

TO: Ron Mitchelson, Interim Chancellor

**FR: Ad Hoc Naming Committee
Prof. Gerald Prokopowicz, Chair**

DATE: January 28, 2021

RE: Review of ECU Building Names

SUMMARY

The Ad Hoc Naming Committee, appointed by the Chancellor in October 2020 to review the namesakes of all buildings on ECU's campus, met on Friday, January 22, 2021 to discuss the five names that were originally brought to the attention of the Board of Trustees for review: Sallie S. Cotten, James L. Fleming, Thomas J. Jarvis, James Y. Joyner, and Robert H. Wright.

The committee voted to recommend that the Chancellor propose to the Board of Trustees removal of the names of Jarvis, Joyner, Cotten, and Fleming from East Carolina University buildings. The committee ranked the strength of the cases for removal in that order.

The committee voted to recommend that the Chancellor propose to retain the name of Robert Wright on Wright Auditorium and any other ECU buildings where it is currently used.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Historical Background and Methodology

The greatest challenge presented by this process was how to take historical context into account. ECU was founded in 1907, during the period historians describe as the Progressive Era (roughly 1890-1920). The four of the five individuals under review came to prominence during the Progressive Era (Thomas Jarvis was of a previous generation and had already served as governor from 1877 to 1885). They largely subscribed to the "progressive" beliefs of their time. These included support for public education, a belief in scientific progress, government protection of the environment, and other views that remain popular today.

Unfortunately, the progressivism of the early 20th century also embraced "scientific racism." Many anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and other social scientists of that time argued that human beings could be categorized along a scale from primitive to advanced, based on race and ethnic origin. Not surprisingly, these white scientists of western European descent concluded that white people of western European descent represented the highest form of humankind, and that eastern Europeans, Asians, and Africans were all inferior. To a greater or lesser degree, these views were accepted by the

five people under review, and by many public figures of their day. If the test for retaining building name honors were simply “did this person openly reject the prevailing white supremacy of their day, and only express views that conform to the values and expectations of ECU in 2021?” then most buildings on campus named before 1960 would fail.

Instead of applying this ahistorical and anachronistic standard, the committee looked for evidence that the person actively advanced and promoted the political and social supremacy of white North Carolinians, as opposed to being a “person of the times” who accepted but did not promote the racial norms of the day. As a secondary factor, the committee looked at the person’s contribution to East Carolina Teachers’ Training School.

These standards were similar to those applied to Charles B. Aycock and Aycock Residence Hall in 2015. Aycock had been a major political driver of the “White Supremacy” campaign of 1898 (including the Wilmington Massacre/Coup d’Etat) and the 1900 constitutional amendment intended to disenfranchise black voters. He played a major role in extending and strengthening the political oppression of African Americans in North Carolina. At the same time, he was not directly involved in the founding or growth of ECTTS.

The committee reviewed historical materials compiled by the University Historian and by the University Archivist and her staff, as well as materials collected in 2015 in connection with the renaming of Aycock Residence Hall. These are the basis of the summaries below for each of the five individuals in question.¹

¹ These summaries are largely synthesized from research memoranda originally drafted in 2015 by Dr. John Tucker of ECU and Dr. Jonathan Sarris of NC Wesleyan, and in many cases use their words directly, without attribution in the text. The original memoranda are available on request. The committee thanks professors Tucker and Sarris, and also University Archivist Alston Cobourn, for their work in researching these individuals.

Sallie Cotten (1846-1929)

Sallie Swepson Sims Southall Cotten, a native of Lawrenceville, Virginia, moved to North Carolina for college at Greensboro Female College. After the Civil War, she married Robert Randolph Cotten, a Confederate veteran and settled in Pitt County.

Remembered for

- One of the North Carolina Managers for the Chicago Columbian Exposition (or World’s Fair), 1893
- Founder of the Turn of the Century Book Club (which eventually became Sheppard Memorial Library), Greenville, N.C. 1899
- Author of the epic historical poem “The White Doe,” 1901
- Co-founder of the North Carolina Federation of Women’s Clubs, 1902
- President, North Carolina Federation of Women’s Clubs, 1912-13

Connection to ECTTS

The fact that Cotten was one of the first six people to receive the honor of building name on campus in the 1920s suggests that she was regarded as important by the school community. She was clearly one of the most prominent women in Greenville at the time. Her specific contributions to the school are less clear. Historian Mary Jo Bratton, author of *East Carolina University: The Formative Years, 1907-1982*, mentions her only twice, once in connection with the building named for her. Neither Dr. Tucker nor Dr. Sarris reported any major contribution or connection to ECTTS

Concerns

Like most members of her social class, she implicitly or explicitly supported white supremacy and endorsed the racial status quo in the South.

- The women’s clubs that Cotten helped organize were racially segregated.
- She was a local leader of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, an organization that helped build the myth of the “Lost Cause” that formed a cornerstone of white supremacy rhetoric of the time.
- Although she did not play an important role in the political battles over race in 1898, she did approve of her state having “at last disfranchised the Negro.”²
- In private letters, Cotten bemoaned what was then called “miscegenation,” and registered disgust for the blended ethnicities she witnessed on a visit to Cuba, writing, “Its people are a hopelessly mixed race – black and white with full unquestioned and unobjected to equality . . . and to this I seriously object forever. Is it necessary or desirable to degrade a superior race in order to elevate an inferior race? Why be superior if we are willing to relinquish superiority?”³

² Sallie Southall Cotten, Excerpt from “Letter to My Dear Friend [Gen. W. G. Le Duc],” Sallie Southall Cotten Papers, 1857-1929, Collection Number: 02613, Series 1. Correspondence, 1891-1929, Folder 1 (1891-1900). http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/c/Cotten,Sallie_Southall.html#folder_1%231

³ Tara McPherson, *Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender and Nostalgia in the Imagined South* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) 191.

- Her best-known writing was an epic historical poem, *The White Doe: The Fate of Virginia Dare, An Indian Legend* (1901). It conveyed themes of white supremacy and affirmed the fear of many whites that white women, when in the company of non-white men, would be brutalized. It romanticized the English conquest of the New World as a noble Christian crusade, and rhapsodized at length about the blue-eyed, fair-haired Anglo-Saxons, contrasting them with dark “savage” Indians.⁴
- Cotten’s book *What Aunt Dorcas Told Little Elsie* (1923) presented itself as collection of “Negro folklore stories” written in the genre of Joel Chandler Harris’s Uncle Remus tales. It featured heavy “negro dialect” and simple-minded characters who represented African-Americans in a condescending and insulting fashion.⁵
- Like many Progressives of her time, Cotten adopted the language of eugenics in her public advocacy. In a speech to the National Mother’s Congress in 1897, she argued for “scientific motherhood,” which would create “a grander, nobler race.” In another speech to an audience of women, she said that “The law of evolution needs her cooperation to the end that a better race may bless the earth.”⁶

Conclusion

Sallie Southall Cotten was an activist for education, women and families, and social uplift. She was committed to the clubwomen movement for reform during the Progressive Era.⁷ She was also committed to the racial hierarchy of her day, however, and her published writing (for which she was best known) was suffused with white supremacist themes. Her contributions to ECTTS do not appear to outweigh her promotion of white and “Anglo-Saxon” superiority.

⁴ Sallie Southall Cotten, *The Legend of Virginia Dare* (Reprint edition, Manteo, NC: Roanoke Island Historical Association, Inc., 1937) xix, 40-46; W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2005) 30; Stephenson, *Sallie Southall Cotten*, 105

⁵ Sallie Southall Cotten, *What Aunt Dorcas Told Little Elsie* (Charlotte: Queen City Print Company, 1923); Stephenson, *Sallie Southall Cotten*, 162

⁶ *Raleigh News and Observer*, February 21, 1897.

⁷ Margaret Supplee Smith, “Sallie Southall Cotten: Organized Womanhood Comes to North Carolina,” in Michele Gillespie and Sally McMillen, eds., *North Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2014), 213-221

James L. Fleming (1867-1909)

Born in Pitt County, N. C., James Lawson Fleming was taught by W. H. Ragsdale at the Greenville Academy and graduated from Wake Forest College, and then studied law at the University of North Carolina. He was admitted to the bar in 1892 and practiced law in Greenville, where he was elected mayor of Greenville. He was a partner in a law firm with Charles B. Aycock and was in 1904 and 1906 elected to the state senate. He died in an automobile accident in November 1909.

Remembered for

- N. C. State Senator, Pitt County, 1905-1909
- Introduced legislation in the state Senate creating East Carolina Teachers Training School (ECTTS) 1907

Connection to ECTTS

During his two terms in the State Senate, Fleming advocated for a teacher training school for whites in the eastern part of the state. He drafted the bill that established East Carolina Teachers' Training School (now East Carolina University). As part of the effort to have the school located in Greenville, Fleming helped organize the Greenville Chamber of Commerce. His untimely death in 1909 ended his contributions to the school two years after its founding.

Concerns

- During the Democrats' "White Supremacy Campaign" in 1898, Fleming helped to found a "White Government Union" and was praised by the *Eastern Reflector* newspaper as having "done much good for the cause of good government and white supremacy."⁸
- Fleming sponsored a bill to expand the use of convict labor in Pitt County. Historians now recognize convict labor to have been a way of legally exploiting African American men or, as one scholar has put it, "slavery by another name."⁹
- Fleming's argument for a teacher training school in the east was explicitly race-based. He claimed there was not "one dollar of the State's fund" spent on the east, except those funds devoted to "two negro Normals [teacher training schools] and one negro Asylum," and questioned "Why give the negroes two norms and the whites none in the East?"¹⁰ Fleming's comparison ignored the fact that white normal schools received nine times the total state funding of black normal schools at the time.

⁸ *Eastern Reflector*, October 28, 1898.

⁹ *Journal of the Senate of the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, Session 1907* (Raleigh: EM Uzzell & Co., 1907); Douglas A. Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* (New York: Doubleday, 2008).

¹⁰ James Lawson Fleming Papers, Manuscript Collection #437. James Yadkin Joyner Library.

- As the drafter of the legislation that created ECTTS, he was responsible for writing into the school's charter the proviso that the school be for "young white men and women," encoding segregation into law for the next five decades.

Conclusion

Fleming is remembered primarily as the drafter of ECU's founding legislation. In doing so, however, he also codified the segregation that would prohibit students of color from attending for the next fifty years.

Thomas J. Jarvis (1836-1915)

Thomas Jordan Jarvis was born in Currituck County, North Carolina, to a moderately wealthy farm family (Jarvis's father, Banister, owned five slaves in 1860). He graduated from Randolph-Macon College in 1860, enlisted in the Confederate army in 1861, and served in the 17th North Carolina Infantry Regiment during the Civil War. After the war, he became an attorney and went into politics as a Democrat. He went on to serve in many high offices, including governor and U.S. Senator. At ECTTS, he planned much of the original campus, hired the first president and most of the original faculty, and chaired the Executive Committee of the ECTTS Board of Trustees.

Remembered for

- Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives 1870-72
- Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina 1876-1879
- Governor of North Carolina 1877-1885
- U.S. Minister to Brazil 1885-1888
- U.S. Senator from North Carolina 1894
- Chair of Executive Committee of ECTTS Board of Trustees 1908-1915
- “Father of ECU”

Connection to ECTTS

Jarvis was the “Father of ECU,” according to historian Mary Jo Bratton. He designed buildings, hired the first president and most of the original faculty, and chaired the Trustees’ Executive Committee in the school’s critical first years. He contributed decisively to the creation of ECTTS: he was the first chair of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees; he coordinated the planning and construction of the campus, and hired most of the founding faculty, including Robert Wright, the first president. Jarvis’s contributions to ECTTS, as well as his role in the construction of a new Methodist Episcopal church (subsequently named for Jarvis), make him one of the most well-known individuals in the history of early-twentieth century Greenville and ECTTS.

Jarvis’s role in the founding has been exaggerated, however, according to University Historian John Tucker. Tucker notes that it was James Fleming and not Jarvis who wrote the legislation authorizing ECTTS, despite a legend to the contrary.

Concerns

- During Reconstruction, as Speaker of the NC House, he led the impeachment of Governor Holden, whose “crime” was his attempt to suppress the Ku Klux Klan,¹¹ and helped rewrite the state constitution in 1875 to centralize power in Raleigh so that black-majority communities could no longer elect their own

¹¹ Years, *Papers of Thomas Jarvis*, xviii-xxii; Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 3.

county-level officials.¹²

- As Governor, Jarvis was a strong proponent of convict labor, a system that exploited a disproportionate number of black prisoners. Under the Jarvis administration, the state used convict labor to build the new Executive Mansion in Raleigh. When one legislator complained that there were not enough convicts to meet demand, Jarvis wrote that was because “the colored people in the East are beginning to quit stealing and start working.”¹³
- In 1898 Jarvis, by then a senior statesman of the NC Democratic Party, left behind the paternalistic and comparatively moderate white supremacist stance of his generation and joined with Charles B. Aycock other younger politicians in their much more strident and uncompromising racism. In more than two dozen speeches and newspaper articles Jarvis campaigned vigorously for white political dominance. Sample quotes:

About the worst thing we could do for the negro, as well as the white man, is to put the negro to administering our government. He has not the fitness, the qualifications, nor the aptitude. He will, of necessity, not only make a miserable failure but instead of lifting his own race up he will pull ours down.

--“Jarvis and Aycock,” *The News and Observer* (June 18, 1898), p. 5.

Shall North Carolina be Cubanized? Shall we have bayonet rule? Shall we have negro domination? Shall we have all the evils of bad government? Or shall we have the rule of the civil law? Shall we have White Supremacy and all the blessings of good government?

--“Gov. Jarvis on Pritchard,” *The News and Observer* (Oct. 28, 1898), p. 3

I come in the name of the white people of Greenville and appeal to the white people of Randolph [County] to free us from our wretched condition. Go to Wilmington and see how they are cursed with negro rule. I do not live there, but they are white men – men of North Carolina. They are our brothers and I appeal to you to go to their rescue.

--“Four Thousand Heard Them: Jarvis and Overman at the Asheboro Rally,” *The News and Observer* (Sept. 10, 1898), Issue 3.

- Although Jarvis officially decried political violence, his participation in the “white supremacy” campaign of 1898 contributed to conditions that resulted in the violent overthrow of Wilmington’s integrated “Fusion” government by white Democrats, in the only coup d’état in American history. Jarvis joined Charles B. Aycock and Wilmington coup leader Alfred Waddell as part of the Democratic Speaker’s Committee, traveling the state to drum up support for white supremacy. The platform that Jarvis promoted was explicitly racist: **“This is a white man's country and white men must control and govern it. They must govern it not only because they are white men, but because**

¹² Yearn, *Papers of Thomas Jarvis*, 544, 605

¹³ Yearn, *Papers of Thomas Jarvis*, xxiv, xxx, 311, 327, 384; Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name*.

they can do it better than the negro. The negro has, whenever tried, demonstrated his unfitness and inability to rule.”¹⁴ Jarvis complained that “hundreds of negroes now fill the offices of justices of the peace and school committeemen” and claimed that Greenville had been “Negroized.”¹⁵ After the election, the *Eastern Reflector* wrote that “Gov. Jarvis’s letter telling of Negro domination in Greenville” played a key role in Democratic success statewide.

- Jarvis’s relationship to the Ku Klux Klan is cloudy. There is no direct evidence that he was a member, but direct evidence of membership in secret societies is not common. His wife Mary wrote two essays sympathetic to the organization.¹⁶ Political opponents accused Jarvis of supporting the Klan, and at least one historian has concluded that Jarvis was at least a sympathizer.¹⁷ In 1914 Jarvis spoke to ECTTS students about the Reconstruction era, when he was a leader in the first post-Civil War effort to restore white rule, and “made the students realize the terrible state of affairs. He made them understand as they never understood before the Union League and the Ku Klux Klan.” The Union League was a Republican organization that sought to mobilize African American political activity, which in turn led to the formation of the KKK (as described in one of Mary Jarvis’s essays). (Reported in the *Eastern Reflector*, April 3, 1914.)
- In 1899 Jarvis was prominent in the effort to amend the state constitution to eliminate black voting through poll taxes and literacy tests. In long article published in the *News and Observer*. Jarvis argued that “The negro has demonstrated the fact that he cannot govern” and that “my opinion [is] that it will be a blessing to them to eliminate the great body of them from politics.” He warned of “the danger of negro domination” and believed that the amendment “insures to the intelligent, worthy white men the management of public affairs.”¹⁸

Conclusion

¹⁴ State Democratic Executive Committee of North Carolina, *The Democratic Handbook 1898* (Electronic Edition - *Documenting the American South: Primary Resources for the Study of Southern History, Literature, and Culture* <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/dem1898/dem1898.html>)

¹⁵ “Greenville Negroized: How the Infamous Job Was Done,” *The News and Observer* (Aug. 11, 1898), p. 5.

¹⁶ Mary Jarvis, “The Conditions that Led to the Ku-Klux Klans,” *North Carolina Booklet*, Vol. I, no. 12 (Raleigh: Capital Printing Co., 1902), pp. 3-24; “The Ku- Klux Klans,” *North Carolina Booklet*, Vol. II, no. 1, pp. 3-26.

¹⁷ Elgiva Watson, “The Election Campaign of Governor Jarvis, 1880,” *North Carolina Historical Review*, vol. 48, no. 3 (July 1971), p. 296.

¹⁸ “Governor Jarvis on the Effect of the Proposed Constitutional Amendment Regulating Suffrage,” *The News and Observer* (August 24, 1899).

Jarvis is the best-known of the five names under consideration, and the one most closely associated with the history of ECU. At the same time, his role in promoting white supremacy and restricting black voting in 1898-1900 was not far behind that of Charles B. Aycock. As a former governor and senator, Jarvis had the political clout to help sway those elections, and he used it to promote white supremacy and deny black voting rights. The reasons that were given for renaming Aycock Residence Hall in 2015 apply almost as strongly to Thomas Jarvis. At that time, the primary reason that Jarvis's name was not removed was that he was much more closely connected to ECU, not because he was less involved in promoting white supremacy.

The committee found the case for renaming Jarvis Hall the strongest of the five.

James Y. Joyner (1862-1954)

James Yadkin Joyner attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he associated with future leaders such as Charles Aycock, Charles McIver, and George Winston. He became a central figure in North Carolina education reform, spearheading Governor Aycock's massive expansion of the state public school system. He initially opposed the creation of a teacher training school in the eastern part of the state, but later lobbied in favor of it and served as chair of the Board of Trustees.

Remembered for

- Superintendent of Goldsboro Graded Schools, 1889-1893
- Dean, State Normal and Industrial College at Greensboro, 1893-1902
- North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1902-1918
- Ex-officio Chair of the Board of Trustees, East Carolina Teachers Training School, 1907-1918
- Member, ECTTS Board of Trustees, 1922-1925

Connection to ECTTS

Joyner was not an original supporter of a teacher training school in the eastern part of the state. In 1907, as the state's Superintendent of Instruction, he wrote "In my opinion, the establishment of such an institution at this time will be unwise and unnecessary." He instead wanted training for white teachers in the state to be limited to the State Normal and Industrial College (now UNC- Greensboro) and two smaller schools in the west (now Western Carolina University and Appalachian State University). He also had an ambitious plan to create rural public high schools, however, for which he needed support from eastern legislators. "To achieve this he would be forced to endorse the eastern normal," according to ECU historian Mary Jo Bratton. He agreed to support a new school, but only after negotiating with James Fleming and Thomas Jarvis to reduce the original appropriation by half and to change the institution's name to make sure that it was perceived as a "training school" rather than a college. After the bill became law, Joyner tried to limit the scope of ECTTS to that of a high school with a teacher training department so it would not rival the college in Greensboro. He opposed locating the school in Greenville (he favored Kinston), because he correctly feared that local backers in Greenville would not be content with just a glorified high school. Joyner qualifies as one of the founders of ECU, but not initially a supportive or enthusiastic one ¹⁹

¹⁹ Mary Jo Bratton, *East Carolina University: The Formative Years: 1907-1982* (Greenville: East Carolina University Alumni Association, 1985), 27, 31.

Once ECTTS was established, Joyner became the ex officio chair of its Board of Trustees, in his position as State Superintendent of Instruction. He overcame his initial reluctance and participated in the growth of the school, notable by helping persuade Thomas Jarvis to chair the board's executive committee and participating in the hiring of Robert Wright as the first president.

Concerns

- More than any of the other five names, Joyner publicly expressed views on race that reflected the “scientific racism” of the Progressive Era.²⁰ He spoke often of his belief in the superiority of the “Anglo-Saxon race,” praising “the native capacity of Southern [white] children through whose veins courses the purest strain of Anglo Saxon blood on the continent – the cleanest blood on earth.”²¹ He regarded the white race as the essential representative of progress, advancement, and civilization.
- As Superintendent of Instruction, Joyner unquestioningly accepted and supported the division of educational facilities on racial lines. Like Aycock, Joyner opposed conservatives who would have defunded black education altogether, but his reasons for doing so were condescending, paternalistic and limited by bigotry. In his Biennial Report of 1902, he wrote:

Who can estimate the danger that lurks in such a mass of ignorance, if these negroes are left uneducated?

The rapidity with which any race will lapse into a state of savagery and brutality through ignorance depends upon the years and generations of education and civilization that lie behind that race, and upon its native and inherited strength.

If this be true, does it not follow that decline of the negro race into a state of savagery and brutality through ignorance would be more rapid than that of the white race, and that there is even more danger in black ignorance than there is in white ignorance...

It is my deliberate conviction that in a few generations, without education, the great mass of the negro race would sink to a state of animal brutality.

Turn such a wild horde loose among out people, endowed with the rights of freedom without the knowledge to use it, controlled by the passions of

²⁰ For analysis of the “scientific racism” of Joyner, Aycock, and others, see Gregory P. Downs, “University Men, Social Science, and White Supremacy in North Carolina,” *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (May 2009), 267-304.

²¹ Undated speech, James Yarkin Joyner Papers, (#345), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA. Box #6

animals without the power to restrain them that comes alone from proper education and our safety will lie in extermination.

With the Negro it must be elevation through proper education or extermination.²²

Joyner's support for black education was thus founded on protecting white people from alleged "savagery" as much as on good will toward African Americans.

- Although Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) mandated equal facilities for racially separate public schools, Joyner defended his policy of underfunding black schools, writing in 1903 that "the negro schools can be run for much less expense and should be. In most places it does not take more than one fourth as much to run the negro schools as it does to run the white schools... [because] the salaries paid teachers are very properly much smaller, the houses are cheaper, the number of teachers smaller"²³
- Joyner's racism often was expressed in paternalistic terms of doing "justice to the weaker race" so that they might one day be given more political rights, but in practice he opposed "trying to enforce upon the Negro race . . . with different racial traits and endowments, the same sort of education [that whites had]" as contrary to nature. He instead favored vocational training because "In the South, the sphere which the negro must fill is industrial and agricultural."²⁴
- He supported the results of the 1900 constitutional amendment, taking away the opportunity to vote from African Americans "on account of unfitness to exercise it."²⁵

Conclusion

Joyner is remembered for his role as North Carolina's Superintendent of Public Instruction during Gov. Aycock's term, when he was an unrelenting advocate of public spending for education and eradication of illiteracy. Less well-remembered is his openly expressed and explicit "scientific" racism, which he used to justify policies that guaranteed unequal

²² North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina: 1900-1901 and 1901-1902*, (Raleigh: North Carolina Dept. of Public Instruction 1902) (hereinafter *Biennial Report*).

²³ Quoted in J. Morgan Kousser, "Progressivism – For Middle-Class Whites Only: North Carolina Education, 1880-1910," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (May, 1980), 186.

²⁴ *Biennial Report*.

²⁵ *Biennial Report*.

educational opportunities for people of color. His support for ECTTS after 1907 was the mirror image of his strong opposition to the creation of the school before that year.

Taking both of these factors into consideration, the committee regards this case for renaming as the second-strongest of the five.

Robert H. Wright (1879-1934)

Robert Herring Wright received his B.S. degree from UNC in 1897. In 1901 he entered graduate school at Johns Hopkins University in English and History. He took positions as chair of the Department of History, Civics, and Economics at Baltimore City College (1903), principal of Eastern High School in Baltimore (1906), and president of the Maryland History Teachers Association before coming to East Carolina Teachers Training School in 1909.

Remembered for

- First (and only) President of East Carolina Teachers Training School, 1909-21
- President, East Carolina Teachers College, 1921-1934
- President, North Carolina State Teachers Assembly, 1916

Connection to ECTTS

As the first president of East Carolina Teachers Training School, Robert Herring Wright was one of the most important individuals in the college's early history. He advocated for progressive educational development, state funding for education, and expanded professional training of public school teachers. Under his leadership, ECTTS became East Carolina Teachers College with authorization to offer four years of college instead of just two. The college began to offer graduate courses and master's degrees in 1929. During his tenure the school grew from 175 students to 1,000 at the time of his sudden death in 1934.

Concerns

Robert Wright was considerably younger than the other four individuals described above. There is no evidence that he took part in or supported the 1898 Democratic Party white supremacy campaign or the 1900 disenfranchisement amendment. During the high tide of racial rhetoric in North Carolina politics, Wright was teaching at a private Quaker academy, in graduate school, or in the first years of his professional career in Baltimore. In an undated debate speech, possibly dating from before the 1900 amendment, Wright argued against a literacy qualification for suffrage: "Can it be right to have an Ed-Qual. for suffrage? The idea of personal freedom, I believe, stands out first in the heart of every true man. Let come what may this government is safest in the hands of the people...."²⁶

- In the course of his 25-year tenure as president of ECTTS and ECTC, Wright did not openly challenge the racial order of his era. In one speech he stated

²⁶ Robert H. Wright, "Speeches on Teaching and Education, undated, pp. 6-8." Records of Robert Herring Wright, 1907-1938; 1909-1934, University Archives #UA02-01 Series 2, Box 2. Joyner Library. East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C. (hereinafter Wright Records).

“Unquestionably there are racial characteristics that justify the people of San Francisco, from a purely pedagogical standpoint, in their attempt to segregate the Japanese, [and] also to justify us in providing separate schools for the whites and the blacks.”²⁷

- On one of the rare occasions where Wright spoke about race, in 1927, he engaged in stereotyping about black criminality. “We have said that the negro must stay in his place, and the white men are going to see that he does,” he warned, “we almost have to do that to protect the white women, and we are going to protect the white women, law or no law.”²⁸
- Wright, a trained historian and son of a Confederate veteran, frequently invoked the “Lost Cause” myth, dismissing the idea that the Civil War had anything to do with slavery, or that emancipation had materially advanced conditions for black Americans.²⁹
- Perhaps the most troubling aspect of Wright’s record, in terms of conflict with ECU’s values in the 21st century, was his opposition to immigration. Immigration was a divisive political issue in the first decades of the 19th century, with many Americans of English or German descent (so-called “Anglo-Saxons) opposing the influx of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe. Congress’s attempts to create a literacy test as a legal wall to limit such immigration was vetoed three times, but passed over Wilson’s veto in 1917. Wright shared the widespread bigotry toward certain foreigners, describing them as “a constant influx of people who are against all law, who are against all government, and they represent an element that is trying to break down the government that you and I live under.” He worried about America becoming “a dumping ground for the slums of the world,” and said that the foreign born were “a menace to this republic of ours.”³⁰ When he proclaimed that “We, as Anglo Saxons, are among the greatest people on the face of the earth,”³¹ he was drawing a contrast to southern and eastern Europeans (many of them Jewish or Catholic) as much as to African or Asian people.

²⁷ Undated speech of Robert Wright, Wright Records, Box 2. UA02-01.

²⁸ Robert Herring Wright, “Chapel Talk,” March 18, 1927, Wright Records, Box #3.

²⁹ For example, see Speech to the Daughters of the Confederacy, c.a. 1913, Wright Records, Box. #2

³⁰ Robert Herring Wright, “Chapel Talk,” November 23, 1923, and December 10, 1923, Wright Records, Box #2.

³¹ Robert Herring Wright, “Chapel Talk”, March 18, 1927, Wright Records.

Conclusion

Robert Wright unquestionably did more for the school than any other individual of the early 20th century. At the same time, he was not immune to the endemic racism of his day, but he did not actively promote it. His focus was on education and teacher training, and his pronouncements on education rarely referenced racial distinctions. In 1920, for example, he told students that “Human progress rests upon education. ... The public schools belong to all the people, and the public school buildings open forums.”³² He referred to students collectively as simply “men and women,” omitting the racial qualifier in the school’s charter that refers to “young white men and women.” When he did refer to race, it was not to inflame passions but to argue for the universality of education: “We must recognize that public education is for all the children of all the people, and not for the favored few nor for the favored race alone.” Wright argued in 1916.³³

Considering these factors, the committee does not recommend removing Wright’s name from ECU buildings.

³² “President Wright Gives Students Acct. Education Meeting,” *Greenville Daily News* (May 12, 1920), p. 1.

³³ Robert Herring Wright to Teacher’s Association of North Carolina, 1916, Wright Records, Box #2.

Policy on Naming University Facilities and Activities

Version 2 (Current Version)

 Print

Policy	POL01.05.02
Title	Policy on Naming University Facilities and Activities
Category	Governance and Administration
Sub-category	Board of Trustees
Authority	Board of Trustees
History	Initially approved on July 25, 1997 with amendments in 2000, 2002, 2003 and 2009. A complete revision was mandated by the Board of Trustees in 2013 and this policy was subsequently approved on April 25, 2014. Policy was amended and approved on November 21, 2014; revision approved September 15, 2017.
Contact	Office of the Vice Chancellor for University Advancement (252) 328 - 9565 Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees (252) 328 - 6105
Related Policies	
Additional References	Naming Proposal to ECU Board of Trustees (FORM) (http://www.ecu.edu/ecuAssets/docs/uploads/prr-uploaded-docs/Naming Proposal to ECU Board of Trustees (00020650xD856D).pdf)

1. Establishment and Source of Authority

1.1 The Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina delegated the duty and authority to the Board of Trustees to approve the names of all individuals on whom "Honorary Distinction" is conferred by the university. As a means of guiding the development of recommendations to the Board of Trustees for naming university facilities and activities, the Trustees will follow this policy for honorary naming and monetary gift naming.

1.2 Since East Carolina University was founded, the University's physical spaces have been named to reflect its rich history and traditions. The act of naming a university facility or activity for a person, a family, or an organization is a conferral by the university of a high and conspicuous honor. It is intended to be a permanent act. The act enduringly recognizes the person, family, or organization so honored, and it perpetually exhibits to the world the judgment and standards of this university as to the qualities and actions that justify linking the name of the individual, family, or organization so honored with that of this institution. All who are involved in the act of naming a facility or activity must ever be aware that they are naming public property with the intent for it to be a perpetual recognition of the person, family, or organization being honored. It follows that the act of naming a facility or activity is to be taken discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and with concern for how that action will be viewed in retrospect.

2. Definitions

2.1 "Facility" is defined as every building, addition to a building, space in a building, outdoor spaces such as a garden, court or plaza, and other tangible and relatively permanent feature locations on any university property.

2.2 "Activity" is defined as every college, school, department, unit, center, program, or organization operating under the auspices of the university.

2.3 "Personal Service" is defined as substantial service that is sustained in character, and rendered to or on behalf of the university as a student, faculty member, administrator, staff member, alumnus, trustee, or friend of the university.

2.4 "Financial Contribution" is defined as a contribution of money or property that is substantial in relation to the facility or activity being named.

3. Review

3.1 The naming policy shall be reviewed periodically by the Board of Trustees, the Office of University Advancement and/or the Office of the Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees with all recommended changes requiring approval by the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Board of Trustees

4.1.1 The act of naming a facility or program shall be that of the Board of Trustees, acting after receiving the recommendation of the Chancellor. Benefactors or honorees should be informed throughout the naming discussions that final naming approval for all University facilities and programs rests with the Board of Trustees.

4.2 Chancellor

4.2.1 Subject to the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, the Chancellor shall have responsibility and authority with respect to, and is an essential participant in, all naming actions.

4.2.2 No facility or program may be named without prior approval of the Chancellor. The Vice Chancellor for University Advancement shall receive and review all recommendations prior to forwarding naming proposals to the Chancellor. The Chancellor and/or designee shall ensure that the proposed action is consistent with the interests of the University, to assure that the amount of any contribution warrants the action proposed, and to maintain equity in the relationship of donations for similar naming actions.

4.2.3 The Chancellor may recommend exceptions to any of the following policies, subject to approval of the Board of Trustees.

4.3 Faculty

4.3.1 When a facility or activity to be named is closely related to a school, department, or other unit having its own administration and faculty, the members of the administration and faculty shall be consulted by the Chancellor or his designee before the Board of Trustees acts on the naming proposal. Recommendations from the unit shall be weighed as one factor, but shall not constitute approval or disapproval of the proposal.

5. Procedures

5.1 It shall be the policy of the university that any facility or activity of the university not previously named may be named in consideration of:

5.1.1. financial contributions made to the university, or

5.1.2. services rendered to the university or society at large.

5.2 Whenever a naming proposal originates, at the earliest feasible date it shall be routed through the responsible dean and/or vice chancellor to the Vice Chancellor for University Advancement. The Vice Chancellor for University Advancement will determine whether the proposal meets the requirements for either a financial contribution or honorary naming. It shall be the responsibility of the Vice Chancellor to assure that a form ([http://www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/prr/customcf/uploadedDocs/Naming_Proposal_to_ECU_Board_of_Trustees_\(00020650xD856D\).PDF](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/prr/customcf/uploadedDocs/Naming_Proposal_to_ECU_Board_of_Trustees_(00020650xD856D).PDF)), developed and approved by the Board of Trustees ensuring uniform reporting of data to the Athletics and Advancement Committee of the Board of Trustees, is provided to individuals planning to submit proposals for naming, and that all pertinent information is collected and completed before forwarding the materials to the Committee.

5.3 The Form

5.3.1 The form ([http://www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/prr/customcf/uploadedDocs/Naming_Proposal_to_ECU_Board_of_Trustees_\(00020650xD856D\).PDF](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/prr/customcf/uploadedDocs/Naming_Proposal_to_ECU_Board_of_Trustees_(00020650xD856D).PDF)) developed by the Chancellor and approved by the Board of Trustees shall be completed and signed by the person responsible for originating the proposal for naming. If the proposal involves a financial commitment, a copy of the signed Letter of Intent defining pertinent arrangements must also be included.

5.4 Prior Approval

5.4.1 When possible as it relates to construction or renovation of a facility, as a benefit and guide to staff and potential donors, the Board of Trustees shall pre-approve a menu of possible facilities and/or activities that may be considered for naming. At the higher range of giving opportunities, flexibility will be given to meet the needs of the university while aligning with the capacity of the donor pool as stated in 5.5.8. When considering a naming for a program, a naming shall be considered when determining the size of the program, the operating budget, national ranking, and visibility of the program, as well as naming amounts of peer programs in the discipline or on the University campus when available and be substantial and significant, even transformative in nature, enabling the program to improve its competitiveness or distinction, or perhaps enabling the establishment of a new program within an exciting unit.

5.5 Financial Contributions

5.5.1 Proposals for naming facilities and activities shall be forwarded to the Vice Chancellor for University Advancement, who shall review the proposals.

5.5.2 Proposals for facilities namings shall be accompanied by sufficient documentation of the gift, along with a completed naming proposal form. The minimum contribution to submit a naming proposal will be \$25,000 and only upon the receipt of at least 60% of the funds committed and with a written gift agreement in place for the remainder, will the Vice Chancellor for University Advancement will forward the naming recommendation to the Chancellor. (Larger, more complex gifts may be considered on a case by case basis apart from this 60% receipt requirement).

5.5.3 The Vice Chancellor for University Advancement shall receive and review all recommendations prior to forwarding the naming proposals to the Chancellor.

5.5.4 Upon receipt of a naming proposal, the Chancellor will make recommendations to the Athletics and Advancement Committee of the Board of Trustees. If deemed appropriate, the recommendations may be made in closed session.

5.5.5 The Athletics and Advancement Committee of the Board of Trustees shall review recommendations from the Chancellor and select those to be recommended to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

5.5.6 The Board of Trustees will review the recommendation from the Athletics and Advancement Committee and will act on the proposal. With approval of the Board chair, the board may act to accept naming proposals as a group under one action.

5.5.7 The naming proposal recommendations may be heard in closed session of either the Athletics and Advancement Committee and/or the Board of Trustees.

5.5.8 Transfer of Donations

When a facility or program is to be named in consideration of a financial contribution, the gift shall have been received by the University or affiliated foundation, or its future receipt shall be assured through the appropriate signed gift agreement, before a naming action shall be taken, as follows:

Pledges to be paid over a period of time, typically up to five years, are acceptable for current naming of facilities and programs when a signed pledge payment agreement for the total is in hand.

If the pledged donation is to name new construction, renovation, or other projects with cash-flow considerations, the timing of the pledge payments should be such that sufficient current dollars are available to cover project costs.

Irrevocable planned gifts may generate current naming of facilities and programs if current cash flow considerations are not an issue for the requesting facility or program. Irrevocable planned gifts will be credited at their face value with particular emphasis being given to the predictability of the long-term value of the irrevocable deferred gift.

Combinations of revocable planned gifts and cash may occasionally generate current naming opportunities under the right circumstances. Each combination request must be explained fully to the Athletics and Advancement Committee and a case made for the appropriateness of the naming given the specifics of a particular gift. Particular emphasis will be given to the cash flow requirements of the requesting facility or program, the predictability of the long-term value of the revocable deferred gift component, and the predictability of its receipt.

5.5.8.1 Non-cash gifts.

5.5.8.1.1 Gifts of real estate. The valuation of real estate shall follow Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations and Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Management Reporting Standards for establishing value. The valuation for the gift shall be based on a qualified current Member of the Appraisal Institute (MAI) appraisal (less than six months of age).

5.5.8.1.2 Gifts-in-Kind. In accordance with IRS regulations and CASE Management Reporting Standards, gifts of real and personal property are to be counted at full fair market value regardless of the value the donor may be able to take as a charitable deduction. Gifts of \$5,000 or more shall be valued by qualified, independent appraisers.

5.5.8.1.3 Additional requirements. When an opportunity to name a facility or service is expected in return for a non-cash gift, the Trustees may require additional agreements from a donor to assure the eventual net from the sale of real estate or other valuables is not less than the value required for naming. Some examples of potential requirements could include a delay in naming until the article of value is sold, the requirement of multiple appraisals, or the requirement of a make-up provision in which the donor commits to make up the difference between the net received from the sale of the asset and the minimum amount required for naming.

5.5.8.1.3.1 Once a designated level of giving has been established for naming, no portion of "annual gifts" or "membership fees" may be counted toward the total required for naming purposes.

5.5.9 Shared Funding for Naming Opportunities

5.5.9.1 Naming opportunities are intended to recognize individuals, organizations or families for their efforts on behalf of the university. Required gift levels may not be split into units among unrelated individuals, with recognition conferred in multiple or hyphenated name fashion, without prior permission of the Board of Trustees.

5.5.10 Buildings or Facilities Constructed By Public Funds

5.5.10.1 When a building or facility that is currently standing or one to be built is funded entirely from non-gift resources (state allocations, federal grants, or fees), the Board of Trustees may require the proceeds to be placed in unrestricted endowment funds within any one or multiples of its related foundations for the general benefit of an area or the entire university.

5.6 **Honorary Namings**

5.6.1 Naming a facility to honor individuals should be extraordinary, and made if:

5.6.1.1 the individual has had a University-wide influence, or the individual has made exceptional contributions to the nation or world;

5.6.1.2 the individual being honored has been separated from the university for at least two years.

5.6.2 Proposals for naming facilities and activities based on honorary service shall be forwarded to the Vice Chancellor for University Advancement who shall review the proposal.

5.6.3 Proposals for honorary facilities namings shall be accompanied by sufficient justification of the naming as well as the naming proposal form.

5.6.4 Upon receipt and review of all applicable materials, the Vice Chancellor for University Advancement will forward the official naming recommendation to the Chancellor.

5.6.5 Upon receiving a formal recommendation, the Chancellor will review the honorary naming proposal, and if approved, will make a recommendation to the Athletics and Advancement Committee of the Board of Trustees.

5.6.6 The Athletics and Advancement Committee of the Board of Trustees shall review recommendations from the Chancellor and select those to be recommended to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

6 Criterion for Renaming

6.1 It shall be the policy of East Carolina University that all namings of campus facilities and activities, are in accordance with the University's vision, mission, and core values.

6.2 The decision to change or alter in any way the name of a campus facility or activity rests with the Board of Trustees, acting on the recommendation of the Chancellor. The Vice Chancellor for University Advancement shall receive all proposals to rename campus facilities and/or activities, and upon review, make a recommendation to the Chancellor requesting renaming.

6.3 Circumstances that may lead to consideration of a name change may include, but shall not be limited to such items as:

6.3.1 the University significantly renovates or adds space;

6.3.2 the University demolishes a facility or discontinues an activity;

6.3.3 an honored person fails to fulfill agreed upon obligations; or

6.3.4 a benefactor's or honoree's reputation changes substantially so that the continued use of that name may compromise the public trust, dishonor the University's standards, or otherwise be contrary to the best interest of the University. Care must be taken when, with the passage of time, the standards and achievements deemed to justify a naming action may change and observers of a later age may deem those who have conferred a naming honor at an earlier age to have erred. Names should not be altered simply because later observers would have made different judgments.

6.3.5 Student, faculty, and staff concerns should be given particular emphasis.

6.4 Upon receipt of a proposal to rename a facility or activity, the Chancellor may appoint an ad hoc Naming Committee to consider the proposal. The Chancellor will notify the Board of Trustees of the committee appointment.

6.5 The ad hoc Naming Committee shall include at least one representative from the University Counsel's Office, the faculty, the staff, the student body, and the Office of University Advancement.

6.6 Once appointed, the ad hoc Naming Committee shall convene at the earliest reasonable date to review the merits of the proposal.

6.7 The ad hoc committee will solicit substantial input from all stakeholders in considering the proposal.

6.8 The ad hoc Naming Committee will submit a recommendation to the Chancellor regarding the proposal. The Chancellor will in turn submit his recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

6.9 Authority to Rename

6.9.1 Final authority for renaming campus facilities and activities rests with the Board of Trustees in response to the Chancellor's recommendations.

6.9.2 The Board of Trustees will review the Chancellor's recommendation. The Board will decide to accept or decline the Chancellor's recommendation.

6.9.3 If a recommendation to rename a facility or activity is declined, the existing name will remain intact.

6.9.4 Once a request has been declined, there is a rebuttable presumption that the Board will not reconsider the decision for two years absent a recommendation from the Chancellor supporting reconsideration based on a material change in circumstances or discovery of material information previously unknown or that did not exist when the prior decision was made.

6.9.5 If a contractual agreement with an honoree or donor exists providing for the removal of the honoree's or donor's name from a campus facility or activity, then such provision may be acted upon by the Chancellor. Such action shall be reported to the Board of Trustees.

7 List of Named Facilities

7.1 The Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees shall maintain a record of officially named facilities and activities.

East Carolina University

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