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PHILIP W. BRAVIN

# CONTROLLING OUR DESTINY



A BOARD MEMBER'S VIEW OF  
DEAF PRESIDENT NOW

Title

**[Controlling Our Destiny: A Board Member's View of Deaf President Now](https://tndeaflibrary.nashville.gov/library/materials/controlling-our-destiny-a-board-members-view-of-deaf-president-now)**  
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In March 1988, students at Gallaudet University led a successful protest to demand the selection of the university's first deaf president. The Deaf President Now (DPN) movement was a watershed event in American deaf history; it achieved self-governance for the deaf community and placed Gallaudet in the center of a national media spotlight. Controlling Our Destiny is Philip Bravin's personal perspective of these momentous events. A lifelong member of the deaf community and proud Gallaudet alumnus, Bravin was a member of the Gallaudet University Board of Trustees and the chair of the presidential search committee during DPN. Although the deaf community had been strongly advocating for a deaf president to lead the university, the board (which had a hearing majority) selected the lone hearing candidate. Bravin recounts the discussions and decision-making that happened behind the scenes leading up to and following the ill-fated announcement. He reflects on the integrity of the process and the internal conflict he experienced as a deaf person who supported a deaf president yet felt compelled to abide by his duties as a board member. After the protests, his leadership was recognized when he was selected as the first deaf chair of the board. Photographs and documents add depth to Bravin's account, many of which will be seen by the public for the first time. I. King Jordan, the first deaf president of Gallaudet, provides a foreword in which he shares his own unique insight into these events. Controlling Our Destiny captures the energy and the urgency of DPN. Readers will understand the complexities of the presidential search process and the cultural and historical contexts that triggered the protest. Bravin's memoir contemplates power, access, community, and the enduring legacy of a movement that inspired deaf people around the world.

Author

Philip W. Bravin

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Tags

Gallaudet University; Deaf President Now; Student Protest

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