

February 12, 2024

To the Mayor and Council:

I attended my first RASEC meeting yesterday. Tonight, I am wearing two hats, that of a 65-year resident of the Town of Washington Grove and that of co-chair of the 150th Anniversary Committee. I've had a good life here and creating a 150th bonanza filled me with lots of positive energy. Yesterday, RASEC voted to send you a request to drop the name McCathran from McCathran Hall. This idea stems from two concerns — First, that when he was young, Roy McCathran engaged in minstrel show style musical entertainment, a genre which has been interpreted as mocking Blacks. The committee also says he failed to remove or adjust racial property covenants inherited from founding fathers.

Both these issues are clearly linked to the times and should not be used as an assault on a remarkable man. Before the vote, I said that this proposal would bring a mix of laughter and disdain in the community. Unnecessary character assassination of Roy McCathran also devalues the exceptional work of his son Don, and defames all family members, especially those who live among us. RASEC confronted the race issue last year with Resolution 2023-01. This new proposal could have been addressed through that Resolution, but it seems to me that the group wanted to stoke a fire. The small volunteer group that met yesterday was composed of ten members, only six of whom are town residents. I feel that they are interjecting gratuitously contentious, personal attacks here. I have a major problem with this. I recommend viewing Phil Edwards on Montgomery History tomorrow at 2 pm for a well-researched, unbiased perspective on the town. The program can be viewed for a week on the site. I also recommend Council drop this proposal quickly when it arrives.

Respectfully,

Meredith Horan