

The Washington Post  
Tuesday, April 23, 1991, page B1  
By Molly Sinclair, Washington Post Staff Writer

## **\$35 Million Suit Filed In Deaf Student's Death; Man Killed in Scuffle With Gallaudet Police**

The family of a Gallaudet University student filed a \$ 35 million damage suit yesterday against the university alleging that his death last fall was the result of "unlawful, excessive and deadly force" by campus police.

The lawsuit said that Carl Dupree, a 41-year-old deaf man, collapsed and died Nov. 9 as a result of the "chokehold" used by campus police during a struggle with Dupree at the university in Northeast Washington.

"This caused Carl Dupree to die a [torturous] and grueling death by suffocation," the suit said.

The lawsuit also alleges that Gallaudet campus police were not adequately trained in the use of sign language and, as a result, could not communicate effectively with Dupree.

The death of Dupree, who had been active in a student movement protesting English requirements at the university, shocked the campus, the scene of the 1988 movement that led to the selection of the first deaf university president, I. King Jordan.

Officials at Gallaudet did not respond yesterday to telephone calls seeking comment.

The 28-page petition was filed in D.C. Superior Court by lawyer Benjamin F. Wilson on behalf of Dupree's widow, Avis, who also is deaf, and the four Dupree children, ages 4 to 11. Two of the children are deaf.

D.C. police ruled that the death of Dupree was a homicide, meaning that it was caused by another person. An autopsy report concluded that he died of asphyxiation.

The case is under investigation by the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Members of the Dupree family said they don't understand why investigators have taken no action as yet.

"It has been more than five months and we are frustrated," said Dupree's sister, Sue Johnson, of Woodstock, Ga.

"My brother was trying to get an education," Johnson said. "He was on a deaf campus; he was deaf himself. He had no weapon. No drugs. He was walking to meet his wife and his children to go to the grocery store and then home. My brother did nothing.

"Why is he dead? We want to know, and we want to know now," Johnson said.

The lawsuit said that the chain of events leading to Dupree's death began on the morning of Nov. 9 when Dupree, who had withdrawn from the university several weeks earlier, went to the English Department at Gallaudet. He spoke with his English professor about the grade he had received in his English 50 course, a Gallaudet requirement that has been the subject of several student protests.

Dissatisfied with his morning meeting, Dupree returned to the campus that afternoon to meet with English Department Chairwoman Nancy Kensicki, the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit includes this account of what followed: About 3 p.m., Carl Dupree picked up two of his children from Gallaudet Elementary School, then met his wife in front of the nearby Hall Memorial Building.

Avis Dupree agreed to wait with her children inside Ely Center, the student union building, while her husband met with Kensicki.

Two Gallaudet campus officers were in Kensicki's office during the meeting.

When the meeting ended, the two police officers followed Dupree as he walked toward Ely Center.

Dupree entered Ely Center by a side entrance, followed by the two police officers.

Inside the center, Dupree "was set upon by eight or more Gallaudet campus police officers," the suit said. They "threw him face-down onto the floor, forcing Dupree's arms behind his back in order to handcuff him, thereby restraining him and cutting off his only means of communication -- sign language," according to the suit.

One officer "deliberately wrapped his arm around Dupree's neck and pulled up on Dupree's throat, choking him," the suit said.

Other officers pushed Dupree's shoulders and head in the opposite direction, toward the floor, eventually causing "the breaking of Carl Dupree's neck," the suit said.

"Carl Dupree was conscious throughout the time the Gallaudet campus police officers assaulted and choked him," the suit said. "He was in immense pain, and screamed loudly."

[Photo caption (early edition only)]: Carl DuPree

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The Washington Post

Saturday, November 10, 1990, page B3

## Man Dies After Gallaudet Scuffle

D.C. police are investigating the death of a man who collapsed after struggling with campus security officers at Gallaudet University in Northeast. The man, identified as Carl Dupree, 41, of Springfield, was taken to Capitol Hill Hospital, where he was pronounced dead yesterday afternoon. Police said the incident began about 3:30 p.m. when Dupree, a former Gallaudet student, went to the campus to dispute a grade with a former teacher. Dupree met with the teacher and left, but returned a short time later. When security officers ordered Dupree to leave, a struggle ensued and Dupree collapsed. A detective said an autopsy will be performed. Efforts to reach university officials last night were unsuccessful, and further details were unavailable.

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The Washington Post

Thursday, November 15, 1990, page B1

By Sari Horwitz, Martin Weil, Washington Post Staff Writers

## Pressure On Neck Was Fatal; Gallaudet Victim Had Broken Bone

The asphyxiation death of a former Gallaudet University student last week after a struggle with campus police was caused by pressure on his neck, a District police source said yesterday.

The source said the D.C. medical examiner's autopsy report on Carl Dupree, 41, of Springfield, indicated injuries that may have been caused by a choke hold or by pressure applied with a nightstick or similar object.

Dupree's death has been ruled a homicide, meaning that it was caused by another person. The case is being referred to the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Police said Tuesday that the medical examiner's findings showed that Dupree died of asphyxiation, but they provided no details.

Yesterday, a police source said the autopsy report attributed Dupree's death to asphyxiation by neck compression, which apparently broke his hyoid bone. The hyoid, a crescent-shaped bone about 1 1/2 inches across, lies between the root of the tongue and the larynx.

The police source said that a choke hold sometimes can break the bone, as can pressure from a rigid object such as a flashlight or nightstick. It is difficult for an individual to apply enough pressure to break his own hyoid bone, the source said.

Dupree collapsed on the Gallaudet campus Friday after a struggle with campus security officers followed what the university described as a "grade dispute" with an instructor. During that struggle, Dupree was restrained by at least five security officers and was handcuffed.

Since the death, some students have criticized the actions of the security officers, complaining that they used excessive force. The students also contended that handcuffing Dupree, who was deaf, deprived him of the ability to communicate in sign language.

Gallaudet, the nation's premier university for the deaf, has retained a law firm to conduct an investigation of the incident. That inquiry began Tuesday.

About 30 security officers are assigned to Gallaudet's campus in Northeast Washington. Minimum requirements for becoming a member of the force include three years of law enforcement experience, which may include prior work as a security officer.

Campus officials said the officers receive a seven-week training course and are required in their first year to take two courses in sign language.

Dupree's death has spurred expressions of concern on the campus and has aroused new interest in what one student leader called a longstanding issue: the need for teachers, administrators and security officers to be fluent in sign language.

Staff writer Molly Sinclair contributed to this report.

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The Washington Post

Friday, November 16, 1990, page B1

By Molly Sinclair, Nancy Lewis, Washington Post Staff Writers

## Campus Security Was Told Not to Use Choke Hold; Grip Considered in Gallaudet Death Probe

Gallaudet University, where a deaf man died last Friday after a struggle with campus police, prohibits its officers from using choke holds, a university spokeswoman said yesterday.

"There is no situation where the choke hold is okay," said Muriel Strassler, director of public relations at Gallaudet, the country's premier university for deaf students.

Carl Dupree, 41, of Springfield, died of asphyxiation by neck compression, which apparently broke his hyoid bone, according to an autopsy report.

Although no determination has been made regarding the cause of the broken bone, the possibility that a choke hold was used on Dupree has been raised by District police.

A choke hold, also known as a trachea hold or arm-bar hold, is an application of pressure to the front of the neck as a way of restraining or rendering a person unconscious by cutting off his air supply.

The pressure may be applied using the forearm or a firm object such as a police nightstick or flashlight.

Gallaudet security police do not carry nightsticks, according to the university.

D.C. police have ruled Dupree's death a homicide, meaning it was caused by another person. No one has been charged in connection with the incident. Both the university and D.C. police are investigating.

Dr. James Luke, a former D.C. medical examiner who is now a consultant to the FBI, said that depending on how the hold is applied it can cause death by asphyxiation by obstructing a person's airways, compromising the arterial blood flow to the brain or stimulating certain reflex centers in the top portion of the neck that cause the heart to slow down.

The District outlawed the use of the choke hold by D.C. police officers in

early 1984, after two suspects died as a result of being restrained by officers using it.

Dupree's widow, Avis, and other family members met yesterday with the D.C. law firm of Beveridge and Diamond, but they would not comment on what further steps the family planned. They are setting up a memorial fund to be known as the Dupree Educational Fund for the education of his four children, ages 4 to 11.

University sources familiar with the incident involving Dupree say it started in the university's Hall Memorial Building about 3:30 p.m. last Friday when he went to see an English instructor about a grade.

Dupree had withdrawn from the university about three weeks ago to spend more time working to support his family.

There was an argument between the instructor and Dupree, and the instructor went to his supervisor. They called for campus police, and two officers went to the building.

Dupree and the two officers walked to the Ely Center, another campus building. A struggle began just inside the side entrance to the center. A second call for assistance went out. It is not clear who made the call, or what prompted it.

Four additional security officers arrived at the Ely Center's side entrance. During the struggle, an officer handcuffed Dupree but initially was able to secure only one of his hands.

Dupree was about 5 feet 9 inches tall and weighed more than 200 pounds, according to his family.

As the struggle continued, one officer reportedly was hit by Dupree using the hand with the handcuff. Eventually, both handcuffs were applied, with Dupree's hands behind his back.

A second officer also was reported injured during the scuffle. A third call, for medical assistance, went out when Dupree collapsed.

Medical personnel, including one trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, arrived within two or three minutes and administered assistance. Those personnel were from the security-force training course underway at Gallaudet.

Dupree was taken to Capitol Hill Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The

two injured campus officers were taken to a nearby hospital, Strassler said.

One was a woman officer who was kicked in the stomach, the spokeswoman said;

the other was a male officer who had head injuries.

Gallaudet has about 36 campus security officers, including about 30 at the Northeast Washington campus.

The officers, who range in age from the early twenties to the mid-sixties, are all university employees. Minimum requirements include three years of some experience, which could be police or security work.

All new security officers take a seven-week course, which covers a range of issues from arrest guidelines to the D.C. court system.

After taking the course, they are required to take two sign language courses during their first year at Gallaudet.

In the past, Gallaudet has had security officers who are hearing-impaired, but there are none at present.

Christine Multra, student body president, said many students are concerned about the officers' restraint procedures. Handcuffing a deaf person in effect silences him, she said.

Students are advocating a study of restraint with chains, which would allow movement of the hands.

Just inside a side entrance to Ely Center, students have constructed a memorial to Dupree. Dozens of photocopies of his student identification card are layered among white flowers. Notes handwritten on white and yellow paper read "We Love You" and "We Miss You."

Staff writer Keith Harriston contributed to this report.

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The Washington Post

Sunday, November 18, 1990, page B1

By Molly Sinclair, Washington Post Staff Writer

## Death Underscores Issues in Deaf World

By midafternoon on Nov. 9, Avis Dupree, a deaf student at Gallaudet University, had completed her classes and collected her two deaf children

from the elementary school on the Gallaudet grounds.

Now the three were waiting in the campus cafeteria inside the Ely Center. Avis expected her husband, Carl Dupree, also deaf, to appear any minute. He had promised to take her to the grocery store and then home to Springfield.

But Carl Dupree never made it to the cafeteria.

Dupree's argument with a teacher about a grade quickly escalated into a confrontation and violent struggle with at least six campus police officers in another part of the building. As the security officers subdued and handcuffed him, Dupree collapsed and died of asphyxiation by neck compression, according to an autopsy report.

The case, which has been ruled a homicide and is being referred to the U.S. attorney, has stunned students and faculty at Gallaudet, the scene of a widely publicized 1988 deaf movement that led to the selection of the first deaf university president, I. King Jordan.

Dupree, 41, had been active in a student movement protesting the university policy that requires new students to complete a basic English course called English 50. The dispute is part of a larger debate at Gallaudet over English requirements and the use of sign language in the classroom. Since Dupree's death, some students have criticized the actions of security officers, complaining that they used excessive force and noting bitterly that guards effectively silenced Dupree by cuffing the hands he used to communicate.

Dupree family members, here from Georgia and Kentucky to help Avis Dupree and her children, say they still don't understand what happened.

"We are all in shock and trying to hold each other," said Dupree's sister, Sue Johnson, of Woodstock, Ga. "The children keep asking, 'Where is Daddy?' "

While the campus remained calm last week, word of new disclosures in the case traveled quickly among students. Protest gatherings were held and some students boycotted classes. Students set up a small memorial of flowers and candles at the scene of the struggle.

While many questions surrounding his final hours remain unresolved, the circumstances surrounding the life and death of Carl Dupree have offered a glimpse into the unique nature of a deaf family, the culture of the deaf world and some of the dominant issues at the premier university for the education of deaf people.



Born Nov. 4, 1949, in Atlanta, Dupree was one of five children. Three of them, including Sue Johnson, have no hearing impairment. Carl and his brother Steve were born deaf.

"We have a long line of generations of deafness in our family," Johnson said. Her parents and grandparents were deaf.

Johnson, the oldest of the children, learned to sign as a young child, even though she can hear and speak. The signing enabled her to communicate with her deaf parents and her deaf brothers.

As a boy, Carl Dupree attended the Georgia School for the Deaf and the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind. After completing school in 1968, Dupree worked in Atlanta for the Postal Service and in Dallas for a company that made pacemakers.

Dupree and Avis Taylor met in 1976 at the Louisville Deaf Club. He had gone to Louisville to visit his brother; she was home to see family on a break from her studies at Gallaudet.

The couple married in 1979 and settled in Eufala, Ala., where Dupree worked as a guide fisherman. When the Duprees realized that their second son, Joshua, now 9, was deaf, they moved to St. Augustine, Fla., so he could attend a school for the deaf during the day and come home at night.

"That was important to Avis because she attended a residential school for the deaf, and she missed not being at home at night and having dinner with her family," Johnson recalled.

In St. Augustine, Dupree ran a taxidermy business to support his growing family, which now included two more children, Jorlena, 7, who has no hearing impairment, and Flave, 4, who is deaf.

He had a special relationship with his son, Carl Jr., 11, a Little League baseball player. While other parents could cheer their sons down on the field, they were too far away to communicate with them.

But Dupree, using sign language, could sit in the bleachers and sign to his son, suggesting a play or sending an encouraging message.

"He was a great father and a great person and that is what we want people to remember about him," Johnson said.

In 1988, the Duprees moved to Rochester, N.Y., where they believed there

would be more educational opportunities for their deaf children and for themselves at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. They were at the institute when a movement erupted at Gallaudet that swept Jordan into the presidency.

Dupree met Jordan at the institute when Jordan spoke there two years ago. That meeting prompted Dupree to move his family to the Washington area, where they could attend Gallaudet.

He enrolled in the fall of 1989, his sister said.

Dupree soon became active in a student effort challenging the English requirements. Students are required to complete English 50 within four semesters. If they don't, they can be barred from continuing at Gallaudet.

The group challenging the requirements is relatively small, perhaps no more than 100 students. But the questions raised by Dupree and his group go to the heart of a fundamental dispute at Gallaudet over communications issues, including the need for instructors and other university personnel to be proficient in the use of sign language and the need for deaf students to be proficient in reading and writing English.

One of the biggest issues emerging among Gallaudet students is the handcuffing of Dupree by campus police officers, cutting off his only means of communication.

Students now are advocating the study of a restraint system of chains, which would allow a person to use his or her hands to sign.

No charges have been filed in the case, but investigations are being conducted by the D.C. police and by Gallaudet University.

University officials said the struggle that led to Dupree's death was triggered by an argument he had had earlier in the afternoon with an English instructor. Gallaudet sources said the dispute was not related to Dupree's effort to change the English requirements; they said the argument was over a grade that Dupree had received from the instructor.

For now, Dupree's family is trying to comfort the children.

"Last night, I was hugging Carl Jr., just holding him close," Johnson said, "and he was saying how much he missed his father. He said he would never be able to go fishing with his father again.

"But then he said, 'But I have good memories of him.' "

[Photo caption:] DuPree's sister, Sue Johnson, says she doesn't understand what happened. (Margaret Thomas)

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The Washington Post  
Sunday, January 20, 1991, page B8  
By Judith Treesberg

## When Will the Deaf Get a Fair Hearing?

On Nov. 9, student activist Carl DuPree was killed by campus security officers at Gallaudet University, where my daughter is a student. The case has been ruled a homicide.

Every day since, I have scanned the paper and listened to the evening news, waiting for an outcry that has not come. The student movement, which shut down the campus less than three years ago by its demands for a deaf president, is fragmented and uncertain. The underlying issues go unspoken, and all the mechanisms that led to this senseless death remain in place.

When he died, Carl DuPree was 41 and still seeking a college degree. His parents, his wife's parents, his wife and two of his four young children were deaf. For generations, members of both his and his wife's family had been deaf. DuPree was committed to making life better for all deaf people.

Last spring DuPree joined student leaders of a two-year-old protest against an English Department policy at Gallaudet and led a boycott of the English 50 exam. He and other deaf protesters did not dispute the importance of English language skills, but they also felt the standards of the English 50 exam were arbitrary and discriminated against the deaf people whose skills it was supposed to measure. Students are permitted to retake the English 50 exam and repeat the course as many as four times before being asked to withdraw from Gallaudet. It sounds reasonable, but look closer.

Faculty at Gallaudet face no similar language constraints. Even tenured professors are rarely fluent in American Sign Language, and new faculty frequently enter the classroom unable to communicate beyond a minimum exchange of greetings. Further, the test scores received at the end of the class determine the student's maximum grade. A teacher can lower a student's grade based on interaction during the semester, but no amount of effort or improvement can make a positive difference.

When DuPree went to the English Department to talk about justice, he knew

that the difference between the C he believed he deserved -- and earned on the exam -- and the D he was given was a question of personalities and attitudes, not standards. He was outraged. The incident has been called a "grade dispute," but it was one man standing up to a ruthless system.

When DuPree was put off with the promise of yet another meeting, he stalked away, angry and frustrated, toward the Ely Center, where his wife and two of his children were waiting. He was intercepted by campus security as he entered the building. They blocked his path, their mouths yammering words DuPree could not hear. He tried to keep going. Then because the security people did not have the signing skills to communicate with him, they reverted to the sorriest of all options, force.

DuPree resisted. Six or more security officers wrestled him to the ground and cuffed his hands behind him. They "restrained" him, ignoring his screams, which even a deaf student who was there and told me this story could hear. With his wrists bound, some students say, DuPree finger-spelled again and again, "I can't breathe," "I can't breathe."

Is this truth or embellishment? Does it matter?

The officers held him until his legs stopped flailing. The university announced that death was due to an "apparent heart attack" and clung to that story throughout the next couple of days. Then the autopsy report said that DuPree died of asphyxiation caused by neck compression associated with a broken hyoid bone.

At the time of DuPree's death, The Post reported that minimum requirements for hiring at the university's Department of Safety and Security included three years of previous law-enforcement experience. After a seven-week orientation program, The Post said, officers are required to take two sign language classes in their first year of employment.

It is, however, unthinkable that two English courses would qualify a foreign-language speaker for security on a hearing campus, but this is the training of the officers who must investigate suicide attempts and question rape victims at Gallaudet. Who makes these rules? Not the deaf.

"Communications breakdown" is the term used to describe any misunderstanding between the deaf and hearing, the implicit understanding being that responsibility for communication belongs to the deaf. A friend of my daughter's told me she must sign her question three or four times over in one of her classes. Exasperated, the teacher snapped at her one day, "Use your voice. How do you expect to get along in the hearing world?" Long after the incident, my daughter's friend signed angrily, "I wish I had told her, this is

a deaf school. We sign here."

Ironically, Gallaudet recently mailed out a new fund-raising appeal. On the envelope and across the front of the brochure are several frames of a young woman signing. The caption reads, "Only one university speaks my language." For now that's just lip service.

\*-- Judith Treesberg The writer works for the Bicultural Center, which is a resource center for American Sign Language and American deaf culture.\*

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The Washington Post  
Monday, March 25, 1991, page D3;  
By Molly Sinclair

## Grand Jury Probing Death at Gallaudet

The death of former Gallaudet University student Carl Dupree, who died Nov. 9 in a scuffle with campus police, is still under investigation.

Dupree, 41, who was deaf and had four children, died of asphyxiation by neck compression, according to an autopsy report.

His death was ruled a homicide and an investigation was launched by D.C. police. The case was referred to U.S. Attorney Jay B. Stephens on Jan. 8 and now is under grand jury investigation, sources said last week.

Dupree had argued with a teacher about a grade, and the incident escalated into a confrontation and violent struggle with at least six campus police officers, witnesses said. They said Dupree could not communicate with security officers after he was handcuffed.

After Dupree died, Gallaudet President I. King Jordan hired the law firm Squire, Sanders and Dempsey to "make an independent review of the circumstances surrounding the tragic incident."

The law firm has declined to reveal the results of its review. A spokesman for the university said last week that the firm's report has not been released because Jordan "wouldn't want to do anything to interfere with the investigation by the police department or the grand jury."

Dupree was on his way to the campus cafeteria to meet his wife, Avis, who also is deaf, and the couple's two deaf children when the scuffle occurred and he collapsed and died.

Avis Dupree, a student at Gallaudet, is continuing her studies there, a

spokesman for the family said last week. Her two deaf children are students at the elementary school on the Gallaudet campus, and her two hearing children are in public schools.

A memorial fund established by the D.C. law firm Beveridge & Diamond to meet the educational needs of the four children, ages 4 to 11, has received contributions totaling \$ 3,050, lawyer Ben Wilson said.

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The Washington Post  
Tuesday, April 23, 1991, page B1  
By Molly Sinclair, Washington Post Staff Writer

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The lawsuit said that Carl Dupree, a 41-year-old deaf man, collapsed and died Nov. 9 as a result of the "chokehold" used by campus police during a struggle with Dupree at the university in Northeast Washington.

"This caused Carl Dupree to die a [torturous] and grueling death by suffocation," the suit said.

The lawsuit also alleges that Gallaudet campus police were not adequately trained in the use of sign language and, as a result, could not communicate effectively with Dupree.

The death of Dupree, who had been active in a student movement protesting English requirements at the university, shocked the campus, the scene of the 1988 movement that led to the selection of the first deaf university president, I. King Jordan.

Officials at Gallaudet did not respond yesterday to telephone calls seeking comment.

The 28-page petition was filed in D.C. Superior Court by lawyer Benjamin F. Wilson on behalf of Dupree's widow, Avis, who also is deaf, and the four Dupree children, ages 4 to 11. Two of the children are deaf.

D.C. police ruled that the death of Dupree was a homicide, meaning that it was caused by another person. An autopsy report concluded that he died of

asphyxiation.

The case is under investigation by the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Members of the Dupree family said they don't understand why investigators have taken no action as yet.

"It has been more than five months and we are frustrated," said Dupree's sister, Sue Johnson, of Woodstock, Ga.

"My brother was trying to get an education," Johnson said. "He was on a deaf campus; he was deaf himself. He had no weapon. No drugs. He was walking to meet his wife and his children to go to the grocery store and then home. My brother did nothing.

"Why is he dead? We want to know, and we want to know now," Johnson said.

The lawsuit said that the chain of events leading to Dupree's death began on the morning of Nov. 9 when Dupree, who had withdrawn from the university several weeks earlier, went to the English Department at Gallaudet. He spoke with his English professor about the grade he had received in his English 50 course, a Gallaudet requirement that has been the subject of several student protests.

Dissatisfied with his morning meeting, Dupree returned to the campus that afternoon to meet with English Department Chairwoman Nancy Kensicki, the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit includes this account of what followed: About 3 p.m., Carl Dupree picked up two of his children from Gallaudet Elementary School, then met his wife in front of the nearby Hall Memorial Building.

Avis Dupree agreed to wait with her children inside Ely Center, the student union building, while her husband met with Kensicki.

Two Gallaudet campus officers were in Kensicki's office during the meeting.

When the meeting ended, the two police officers followed Dupree as he walked toward Ely Center.

Dupree entered Ely Center by a side entrance, followed by the two police officers.

Inside the center, Dupree "was set upon by eight or more Gallaudet campus police officers," the suit said. They "threw him face-down onto the floor,

forcing Dupree's arms behind his back in order to handcuff him, thereby restraining him and cutting off his only means of communication -- sign language," according to the suit.

One officer "deliberately wrapped his arm around Dupree's neck and pulled up on Dupree's throat, choking him," the suit said.

Other officers pushed Dupree's shoulders and head in the opposite direction, toward the floor, eventually causing "the breaking of Carl Dupree's neck," the suit said.

"Carl Dupree was conscious throughout the time the Gallaudet campus police officers assaulted and choked him," the suit said. "He was in immense pain, and screamed loudly."

[Photo caption (early edition only)]: Carl DuPree

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The Washington Post

Wednesday, August 28, 1991, page B6

By Martin Weil, Washington Post Staff Writer

## Gallaudet Guards Indicted in Death Of Ex-Student

Four Gallaudet University security officers were indicted yesterday in the death of a 41-year-old former student during a scuffle.

The U.S. Attorney's Office said the four were charged by a Superior Court grand jury with involuntary manslaughter in the Nov. 9, 1990, death of Carl Dupree, of Springfield.

Dupree died of asphyxiation "in a struggle with campus security officers who were attempting to remove him" from the Northeast Washington campus after a grade dispute with a teacher, the prosecutor's office said. The incident aroused students and faculty.

The indicted guards were identified as Bernard A. Holt, 42; James R. Rossi, 35; Paul C. Starke, 30; and Steven L. Young, 26. Their addresses were not available.

The indictment alleges that the officers "used excessive force in attempting to apprehend Dupree," the U.S. Attorney's Office said.

"We are absolutely not guilty," Holt said last night.



The other defendants and their attorneys could not be reached.

University spokesmen also could not be reached.

Dupree, who was deaf, had withdrawn from Gallaudet -- the nation's foremost university for the deaf -- two weeks before his death, to spend more time working to support his family. He was married and had four children.

He had been active in a student movement protesting a Gallaudet policy requiring new students to complete a basic English course. The dispute was part of a larger debate at the school over English requirements and the use of sign language in the classroom.

His death prompted student demonstrations at the campus, where protests in 1988 had led to selection of the first deaf university president, I. King Jordan.

Witnesses to the scuffle in which Dupree died said he could not communicate with guards after he was handcuffed. An autopsy report said that Dupree died of asphyxiation by neck compression.

Within a few days of the incident, the death was referred to the U.S. Attorney's Office. A civil lawsuit filed by Dupree's family alleged that death resulted from use of a "chokehold": wrapping an arm around the neck and pulling up on the throat.

An attorney representing the family in the suit declined to comment on the indictment.

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The Washington Post

Friday, September 18, 1992, page B1

By Brooke A. Masters, Washington Post Staff Writer

## Trial Opens in Death at Gallaudet; Excessive Force, Communication at Issue in D.C. Court

Using only her hands, former Gallaudet University student Avonne Brooker told a D.C. Superior Court jury yesterday what she saw the afternoon Carl Dupree scuffled with campus security guards and died.

Two years after Dupree's death by asphyxiation, four of the guards are standing trial on manslaughter charges. The verdict will hinge on the jury's answers to two questions: Did the guards use "excessive force" when they

subdued and handcuffed the struggling Dupree? Did they make sufficient effort to communicate first with the deaf man, who had come to campus to protest his low grade in a remedial English course?

The communication problem was played out for the jury on the first day of testimony, as the courtroom sign-language interpreters asked for clarification several times as they translated the lawyers' questions and Brooker's replies.

American Sign Language, though based on spoken English, has syntax and idioms that do not always match exactly.

Bernard A. Holt, James R. Rossi, Paul C. Starke and Steven L. Young are accused of involuntary manslaughter in the Nov. 9, 1990, confrontation with Dupree, 41, in a vestibule of the Ely student center on the Florida Avenue campus. If they are convicted, the defendants face maximum sentences of 15 years in prison.

Dupree's death inflamed an already heated controversy about the use of spoken English and sign language in classrooms at Gallaudet, the nation's premier university for the deaf. Students complained that some faculty and staff members, including some security guards, did not have an adequate command of sign language. Dupree, who was no longer enrolled as a student when he died, had been active in a student movement protesting a new policy requiring students to complete remedial English.

In their opening statements, the prosecutor and defense attorneys painted starkly different pictures of the events surrounding Dupree's death.

Did the guards, as Assistant U.S. Attorney David Schertler told the jury, "overreact" and cause Dupree's death by putting him in a choke-hold that lasted more than five minutes?

Or did Dupree, whom defense lawyers described as "huge . . . standing five-feet-nine and weighing 252 pounds," wave off efforts to calm him down and provoke the guards by shoving one of them into a door?

"Nobody assaulted Carl Dupree. He was at all times the transgressor," said William R. Martin, Starke's attorney. "These officers were fighting for their lives . . . They were afraid Carl Dupree was going to pick them up and throw them down the stairs."

But Schertler said, "This case is about the use of . . . excessive physical force against a student . . . who could not speak and could not hear, a student who had not committed any crime."

Both sides agree that Dupree came to see a professor, who called security guards before she would speak to him about his grade. They also agree that he was angry when he left her office and headed for the student center.

Schertler said Dupree was trying to shake off the guards who followed him. Defense attorneys said Dupree saw and understood a guard's repeated attempts to persuade him to leave the campus peacefully, but refused. Eventually, they said, he shoved the guard.

Chief Judge Fred B. Ugast told the jury as the trial began that "The measure of reasonable force is that a person of ordinary intelligence . . . with the knowledge and in the situation of the defendant, would have believed necessary."

Even the cause of death is in dispute. Young's attorney, Henry F. Schuelke III, said the defense will present medical evidence that Dupree died because he was overweight, had severe heart disease and was held face down on his stomach while the officers tried to put handcuffs on him.

Schertler, citing a small broken bone in Dupree's throat, said he will argue that Dupree was choked to death.

Brooker, the first and only witness to testify yesterday, said she saw one of the officers' arms around Dupree's throat.

"Carl's head was lifted because someone had their arm around it," she signed. "His head was pulled back, it was stuck. He couldn't move . . . . There was a lot of grotesque expression . . . as if he was in pain."

Then, she said, several other guards "came in and were on top of him. It was out of control . . . . I couldn't even see him. Carl was just covered."

Earlier in the confrontation, Brooker said, she saw Dupree sign to a guard "leave, leave . . . . I will leave," as Dupree tried to push past the guard into the Ely Center. She said she "never saw the guard communicate with Carl."

At the time of the incident, according to Schuelke, Rossi and Turner were so new to Gallaudet's security force that they had not been issued uniforms, and Holt had worked there for 15 years.

Martin said Starke, who had worked at Gallaudet for six months and had learned sign language to communicate with his deaf grandparents, was the guard who first confronted Dupree at the Ely Center.

[Illustration caption:] Former Gallaudet student Avonne Brooker signs to jury about what she saw the day Carl Dupree died. (Carolyn D. Landon for The Washington Post.)

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The Washington Post  
Friday, September 25, 1992, page D6;

## Acquittal at Gallaudet

One of four security guards on trial in the death of a 41-year-old deaf man at Gallaudet University was acquitted yesterday in D.C. Superior Court.

Judge Fred B. Ugast said in court he was granting a defense motion to acquit James R. Rossi, 27, of involuntary manslaughter because the government had failed to present evidence sufficient for a jury to find him guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

The court refused to grant defense motions to acquit the other three guards, Bernard A. Holt, 43; Paul C. Starke, 31; and Steven L. Young, 36, who are charged with involuntary manslaughter in a Nov. 9, 1990, confrontation with Carl Dupree in a vestibule of the Ely Student Center on the Florida Avenue campus.

Dupree died of asphyxiation during a scuffle with campus guards. The incident occurred after Dupree, a former Gallaudet student, went to the university to protest his low grade in a remedial English course.

Defense lawyer Mitchell Rubenstein, who represents Rossi, characterized the acquittal as a "bittersweet victory." He said Rossi "will not feel fully vindicated until the other guards are found innocent." The trial of the three remaining defendants continues today.

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The Washington Post  
Saturday, October 3, 1992, page B5;  
From news services and staff reports

## AROUND THE REGION

### One Charge Dropped in Gallaudet Case

A D.C. Superior Court judge yesterday dismissed one of the two charges of manslaughter against each of the three Gallaudet University security guards on trial for the November 1990 death of Carl Dupree during a scuffle at the

Florida Avenue campus.

Chief Judge Fred B. Ugast ruled that the prosecution had failed to prove that the guards were guilty of causing Dupree's death while committing a simple assault against the 41-year-old former student.

A jury is deliberating whether to convict Paul C. Starke, Bernard A. Holt and Steven L. Young of the remaining charge of criminal negligence manslaughter, punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

To convict the guards of that offense, Ugast told the jurors, they must find that the guards caused Dupree's death by the use of excessive force, specifically that they choked him during the melee, or aided and abetted someone else who was choking the deaf man.

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The Washington Post

Tuesday, October 6, 1992, page C1

By Brooke A. Masters, Washington Post Staff Writer

## Guards Acquitted in Death Of Ex-Student at Gallaudet

A Superior Court jury acquitted three Gallaudet University guards yesterday of manslaughter in the death of former student Carl Dupree during a struggle on the Florida Avenue NE campus.

The jury deliberated about an hour Friday and about three hours yesterday before finding Paul C. Starke, Steven L. Young and Bernard A. Holt innocent of criminal negligence manslaughter. Chief Judge Fred B. Ugast dismissed the charges against a fourth guard, James R. Rossi, midway through the three-week trial.

Prosecutors had contended that the guards used excessive force -- a chokehold lasting several minutes -- in restraining Dupree, 41, who had come to the Northeast Washington campus to protest his low grade in English.

But the jury, according to one member, agreed with defense attorneys that Dupree's death was accidental, due in part to his large size and a heart ailment.

Yesterday morning, the jury was split 10 to 2 for acquittal, and the majority eventually "was able to satisfy [the others] that there was no real evidence of a chokehold," said the juror, who asked not to be named. "There were no marks, no evidence of damage to the larynx."

Because the prosecutor "never named [a specific guard] as doing the

chokehold, it makes it hard to convict anyone," the juror said.

Dupree's death on Nov. 9, 1990, sparked widespread student anger and intensified debate about the use of spoken English at the nation's premier university for the deaf, but the trial drew little attention from the 2,200 students. Many of those who saw the struggle or protested have graduated. Still, Neil McDevitt, an editor of the campus newspaper, Buff and Blue, said the verdict "stinks. The officers had used an illegal hold."

University spokeswoman Muriel Strassler said, "We're relieved the judicial process is finished, but it's still a tragedy. The hearts of many people at Gallaudet go out to the family of Mr. Dupree."

Dupree's wife, Avis, who is still a student at Gallaudet, has filed a wrongful death suit against the university, and a hearing is set for this week. Her attorney, Ben Wilson, said she did not want to comment on the verdict.

The criminal case was unusual because many of the witnesses are deaf. Cameras were set up to tape the signing by the witnesses and the interpreters.

The prosecution's case rested on witnesses who said they saw an arm around Dupree's neck during the struggle and on the testimony of Deputy Medical Examiner Vincent E. Hill, who said he ruled that Dupree died from "asphyxiation due to compression of neck."

Assistant U.S. Attorney David Schertler told the jury "five students . . . told you they saw someone choking Carl Dupree . . . . The medical evidence tells us there was a chokehold."

Hill testified that Dupree must have been choked for more than five minutes because he found a break in a small horseshoe-shaped bone -- the hyoid bone -- in Dupree's neck and tiny "petechial bruises" on the man's eyes, gums and eyelids. Such bruises occur when blood is prevented from returning to the heart and backs up in the small blood vessels.

The prosecution never specified which guard was believed to have choked Dupree. Shertler argued that Starke, Young and Holt were guilty of "aiding and abetting" in Dupree's death because they were near Dupree's head and had to know he was being choked.

The defense argued that Dupree was to blame for the melee that took his life. Describing Dupree as an angry man looking for vengeance over the "D" he received in English, the defense attorneys argued that he started the

fight when the guards asked him to leave the campus and then blocked his entrance into the Ely Student Center.

"Mr. Dupree was a time bomb waiting to go off," said Starke's attorney, William R. Martin.

The defense also presented two medical specialists to support their claim that Dupree, who was 5-foot-9 and weighed 253 pounds, died because he had a heart ailment and his abdomen was so large that he could not breathe when the guards put him face down on the floor.

"The government wants you to believe there was a mystery choker," said Steven D. Gordon, Young's attorney. "The man was living on a banana peel and when he stressed his system, that's what caused his death."

The jury apparently agreed. "There is evidence he resisted right to the end," said the only juror who consented to be interviewed.

"I'm ecstatic," said Young, who like the other three guards has been on paid administrative leave.

Starke, who was accused by prosecutors of precipitating the struggle, said he "believed [the trial] was mostly political. After the Rodney King [beating by Los Angeles police], it really got going."

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The Washington Post

Tuesday, October 13, 1992, page B1

By Brooke A. Masters, Washington Post Staff Writer

## Sign Language: Can It Be Used Fairly in Court? Testimony in Idiom of the Deaf Poses Problems for Interpreters

"Carl looked like he was choked," the witness told the D.C. Superior Court jury.

Or did he say: "Carl looked like he was choking"?

The witness spoke with his hands, and the sign he used could have had either meaning, depending on the context. Its interpretation made a great deal of difference to four Gallaudet University security guards who stood trial last month in the death of a former student.

The trial, which ended in the guards' acquittal of using excessive force when they arrested Carl Dupree, turned in part on the testimony of witnesses who

used American Sign Language -- and on two interpreters with the delicate task of communicating their exact meaning.

The match between ASL and English is hardly exact. Once regarded as a crude slang version of English, ASL is now considered a distinct language with its own syntax and idioms.

The Gallaudet trial spotlighted the complications that can arise when deaf people who are more fluent in ASL than signed or spoken English must interact with the hearing world.

Like Dupree's death in 1990, the trial becomes part of the debate about whether deaf people should be educated to join the hearing mainstream by learning to read lips or to celebrate their own culture and live primarily among people like themselves. That issue sparked a student rebellion at Gallaudet in 1988 and led to the appointment of its first deaf president.

Perhaps three-quarters of American deaf people -- estimates for the total population range from 500,000 to 2 million -- lose their hearing in adulthood and never participate wholly in deaf society, according to Timothy L. Armstrong, a research scientist at Gallaudet's Center for Assessment and Demographic studies.

But the rest -- those he describes as "culturally deaf" -- were born deaf or lost their hearing as children and identify with other deaf people.

"There's a perspective among hearing people that because you live in this country, you should be good in English and if you don't you're stupid," said Earl Elkins, director for emergency translation services at Sign Language Associates. When ASL-signers and English speakers try to communicate, as they did during the trial, they can be stymied by something as simple as grammar.

Unlike signed English, where each gesture is coordinated with an English word, ASL has a radically different grammatical structure and uses facial expressions and gestures to communicate whole ideas and concepts. ASL sentences usually start with the time element, followed by the object, the subject and then the verb. Because negation comes after the verb, as do modifying ideas such as "seems" or "I think," interpreters must wait until a sentence is completed before trying to translate.

"Three or four signs may take two or three minutes of words because [ASL] takes advantage of the fact that it is a visual language," said Betty Colonomos, who is co-director of the Bicultural Center in Riverdale and has trained courtroom interpreters. "It's more like interpreting between English and Chinese than English and Spanish."



Translating into ASL can also eliminate the tricks of language -- such as double negatives -- that lawyers use to control and focus their questioning. The standard phrases of lawyer-speak -- "Do you recollect?" or "Does this refresh your memory?" or "Do you not recall" -- translate into basically the same set of ASL signs as "Now do you remember?"

The presence of Gallaudet, the nation's premier university for the deaf, has made the Washington area a mecca for the culturally deaf and made ASL interpreters a relatively common sight in Washington area courtrooms. Current regional statistics are unavailable, but Deaf Pride estimates that there are nearly 7,000 deaf people in the District. The city's courts receive 25 to 30 requests a month for sign-language interpreters, compared with 320 requests a month for all spoken foreign languages combined, said Chief Executive Officer Ulysses Hammond.

The trial of the four Gallaudet guards drew five interpreters -- the two official ones, two defense consultants and someone who translated for Dupree's wife, Avis, and other deaf spectators. The testimony was videotaped in case interpretation becomes an issue on appeal.

Despite such precautions, misunderstandings arose. One deaf witness, describing the guards' struggle with Dupree, seemed to veer wildly off the subject. "They continued to wrestle, and then I noticed a spider," the interpreter translated.

The jury looked confused, until defense attorney Henry F. Schuelke broke in. "I am confident the witness did not see a spider. She saw a person named Spider."

The exchange caused some concern among the jurors. "I kept wondering why in the world they weren't typing the questions up on a computer screen where they could see them," said Charles Ballard, an alternate juror. "It did seem to me it would have run less risk if they had done it in English."

The judicial system is based on oral testimony, and participants are usually allowed to use the language they find most comfortable. Computers are used occasionally for deaf people who do not sign, said Mark Charmatz, attorney for the National Association of the Deaf.

The juror's question demonstrates what some deaf advocates consider a double standard for the deaf, which has arisen from ASL's unique relationship to English. Unlike foreign-language speakers, ASL-users can usually read and write English. At the Gallaudet trial, several witnesses, when confronted with written copies of their grand jury testimony, disputed the translation.

Defense lawyers said the use of interpreters affected the way they examined witnesses. "The witnesses never looked at us. They looked at the interpreter. You want to see their expressions to determine credibility, and that's difficult when you never see their faces," said Mitchell Rubenstein, attorney for guard James R. Rossi.

Similarly, the interpreters filter out differences between witnesses.

Not only does each witness necessarily speak with the same voice -- the interpreter's choice of words -- but the interpretation eliminates many of the pauses and hesitations that are part of everyday speech.

Steven D. Gordon, attorney for Bernard A. Holt, said a witness using an interpreter "can always play for time by saying she didn't understand the question . . . . It's harder to pin them down."

[Photo caption (early edition only):] Carl Dupree

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The Washington Post  
Monday, June 28, 1993, page D5;  
By Molly Sinclair

## Gallaudet Settles Homicide Lawsuit

A suit filed against Gallaudet University by the family of Carl Dupree, a former student who collapsed and died during a struggle with four security guards on the school's Florida Avenue NE campus, has been settled, but the amount of the settlement has not been disclosed.

Dupree, who was deaf, was 41 when he died Nov. 9, 1990. D.C. police ruled his death a homicide, and the guards were charged with manslaughter. But the charge against one was dismissed, and a jury acquitted the other three in a trial last year.

Avis Dupree, Carl Dupree's widow, who is also deaf, received her bachelor's degree in liberal arts from Gallaudet at graduation exercises May 21. She has four children, 6 to 13. Her sister, Sue Johnson, of Woodstock, Ga., said last week that Avis Dupree is moving to Indianapolis to make a new start.

Neither the Dupree family nor the university would disclose the terms of the settlement. The lawsuit initially sought \$ 35 million in damages for the widow and children. D.C. Superior Court approved the settlement.

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The Nation

February 11, 1991

Volume 252, number 5, page 154-157

By Judith Treesberg

## The Death of a 'Strong Deaf'

On November 9, 1990, student activist Carl DuPree was killed by campus security officers at Gallaudet University, where my daughter is a student. Every day since, I have scanned the morning paper and the evening news, waiting for an outcry that has not come. The underlying issues go undiscussed, and all the mechanisms that led to Carl's senseless death remain in place. The student movement that shut the campus down less than three years ago, demanding a deaf president for Gallaudet, is fragmented and uncertain. "We don't know what to do," says my daughter. "We are all in shock."

Like Carl, my daughter is Deaf. At 19, she is one of the 500,000 or so Americans who define themselves by the use of American Sign Language and their affiliation with the Deaf community. Like 90 percent of the parents of deaf children and more than 80 percent of their teachers, I am hearing. For half my daughter's life, I sought out the advice of those educators as well as doctors, audiologists and speech pathologists and diligently practiced the drills they recommended. Then, in the summer of her 10th year, we met other Deaf people for the first time, and in a circle of signing strangers I glimpsed the adult she would grow up to be.

Since the beginning of history, Deaf people have gathered into adult communities and devised visual languages as well as strategies for coping in a world where they are vastly outnumbered. Until recently, the hearing majority, including their birth families, has stubbornly refused to recognize the authenticity of either their language or their experience. Nevertheless, a growing worldwide movement has actively begun to challenge medical models of deafness and call for recognition of Deaf people as a distinct linguistic and cultural minority. When I look at my daughter now, it is the only description that makes sense to me.

We moved from our small Midwestern town to Washington, D.C., home for Gallaudet University, the world's premier institution of learning for the Deaf. Expecting the best in deaf education, I was stunned by what we found. Instead of a school run for the benefit of the Deaf student body, I discovered that Gallaudet is occupied territory, a small island overrun by hearing, speaking teachers and administrators who have neither desire nor incentive to learn the language or culture of the Deaf community. In the Precollege

Programs at Kendall Demonstration Elementary School and Model Secondary School for the Deaf, bright children were falling behind, and failure was blamed on everything but the fact that their teachers could neither use nor understand their language. Deaf students from kindergarten through college endure endless hours in the classroom with hearing teachers who cannot sign or who sign poorly. Students survive by their wits, by constructing elaborate self-help strategies and by bonding in a fierce, impenetrable loyalty.

I couldn't bear it. I took my daughter out of deaf school and enrolled her in a small private school in Maryland with a progressive curriculum. She graduated from the eighth grade with honors, but she was the only Deaf. (That is how she put it: "I am the only Deaf." In many Native American languages, the name of the tribe is also the word for people or friend. In my daughter's lexicon, Deaf is another word for family.) I have tried to put the memories of those nightmare years behind me, but they returned full force when I heard the news that Carl DuPree, one of the family, had died just inside the door of the Ely Student Center.

Because Deaf people depend on visual patterns, not sound, for communication, they require a visual language to fulfill their linguistic potential and to explore the full range of their thoughts and feelings. By the time my daughter reached high school, I could see that her English skills, which so impressed everyone, were limiting her to predigested information. She was learning by rote, in isolation, without the opportunity to test her knowledge and expand her mind in the give-and-take of a fluent exchange of ideas. Because I wanted for her, more than anything, the opportunity for free inquiry, I sent her back to Gallaudet. Like many generations of Deaf students before her, she would learn the language she was born to from friends and Deaf dormitory staff. And I began to study it as well.

It did not come easily. Learning a new language as an adult is difficult. Learning American Sign Language, which is so foreign to my physiology and my expertise, proved to be almost impossible. My daughter's Deaf eyes drank in the simultaneous modulations of hand shape and movement, facial grammar and eye gaze that are functional parts of a visual language. I could hardly see them, even when they were pointed out to me. Furthermore, I had to learn that a full and complete language, like A.S.L. or English, is inextricably bound up with identity, history and culture. Mother and daughter, yes, but I was as hearing as she was Deaf.

"You think you're so open-minded; well you're not," is the charge my daughter hurled at me at the height of our struggle to learn to live with the bitter legacy of oppression that haunts even the closest Deaf-hearing relationships. I had no map but love to keep me going on this painful journey, until finally I came round to see our separate worlds through her

eyes. What was revelation to me was old news to Deaf people like Carl DuPree.

The fact is that even after thirty years of linguistic and social science documentation, the news that signed languages are complete and equal to spoken languages has not yet trickled past the gatekeepers who wield the power in deaf education in America. By contrast, in 1981 the Swedish Parliament officially recognized Swedish Sign Language and designated it the language of instruction for Deaf people. Deaf preschoolers from hearing families acquire Swedish Sign Language in day care centers and enter the classroom with a whole language and a broad base of common knowledge. They go on to learn other subjects, including written Swedish as a second language, with success. Oliver Sacks, in his book *Seeing Voices*, pointed out the physiological and anatomical shiftings and reorganizations that take place in the brain to accommodate visual rather than auditory sensory inputs. He proposes that the indispensable factor for development of intellect is "inner speech," not words; it is "that ceaseless stream and generation of meaning that constitutes the individual mind." Isn't that the same as the intuitive knowledge that Deaf people have always tried to explain, and that Carl DuPree fought for?

At his death, Carl DuPree was a 41-year-old father of four. His parents, his wife's parents, his wife and two of their young children as well as others in both their families for generations are Deaf. "Strong Deaf," a student called him, meaning that Carl was deeply committed to making life better for all Deaf people. Last spring Carl joined the student leaders of a two-year-old protest against English department regulations at Gallaudet and led a boycott of the English 50 exam. Carl and the other protesters knew very well the importance of English language skills; they also understood the politics and economics that mandate the discriminatory policies that keep those test scores low.

English 50 is a remedial course for undergraduates who fail the English placement test required of all incoming students. At the end of the semester, they retake the placement exam, which is supposed to test composition, reading, vocabulary and grammar. If they cannot pass after four tries, they are asked to withdraw from the university. (No equivalent sign language requirements exist for Gallaudet faculty. New teachers, who frequently are unable to converse beyond basic phrases in American Sign Language, have little to offer frustrated students, and even tenured professors are rarely fluent bilinguals.) Furthermore, the test score received at the end of the course determines the student's maximum grade. A teacher can lower a student's grade based on interaction over a semester, but no amount of effort or improvement can make a positive difference.

Carl went to the English department on November 9 to protest his English 50 grade. Although he had earned a C on the exam, his final grade had been

lowered to a D in a disciplinary action. A bitter argument erupted with no hope of resolution. When security guards were called, Carl left and headed toward Ely center, where his wife and two of their children were waiting. He was halted by campus security as he entered the building. They blocked his path and tried to order him to leave campus. "I'm going to meet my wife," Carl signed once or twice and then just waved them away, knowing that real communication was impossible.

"We tease them all the time," my daughter tells me about the Department of Safety and Security. So I can imagine the security officers patrolling the campus and never knowing for sure what is being said to them or about them. I can imagine their helplessness and their fury when these hearing officers with only a few signs tried to stop a Deaf man who kept going. I see how they grabbed him, reverting to the sorriest of all options, force.

Carl "resisted and a struggle ensued," according to a university spokesperson quoted in The Washington Post, which means that five or more security officers wrestled to the ground one man they could not communicate with and cuffed his hands behind him. They "restrained" him, ignoring his anguished screams that even some of the Deaf students who witnessed the event could hear, holding on until his legs stopped flailing. The university announced that Carl's death was due to an "apparent heart attack" and clung to that story throughout the weekend, but the medical examiner's autopsy report states clearly that Carl DuPree died of asphyxiation caused by neck compression, which broke a bone in his throat.

The Post also reports that minimum requirements for hiring at the Department of Safety and Security include three years of previous law-enforcement experience. I have called around, but there does not seem to be a place where a Deaf person can get law-enforcement training, much less a job to gain experience at it. After a seven-week orientation program, officers are required to take two sign-language classes in their first year of employment. No foreign-language speaker with two semesters of English would qualify for a police position on a hearing campus, but at Gallaudet, officers with comparable experience investigate suicide attempts and interview rape victims. Who makes these rules? Not the Deaf, who never take communication for granted. It must be the same people who make the rules in the English department. They are fooling themselves, just as hearing people have always been able to up to now because they are so many and Deaf people are so few.

"Communication breakdown" is the term used to describe any misunderstanding between Deaf and hearing, and even after the success of the protest for a deaf president at Gallaudet there is still the implicit understanding that responsibility for communication belongs to the Deaf. My daughter's friend repeats herself several times when signing a question in class. (This young woman happens to

speak clearly, but many Deaf do not.) Exasperated, the teacher snaps, "Use your voice. How do you expect to get along in the hearing world?" Long after the event, my daughter's friend signs angrily, "I wish I had told her, 'This is a Deaf school. We sign here.'"

Ten years ago, at a symposium on Black English and the Education of Black Children and Youth, James Baldwin charged, "The brutal truth is that the bulk of the white people in America never had any interest in educating black people, except as this could serve white purposes. It is not the black child's language that is in question, it is not his language that is despised: It is his experience. A child cannot be taught by anyone who despises him, and a child cannot afford to be fooled. A child cannot be taught by anyone whose demand, essentially, is that the child repudiate his experience, and all that gives him sustenance, and enter a limbo in which he will no longer be black, and in which he knows that he can never become white." I substitute Deaf and hearing for black and white in my mind, but Deaf youth live it. They don't know that control of language is a common technique for internalizing oppression in the minds of colonized people.

My daughter says many of the students are confused. They think Carl must have done something wrong. They say they wish he had cooperated with security. They don't understand how this could happen with a deaf president. A group of student leaders meet with the new Deaf provost and try to trust that he will not betray them. I have no such trust.

In synchronistic irony, Gallaudet has recently mailed out a new fundraising appeal. On the envelope and across the front of the brochure are several frames of a young woman signing. "only one University speaks my language," reads the caption. For now it is only lip service, but perhaps not for much longer. The Washington police officer I spoke to assured me that a grand jury would be convened. "Really?" I asked him again and again. "Are you sure?" "Of course." He sounded impatient. "I thought Gallaudet could cover up anything," I explained. He sighed. "A lot of people are afraid to come forward," he said. "They're afraid of Gallaudet. It's a terrible thing."

A terrible thing happened, and we are all afraid. We are afraid that if we say too little, nothing will be done, and if we say too much, Congress will vote away our funding and we will lose the opportunity to make Gallaudet what it could be. But we are also learning that we must speak out in spite of fear, in spite of the risks and even in spite of the most terrible consequences. Carl's death is a tragedy for his family and a great loss to the Deaf community, but his life illuminated, for anyone who is willing to see, the struggle of Deaf people for the right to define their language and their culture.

\*Judith Treesberg is completing a book about deaf children in hearing

families. She is the editor of "TBC News" for The Center for Bicultural Studies, a resource center for American Sign Language and American Deaf culture located in Riverdale, Maryland. In the Deaf community, it is standard practice to differentiate between culturally identified (D)eaf and audiolgically (d)eaf persons and institutions. \*