

Ballard, Steve

From: steven.wright@hklaw.com
Sent: Thursday, December 18, 2014 3:16 PM
To: Ballard, Steve
Subject: Vote to Change Name of Aycock Hall

Dear Chancellor Ballard:

My name is Steven Wright. I am an ECU alumni, and the son of Ledonia Wright, whom the Ledonia Wright Cultural Center ("LWCC") is named after. I am writing to urge the Board of Trustees of ECU to vote in favor of changing the name of Aycock Hall.

I was made aware of the issue at a recent visit to ECU, when I met with approximately 25 diverse students at LWCC. I was giving them career advice on how to pursue their dreams and goals, and one of the students asked me how I would address the issue raised by Aycock Hall.

I asked the student what was the issue and he indicated that a dorm was named after a prominent leader in public education, a former Governor who was also a "White Supremacist". I was stunned to learn that there was even a question, or resistance to a name change.

I've since been made aware of the Task Force that was engaged to study this issue. I find Chancellor Ballard's letter summarizing the issue, and recommendation of a name change compelling.

First, while Brantley Aycock advanced public education, he also advanced bigotry, white supremacy, voter suppression, and the degradation of an entire race of US citizens.

Second, I had the honor of participating in the development of some of the strategies connected with ECU advancing its goal of becoming The Leadership University. It is clear that endeavoring to "develop tomorrow's leaders to serve and inspire positive change" demands that the Trustees lead the school into the new global diverse changing world. The world is changing, and being a leadership institution means having the courage and temerity to correct the injustices of the past. Once one understands the history behind the name, you get the same visceral reaction that connected to the Confederate flag supporting slavery. It should be changed.

Lastly, in this day of Google and social media it will do irreparable harm to the University if it is seen as affirmatively embracing a white supremacist as an inspirational figure, and can do incalculable harm to the University, the current students and alumni.

Accordingly I urge you to vote to change the name.

Sincerely,

Steve Wright

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