

Ayers, Megan Kint

From: Carl Davis <cwDavis@nc.rr.com>
Sent: Friday, December 19, 2014 11:43 AM
To: Brinkley, Robert
Subject: Aycock Debate

Robert,

I wanted to weigh in on this issue. First of all, I am very pleased that we had some representation from our alumni on the committee. Very often ECU puts together groups like this and there is no alumni representation. Our alumni seem to be an afterthought. Our alumni are 155,000 strong and are the foundation of our university. As an alumnus, I know you understand this. Neal Crawford and I have discussed this multiple times. He's a terrific advocate for our alumni.

You and our trustees have a very difficult job with this issue. This is a no win situation. You have done the right thing to postpone a decision and gather more input and feedback. The committee's charge to make a recommendation in two weeks was not realistic.

First, I believe that this began with a similar movement at Duke. It will likely spread to Chapel Hill and Greensboro, if it hasn't already gone there. Since ECU is a public institution, that raises the stakes and makes your decision more visible.

As a former resident of Aycock Hall, I commented on the website. My thoughts were like many others. This is a different time than the early 1900s when Governor Aycock made the comments that are now so controversial. It's a different time than the early 60s when the dorm was given his name. It's almost impossible to judge someone's words more than 100 years after they were spoken. We also need to judge his actions. He built more schools for both white and black students than anyone before or since his time.

It's my opinion that Governor Aycock was pandering to the poor uneducated white voters and injected race into the election. That is not unlike what we saw in a much more subtle manner in several races in the recent election.

The last speech of his career and life (He died while giving the speech.) made no mention of race. It was all wrapped around education for all. I would like to believe that these were his true feelings later in his career with no campaign to run.

The real question for me is do Governor Aycock's words over shadow his good deeds. They probably do.

I would suggest that if the Board of Trustees decides to change the name that two things

be done to make it more palatable. As they did at Duke, change the name to something very neutral like College Hill Residence Hall or East Residence Hall. Second, a plaque or historical monument within the dorm should explain the name change. You can't erase 50+ years of history without some explanation. This was also done at Duke.

We need to be careful not to set a precedent with renaming our buildings. Will Governor Jarvis be next? I hope not.

Robert, good luck on this difficult task. If I can ever help, please call on me.

Hope to see you in a couple of weeks in Birmingham. Go Pirates!

Carl Davis