



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on March 31, 2016

Marquette Moves to Suspend Conservative Professor

While conservatives have understandably focused much of their attention on the contentious presidential campaign, this should not cause those on the political right to neglect other important contests such as those for Congress, governorships, legislatures, and even city councils and school boards across the country.

The sad truth is that good, solid constitutionalist candidates have a tougher time winning because conservatives have neglected the importance of creating and changing the worldview of the electorate. While “educational” campaigns that lose have some benefit, it would be far better to both educate and win.



Unfortunately, the political Left has well understood the importance of altering public opinion long before any votes are actually cast. Progressives dominate the media, the entertainment industry, and academia (from pre-school to graduate school).

Rather than fight for a place in these three critical areas of influence over the collective American mind, conservatives far too often have retreated to their churches, jobs, and sporting events, leaving these fields in the hands of the Left.

What is happening at Marquette University illustrates the point. At this nominally Catholic college, Professor John McAdams is facing termination in a leftist-controlled process he has compared to the Inquisition. His ordeal began back in the fall semester of 2014, when graduate assistant Cheryl Abbate berated a male student in her class who was attempting to defend the position that marriage should be between only a man and a woman.

Abbate told the student, “You can have whatever opinions you want but I can tell you right now, in this class homophobic comments, racist comments, and sexist comments will not be tolerated.” And, she added, he should drop the class.

Professor McAdams challenged Abbate’s illiberal attitude on his popular blog, observing that the instructor was using a tactic “typical among liberals now. Opinions with which they disagree are not merely wrong, and are not to be argued against on their merits, but are deemed ‘offensive’ and need to be shut up.”

While Abbate was portrayed as a victim of McAdams, she was praised for her action, and consequently landed a faculty position at another university. McAdams, on the other hand, only landed in academic hot water. A faculty committee at Marquette recommended this past week that McAdams be suspended — without pay — from April 1 through the fall semester of 2016. If he refuses to apologize and admit “guilt” within the next two weeks, it was suggested that he be fired.

The committee told McAdams that he must acknowledge that his blog post “was reckless and



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incompatible with the mission and values of Marquette University.”

In his response, McAdams said he would not submit, and he zeroed in on the committee assertion that his remarks somehow violated the “mission and values” of the Catholic college. He dismissed the reference to Marquette’s “Catholic mission” as nothing more than a “marketing gimmick.”

While much of the public regard Christian institutions — Catholic or Protestant — as somehow more conservative in their worldview than secular state-supported colleges and universities, the naked truth is that many so-called Christian institutions of higher learning are no more Christian in their orientation than government schools. Bluntly put, many of these institutions are like parasites, living off the work of previous generations.

McAdams’ dilemma raises many issues, which are addressed in the new book *Passing on the Right: Conservative Professors in the Progressive University*, by professors Jon Shields and Joshua Dunn. Most conservative professors are reluctant to speak their mind as freely as McAdams (for obvious reasons, considering his case). “Such closeted conservatives generally wait until they are tenured before venturing out of the ivory tower’s shadows,” say the authors, “a fact that should give pause to those right-wing thinkers who recommend getting rid of tenure.”

Yet, Shields and Dunn wrote their book largely to encourage more conservatives to consider careers in academia. They state:

Most partisans on both sides of the political divide continue to regard academia as an inappropriate career choice for conservatives. The right, in fact, has long steered young conservatives away from academic careers by highlighting the excesses of far-left professors and the trials of their conservative students.

Pillorying the university for its liberalism, of course, has been part of the modern right’s rhetorical arsenal ever since the 1950s when William Buckley penned *God and Man at Yale*. [Because of this,] the implicit message has always been that universities are “unsafe spaces” for conservatives.

Failure to compete with the Left in academia can be compared to unilateral disarmament. The same thing can be said about media and entertainment. But because so few conservatives enter these fields of influence, the Left prepares the way for progressive electoral victories and ever-expanding government in these very fields.

This was the path of the Fabian Socialists in Great Britain: Enter the fields of influence and win the next generation over to socialism. They argued that the pen was mightier than the sword. So as a result, young leftists became lawyers, professors, writers (liberal novelists far outnumber conservative ones), and even preachers (of the so-called social gospel). Liberal preachers spouted their opinions on politics long before the Jerry Falwells and Pat Robertsons were even born.

How does all this relate to the unfortunate Professor McAdams? Shields and Dunn argue in their book that the more conservative professors there are, the harder it will be to silence them. Certainly, they understand that fighting for limited government, free enterprise, individual liberty, constitutional principles, and traditional standards in the Ivory Towers across the land will present a stiff challenge for any person who chooses that career path.

But considering the high stakes, it is certainly a battle worth taking on.

Photo: Marquette Hall

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