

Aycock Un-Naming Request

This issue is a real opportunity for ECU to make a long-lasting, impactful decision based off intelligent discourse and community engagement. Unlike Duke University, which I believe hastily made a fear based decision out of being influenced by perceived public opinion, ECU has chosen a wise path of due diligence which will hopefully end with a swift, unwavering decision.

Important information to keep in mind during the decision-making/discussion process:

Governor Aycock was the youngest of 10 children, an advocate for the advancement of the state public school system, served as super-intendant of a county school system and was known as the "Education Governor."

In making the decision, Naval Captain Michael Abrashoff wrote in his best-selling management techniques book, "Its Your Ship" the following about 3 types of people you'll encounter during a tough decision making process:

- **Immoveable** – their minds are made up, no matter what information is brought to light, they aren't interested in listening to the other side.
- **Moveable** – their minds are made up but are willing to listen to the other side's point of view but at the end of the day, can't change.
- **People that Move** – their minds aren't made up, will listen to new information or ways of thinking because they solely want to make decisions based off trying to achieve the best results.

I say focus on identifying the 'People that Move' because they aren't emotionally attached to their opinions, will be objective through the process because they're *main focus is to get it right not just be right*.

I believe the following aspects should be considered:

1. **What would ECU intend to accomplish by removing Aycock's name?** If it's to be disassociated from a known white supremacist because it thinks by not doing so will confuse the local community and state about if ECU is a supporter of white supremacy and/or black disenfranchisement then I think ECU would be following Duke's fear-based suit. To lead, I believe one aspect ECU must do is compare what Aycock contributed to the state against his transgressions as a human. If it's agreed that his transgressions do outweigh his contributions then the decision to remove his name will still not be agreed upon by all parties but at least you as the Chairman can have peace that it was not hastily made and should be respected due to a sound process.

2. **Humans are inherently flawed and no one can truthfully claim to be perfect.** Because of that, I think it's a slippery slope to where if the Board decides to remove Aycock today, what's to stop another quest against a past leader's name at the University that was anti-gay. I use that as the example because popular sentiment over the past 100 years about the LGBT community has changed so much from society not acknowledging its existence in the open to now being able to marry in a lot of states. I bet it wouldn't be hard to find someone from past times that expressed or even acted on anti-gay sentiments but at what point do we stop holding those past individuals and leaders to the same standard we live by today when they weren't exposed to the same information, public sentiment more open-minded society we're so fortunate to live in today. Where would the search stop to wipe away historical figures that has had an unsavory personal opinion or actions in their past? Governor Aycock never had slaves but under the approach wipe all our historical slates clean, should we recommend removing George Washington from the \$1 bill because he did own slaves?

3. **What if he was to the personal standard we want our public servants to be today?** If Governor Aycock had been 100 years ago who want him to be today in order to keep his name on school buildings, dorms, etc there is one question you have to ask yourself keeping in mind the pragmatism and political savviness required to accomplish all that he did. If he weren't in many ways a product of his time, because let's be frank the way he personally felt was the popular opinion back in those days - *where would the NC educational system be today* if his paramount issue instead of education was for progressive movements for minority issues – would he have still been able to rally coalitions and get buy-in to build hundreds of public schools when other states weren't focused on the issue. Would our state still be looked at as a higher-education national cost leader when it comes to our state public school system? Just an aspect to think about and reminds me that everyone may love to eat sausage but at the same time hate knowing how it's made.

My opinion – keep Governor Aycock's name on the dorm and release a strong statement against his personal transgressions, completely own that we as a University are aware of them, do not condone them but that we as a society must not try and hold past figures of a different time to the same personal standard we adhere to today because they weren't privy to the new information we have today or able to participate in open discourse that changes public opinion landscapes. I think its more detrimental from an overall societal standpoint to remove his name and set that precedence rather than just leave it.