

19 June 2021

## Charting Our Progress During a Challenging Nine Months

In the fall of 2020 Washington and Lee University was in turmoil. The Coronavirus epidemic had hit the campus, and President Dudley was struggling to find the right balance of solutions. Many parents and students were concerned about what they perceived as inconsistent and even discriminatory enforcement of coronavirus policies. Many of them were also concerned about issues of freedom of speech and expression and the perceived quelching of certain points of view in favor of others. A few weeks before in late summer, the Board of Trustees announced that they were revisiting the issue of the university's name and the issue of the namesakes' images on diplomas. On previous occasions the Board had more than once indicated that the name would not be changed and had, only six months before this time, declared that retaining the images of our namesakes on diplomas was a settled matter.

The Generals Redoubt (TGR) leapt into action. We established relationships with students both as individuals and as members of groups, including new groups such as Students for Historical Preservation. We brought together a significant number of parents who had concerns not only about the coronavirus and freedom of speech but also about a possible name change and the further destruction of the history, values, and traditions of the university. We reiterated our opposition to a name change to our followers, the administration, and the Board.

TGR also launched its second annual fund in September with a goal of \$500,000. This money was to be primarily used for communications and public relations efforts and also for legal purposes if necessary. We believe our efforts were successful in halting a name change as 22 of 28 members of the Board of Trustees voted not to change the name and we congratulated and thanked them for making the right decision. At the same time there were other elements of their decision with which we strongly disagreed and which

we think will contribute to the further hollowing out of our history, values, and traditions from the inside (see our Letter to the Board of Trustees which is on the Letters page). Moving forward, we will continue to address these issues with the Board, the administration, and many others.

Following are a brief list of some of our most significant accomplishments this year:

- Increasing our number of email followers to close to 10,000 individuals. This includes not only alumni but also parents, students, and other friends of the university.
- Upgrading and improving our website, [thegeneralsredoubt.us](http://thegeneralsredoubt.us)
- Establishing a Concerned Parents Group affiliated with The Generals Redoubt
- Significantly increasing our contacts with students and encouraging them in establishing new groups to preserve the history, values, and traditions of W&L.
- Building a more diverse and younger Board of Directors and Board of Advisors
- Working with new alumni groups at the University of Virginia and Virginia Military Institute who share our concerns for the preservation of the history, values, and traditions of their schools
- Working with newspapers, television and radio stations, blogs, and other media outlets to get out our message
- Creating two new videos defending the legacy of Robert E. Lee in contrast to the ahistorical and biased take on Lee by certain members of the faculty and others. Despite our having shared these videos and other materials with our followers, President Dudley and the administration have not allowed our materials to be distributed through university channels while effectively conveying through their conspicuous silence only a vague allegiance to the University of Chicago Principles of Free Speech and Expression.

- A Spring campaign centered around the theme of "Retain the Name." This has consisted of banners, yard signs, and billboards placed all around Lexington and Rockbridge County. It has also included a number of "swag" items such as T-Shirts, Hats, etc., and has been well received within the local community.

- Significantly exceeding our annual fund goal

On this last point, as of today (June 18th, 2021) we have received gifts and donations of over \$586,000. If we are able to secure \$14,000 in additional gifts by June 30th, we will have exceeded our goal by 20%. If you have not yet made a gift to our annual fund or would like to make an additional gift, just go to our website to see how you may do so.

( [www.thegeneralsredoubt.us](http://www.thegeneralsredoubt.us) )

As a result of not having to spend funds on legal matters, we now have a cash balance of almost \$1 million. Some have asked what we intend to do with this money. Of course, we may yet have additional costs for communications, public relations, and other organizational matters, and we may yet have legal costs concerning relationships with the university. Barring significant costs in these areas, we are seriously considering some very promising initiatives which we would like to present to the Board and the university.

- The establishment of a co-curricular program which will encourage greater on-campus intellectual diversity

- A "Greek Renaissance" which will promote greater ethnic diversity within the fraternities and sororities and place a greater emphasis on service activities

- Support for a new museum which is truly balanced in its presentation of our history and not simply a reflection of the "erase history" and "woke" culture.

We have other ideas for raising significant funds which will support both the values-based mission of The Generals Redoubt and restore to the university the legacy of its namesakes which has created its iconic brand of excellence in the liberal arts, science, commerce, and legal education.

This does not mean that we will abandon focus on our concerns regarding recent actions taken by the university or actions which we fear will be taken in the future.

These include:

- The highly questionable action of changing the name of the Lee Chapel and making other physical alterations to the Chapel. We feel that such actions may well jeopardize the designation of the Chapel as a National Historical Landmark and may, indeed, be a legal violation of National Historical Landmark standards.
- Providing an option for students who wish to choose a diploma with the namesakes' images
- Continuing to monitor violations of the Honor System and the Code of Civility, both of which we believe were seriously compromised during the last year
- Continuing to hold the administration and the faculty accountable for past, current, and future efforts to diminish the history, values, and traditions of the university.

All in all, we are hopeful that we can continue to work with the Board and the university to both protect our history, values, and traditions and be "not unmindful" of the many challenges and opportunities facing Washington and Lee moving forward.

Neely Young

Vice President, The Generals Redoubt