

Dear Wake Forest University Naming Committee:

The mission of the Slavery, Race and Memory Project (“SRMP”) is to guide the research, preservation, and communication of an accurate depiction of the University’s relationship to slavery and its implications across Wake Forest’ history. We write today to convey our collective thoughts on the principles associated with naming spaces and buildings on campus. Consistent with our mission, the Slavery, Race and Memory Project conducted a preliminary study into buildings, spaces, and monuments on Wake Forest’s Reynolda campus with names of individuals with linkages to slavery and racism. With the expert assistance of the Special Collections Department of the ZSR Library and the Historical Museum in Wake Forest, North Carolina, we have combed existing historical research and archives, as well as research recently completed by an independent historian, Andrew Canady, to assemble a list of such names. We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the vital work of the University’s new Naming Committee.

The Importance of Names on Campus

Monuments and symbols linked to slavery, the Confederacy, and segregation have long been considered symbols of division and exclusion in our country. The concept of renaming university buildings and other university features associated with controversial figures, especially those linked to slavery, has spanned several decades. Over the last few decades, many colleges and universities have formed committees and articulated principles for naming. As a result of these efforts, many universities removed the names of buildings named for individuals who actively promoted slavery, supported the Confederacy, who were members of the Ku Klux Klan, and actively supported racial segregation.¹ Recent events in the wake of the George Floyd murder have renewed these calls, and many institutions have moved swiftly to revisit the names of buildings, spaces, programs, and other university features associated with individuals based on their involvement in the Confederacy, slavery, and/or otherwise racist views.²

The ills of slavery are well-documented, and need not be repeated in detail here. In short, we believe the practice of owning another human-being was always indefensible. While it may be argued that individuals with the linkages to slavery or racism may have been simply conducting themselves in accordance with widely held positions or beliefs at the time, they were not without choice and there have always been alternative viewpoints. Thus, we find it difficult to reconcile honoring an enslaver with a name on a university campus, especially our university, whose motto is *Pro Humanitate*. With respect to those who served in the Confederate Army, there is a similar argument. As historians have amply chronicled, many of those fighting for the Confederacy were fighting in favor of secession and in defense of slavery. Again, honoring such individuals with a

¹ (see Fig.1- Table of Name Changes Prior to 2020).

² (see Fig.2- Table of Recent Name Changes).

name on our campus is antithetical to the core values of inclusion and equity that our university espouses.

Furthermore, today, Wake Forest University is a different institution than it was at its founding in 1834 in Wake Forest, North Carolina. It is also a different institution from that when the University relocated from Wake Forest to Winston-Salem in 1956. Many current Reynolda Campus names, even though they are associated with early founders and presidents, were actually designated in the 1950s, at a time when Wake Forest University barred admittance of black students. There was likely no opportunity for these impacted groups to address the names chosen. The ties to slavery and the Confederacy were likely known, but still disregarded because of the absence of strong voices to the contrary.

Principles for Reconsidering Names

Our SRMP Steering Committee's primary charge from President Hatch is to articulate the principles that must guide any recommendation to address names honored on our Reynolda Campus. Those principles are articulated as follows:

1. Wake Forest University prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability and veteran status and strives to create a diverse, equitable, inclusive and welcoming educational environment.
2. Names on the Reynolda campus, especially those of individual people, are important symbols that communicate the core values of the University to students, faculty, staff, and the broader community.
3. Names on the Reynolda campus should be selected through an inclusive process, one that seeks to commemorate a broad array of notable figures associated with the university.
4. Individuals for whom we name University features should reflect the core values of the University.
5. Engaging in the ownership of human beings and/or employing enslaved individuals is a practice that conflicts with the core values of the University.
6. Service in the Confederate Army and/or providing support for the goals of the Confederacy conflict with the University's core values.
7. Publicly advocating for racial segregation, the continuation of Jim Crow laws, and other policies and practices that deny or diminish the worth, value and dignity of all people conflicts with the core values of the University.
8. Changing a name that does not reflect the values of the University does not signify an intent to erase history, rather it signifies an intent to honor the core and enduring values of the University.
9. Renaming should be explored if there is any contradiction to the above principles.

At least two portraits and one plaque have been removed from public display in recent years, based on guidelines similar to those listed above. The plaque honoring Julian Shakespeare Carr, North Carolina industrialist, philanthropist, white supremacist, and Ku Klux Klan supporter, was removed from Wait Chapel. The portrait of Law Professor I. Beverly Lake, Sr., was removed

from the School of Law. Lake actively opposed the Supreme Court's landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, and presented the state's case in defense of segregation before the Supreme Court. The portrait of Wake Forest alumnus Thomas Dixon, Jr., was removed from the Library. Dixon was a white supremacist and author of *The Clansman*, which became the basis for the movie, *Birth of a Nation*. He endorsed the Lost Cause of the Confederacy and is credited with inspiring the 20th century revival of the Ku Klux Klan.

Sample Names to Reconsider

Based on the aforementioned principles and a deep historical record verifying the facts mentioned below, it is the recommendation of the Slavery, Race and Memory Project that the Naming Committee focus its initial efforts on reconsidering the names of the following spaces:

- **Royall Drive.** Named for William Bailey Royall, who was the son of William Royall. Both Royalls were Wake Forest faculty members. After the Civil War began, Wake Forest College closed due to a lack of students, and the senior Royall was appointed chaplain of the Fifty-fifth Regiment of North Carolina Troops. He served from 20 May 1862 to 24 July 1863, when he resigned because of a physical disability. Royall was also a slave owner. The son joined the Confederate Army in 1861 when he was 17, and later became a Professor of Greek at Wake Forest from 1866-1928.
- **Taylor Residence Hall.** Charles Elisha Taylor was the sixth President of Wake Forest (1884-1905). Taylor joined the Confederate army the day Virginia passed the Ordinance of Secession. He served with the Tenth Virginia and with the Signal and Secret Service Bureau in Richmond.
- **Wait Chapel.** Wait Chapel is named for founder and first president, Samuel Wait (1834-1845). Wait was a slave owner, and while he was president, enslaved people were routinely hired from their owners to maintain the College.
- **Wingate Hall.** Wingate Hall is named for Washington Manly Wingate, Wake's fourth president (1854-1879). Wingate was president in 1860, when the 16 enslaved individuals from the Blount estate were sold to start the College's first endowment. While the school was closed during the Civil War, Wingate preached as an evangelist to Confederate soldiers. Wingate was also a slave owner.

A Need for a More Inclusive Naming Process

While the SRMP Steering Committee recommends, based on the principles outlined above, that the Naming Committee consider the renaming of the buildings and spaces listed herein, this is not an exhaustive list of names that deserve reconsideration. Thus, we further recommend that the University—presumably working through this Naming Committee—develop a process for more inclusive naming and to consider the aforementioned principles in future naming opportunities. Names in a campus environment should commemorate a broader range of individuals associated with the University and those whose achievements reflect Wake Forest's mission, values, and aspirations. We encourage the Naming Committee to engage the larger

campus community in the dialogue surrounding naming, and recommend that the Naming Committee solicit public input from campus stakeholders as to potential names.

We realize that the history and founding of Wake Forest is inextricably linked to the institution of slavery, and thus, a number of names on campus likely violate the principles we have identified. Thus, we believe that a further examination of the names herein, and others, alongside the principles articulated above, will provide a framework for beginning to reconcile a painful past with a future that is inclusive and inviting for all students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Our nation's values and the values of Wake Forest University have evolved, and so too, should our principles related to naming university features evolve.

The Steering Committee of the Slavery Race and Memory Project

Appendix Attached