ETHICS UPDATES

ETHICS CASE STUDY DETAIL

Case # 90:

TELLING IT LIKE IT IS: LYING ON YOUR RESUME

Category: Personal ethics

In the early 1970's, when Quincy Troupe was an adjunct faculty member at the College of Staten Island, someone told him that he would never be hired as a tenure-track professor unless he had a bachelor's degree. He had attended Grambling, but not graduated. He changed his resume to say that he had graduated from Grambling.

Over the years, high accomplishments and fame increased, and he held several prestigious teaching position including an appointment as a full Professor at the University of California at San Diego. He became recognized as one of the best poets in the country as well as a gifted teacher who unstintingly gave back to the community which he lived.

In 2002, Troupe was nominated as California's Poet Laureate—the first time this appointment was made in a non-political way. Prior to his appointment, the Governor's chief of staff had an interview with him to make sure that there were no skeletons in the closet.

Shortly after his appointment, the state legislature's staffers completed their screening and discovered that Troupe had not graduated from Grambling, despite the fact that this is listed on his resume. They contact Troupe to ask him about this discrepancy, and he immediately confirmed that he had not graduated. Shortly thereafter, he submitted his resignation as California Poet Laureate. He also immediately informed UCSD of what had happened. Imagine that you are on the committee charged with the responsibility for deciding what the university ought to do in response to these revelations about Troupe. What should the administrators of UCSD do in response to discovering that Troupe had falsely claimed to have a bachelor's degree from Grambling. What should Troupe himself do? What factors ought to be considered in making this decision?

Notes:

Author Information

Name: Lawrence M. Hinman
E-mail: hinman@sandiego.edu
Homepage: http://ethics.sandiego.edu/About/editor/index.asp
Institution: University of San Diego
Web site: http://ethics.sandiego.edu/