

## More thoughts regarding renaming McCathran Hall

To the Town Council and Residents of Washington Grove,

In an earlier email on the listserv, someone said, "removal of the name need not be a judgment of that person", but I disagree - it is a judgment of the person - it's just that the judgment is by today's standards rather than when they lived. Removal of the name should not, however, be considered as denigrating to that person. Whether a person is "good" or "bad" should rightly be based on the norms of their day, and with the empathy that goes with knowing all of us have both good and bad tendencies. That said, whether or not a person should be honored *today* by having their name on a building (or park or whatever) should, I believe, be based on the norms of today. Only then are we proclaiming what we currently find honorable and respectful.

There's been much talk about how pain it would cause and how divisive it would be to remove the name, and I don't doubt it would cause a lot of hard feelings. Despite that, we now have an opportunity to remove a symbol that is in all likelihood a painful reminder to our neighbors of our town's racist past, and I for one think we should put their comfort ahead of our own.

Ultimately I think it comes down to what type of culture we want to promote. I believe that we would welcome people of color, or sexuality or whatever, to live here but I think we should set the bar higher than that - we should promote a culture that says I'm okay with discomfort and even disadvantaging myself in order to elevate those who have suffered the sins of our forefathers.

- Rick Silton

P.S. Many thanks to the council, and especially to the RASEC committee members for their time spent trying to move us forward toward real reconciliation with our neighbors.