

‘Nasty’: Radical Activists Reach Pathetic New Lows at Library Event

Hundreds of families gathered at a local library in Missouri for a BRAVE Books story hour, where professional surfer Bethany Hamilton and former University of Kentucky swimmer Riley Gaines shared their inspiring stories of overcoming obstacles in the face of transgender athletes competing in women's sports.

As Gaines and Hamilton recounted their athletic experiences, the event was marred by the presence of transgender activists draped in pride flags and themed clothing, causing disturbances from the crowd. One activist went to the extreme, dressing as a shark to mock Hamilton, who famously survived a shark attack in 2003.

CEO of BRAVE Books, Trent Talbot, expressed dismay at the disruptive behavior, stating, "The activist who showed up dressed as a shark to target Bethany Hamilton is a terrible person. Once again, those who claim they are most tolerant turn out to be the most callous."

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The activists, who had made a "call to action" on social media urging supporters to "wear inclusive shirts" and to contact the library to cancel the event, were condemned for their disruptive tactics.

Despite the disruptions, Riley Gaines found inspiration in the support shown by a long line of young girls and swimmers who attended the story hour. "I'm so grateful for the people of Missouri who came out to the story hour. The presence of a

group of confused people dressed as a shark and clothed in pride did nothing to stop hundreds of families and young girls from taking in messages of truth and faith at our BRAVE Books story hour,” Gaines said.

How messed up is this? This protester brought a shark stuffed animal to mock Bethany Hamilton who lost her arm to a shark.

Miserable, insufferable people. But oh so “tolerant”

– Riley Gaines (@Riley_Gaines_) February 6, 2024

The Library Center event featured book readings of the new children’s books “Happy No Snakes Day” by Gaines and “Surfing Past Fear” by Hamilton. Both books, published by the conservative Christian book publisher BRAVE Books, advocate standing up for truth despite fear and overcoming obstacles to achieve big dreams.

During the event, Gaines presented Hamilton with the Riley Gaines Center’s 2023 “True Woman of the Year” award. Special attendees included Missouri Secretary of State John “Jay” Ashcroft and former Division I collegiate swimmer Valentina Gomez.

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Hamilton, a survivor of a shark attack, recently criticized transgender athletes in women’s sports, stating on social media, “Male-bodied athletes should not be competing in female sports. Period.”

Gaines, who famously competed with transgender athlete Lia Thomas in the 2022 NCAA Championships, has become an outspoken defender of maintaining the integrity of women’s sports. Reflecting on the disruption caused by activists, she said, “This is the tactic they use time and time again. They want so

desperately to mock, intimidate and threaten those they don't agree with into silence, but this was a step too far."

Despite the challenges, Gaines concluded, "I have no words to describe how messed up it is to directly mock Bethany Hamilton and her traumatic experience that cost her arm by bringing a shark to a children's story hour. Dare I call this protester an ableist?" She emphasized the importance of sharing stories at the BRAVE Books story hour, noting, "They needed to hear the stories read even more than the kids." {eo}

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