

SENSE OF THE BOARD REGARDING ACCURATELY PORTRAYING CLEMSON UNIVERSITY'S HISTORY

Expressing the sense of the Board of Trustees of Clemson University regarding accurately portraying Clemson University's history;

WHEREAS, Clemson University was established in 1889 with the fundamental purpose of being a high seminary of learning;

Clemson University has throughout the years held true to its fundamental purpose while becoming a coeducational institution in 1955, peacefully desegregating in 1963, being renamed Clemson University in 1964, and becoming the nationally recognized public university that it is today;

As a national leader among public universities, Clemson University is committed to diversity, inclusiveness and historical accuracy as key values needed to continue our founding purpose of being a high seminary of learning;

Recent events in our state and nationally have prompted concerns about how Clemson University portrays its history and how that portrayal impacts the full breadth of the Clemson family;

Clemson wants to acknowledge the leadership of the Governor, the Senate, and the House with respect to their removal of the Confederate flag from the grounds of the state house;

Ten past Presidents of the Faculty Senate have recently written to the Board of Trustees requesting reconsideration of the 1946 decision to honor Benjamin Tillman by naming the Old Main Building Tillman Hall;

Benjamin Tillman played a key role in the founding and early success of Clemson University, was appointed as one of the original Trustees of the then Clemson Agricultural College of South Carolina, and served as Governor of the State of South Carolina and a United States Senator;

Benjamin Tillman was also known to be by his own admission an ardent racist and led a campaign of terror against African Americans in South Carolina that included intimidation and violence of which he boasted about publicly; and

For some members of our university family Benjamin Tillman's legacy included not only contributions to Clemson University but also oppression, terror and hate.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The sense of the Board of Trustees is that such actions and views of Benjamin Tillman are repugnant to our values and our fundamental purpose of being a high seminary of education;

The Board of Trustees reaffirms that Clemson University should be known as a Top 20 Public University and for its outstanding students, faculty, and staff not by the racist actions a century ago; and

There is a need for a task force of members of the Board to work closely with the President and administration on how to best preserve and tell the complete history of Clemson University. This task force is charged with the engagement of stakeholders to include students, faculty, administration and alumni to receive their input. The task force is charged with creating a comprehensive plan to include, but not limited to, any recommendations regarding curating our historic buildings and memorials, developing better ways to acknowledge and teach the history of Clemson University, and exploring appropriate recognition of historical figures. This task force will serve for a period of six months at which time it shall expire unless extended by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and will report its progress and any recommendations to the Board at its quarterly meetings.