statements and jesters had on the social and emotional well being of myself and my colleagues.

While having dinner, we were abruptly interrupted by your loud and boisterous conversation with members at your dinner table. Your repeated use of the word "Nigger" was at first unbelievable to acknowledge. We simply froze in disbelief, disgust and fear. At one point my staff member began to cry. You then stated "Jim, I know there are no brothers around here, but you are my main "Nigger". Other diners in the area appeared equally shocked and appalled. Your behavior was reprehensible and contrary to the mission, philosophy and focus of the American Humane's 2008 Conference on Family Group Decision Making.

I conducted an intensive skills institute on Cultural Competency; perhaps you should have attended that workshop: While your behavior is an unfortunate reality of the continued racial divide and marginalized position affirmed by the denigrating perceptions and beliefs held by many, I am hopeful that you will open dialogue with members of your community for the purpose of advancing your personal development related to matters of diversity. As well, in view of your leadership position, I believe it would be in the best interest of the constituents you serve in Dauphin County, both black and white, to actively engage in conversations that celebrate racial differences, embrace diversity and negate intolerances and insularity.

Area Agency on Aging
Children, Youth and Families

Office of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities

Office of Behavioral Health
Office of Community Services

My greatest hope however, is that my colleagues from Pennsylvania and around the country that dined with you that evening and remained complacent during your inappropriate and bigoted remarks will appreciate how I felt and in the future stand against attitudes that are contrary to what leaders and policy makers in Child Welfare are presumed to represent. I wish you well.

Sincerely,



Marcia M. Sturdivant, Ph.D.
Deputy Director,
Allegheny County Department of Human
Services Office of Children, Youth and
Families

Cc: Jeffrey T. Haste, Chairman
Dauphin County Board of Commissioners
Dominic ("Nick") DiFrancesco, II
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