

June 22, 2020

Dear Madison Founders Society,

Here we are in the middle of June. Many of us are still under self-quarantine, some of us have gone back to the office, and some of us never quit going to our workplace. Some of us wear masks, gloves and hand sanitize, others choose not to. A man's life was senselessly snubbed out as we watched on video. Americans have shown a very bright and sometimes harsh light on the choices we make, the burdens some of us carry and the imperfections of our Nation. During all of this we have also seen beauty, caring, heroic efforts and self-sacrifice.

Hopefully, if nothing else, we walk through this with grace for others and for ourselves.

Through these months James Madison University has shown a light on itself, and made difficult decisions which protected our students, faculty and staff. Classes went strictly on line and our campus went into high gear helping with out-reach and also preparing the campus for a safe return in the fall.

Other decisions were made as we reexamined our own history. JMU has made a recommendation to our Board of Visitors to remove the names from three halls on campus. Ashby, Jackson and Maury named for three Confederate military leaders. These were actually the second names of these buildings. This was not a sudden decision. Several years ago the University formed a Task Force on Inclusion which, as a part of its work, studied the names and context of buildings on campus. Discussions, forums and an open survey over the course of time were used to gather opinions and impressions. Overwhelmingly our faculty, staff, students and community members and alumni that were surveyed are in favor of the removal of these names.

JMU has evolved over the years, becoming a comprehensive, fully coed university, opening our campus to students from all racial, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. JMU continues to evolve and will remove these names helping to foster a culture and environment on our campus where all students, faculty and staff feel safe and respected. To see President Alger's presentation please visit [jmu.edu](http://jmu.edu) "*Update on Building Names*" or visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDOe2r5WUzU>

I am grateful for your support, this place that connects us and this day,

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