

Letter to the Editor Michael Deyo

By Michael Deyo
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As we all know, regarding the Huguenot family names on the Hasbrouck complex, President Donald P. Christian recently announced the non-unanimous recommendations of the Diversity & Inclusion Council that, "buildings that honor families who owned slaves should be renamed," so be it. But, as one of the tens of thousands of descendants of those families, I'd like to highlight two major points ignored by the Council.

There is a distinct difference between naming a building for a generic family which has existed for centuries and is made up of thousands of individuals born into the family, and naming a building for a specific person (such as Robert E. Lee) or a group of unrelated individuals with a com-

mon purpose (such as Confederate Veterans) .

It would be difficult to impossible to find many European families with ancestors who arrived in America prior to the 19th. Century who did not have a slave holder somewhere in their family tree.

Nevertheless, if the Huguenot family names are to be stripped from campus buildings because two centuries and more ago someone in the family owned a slave, then surely fairness and consistency requires that names such as Scudder, Bliss, Haggerty, Coykendall, Wooster, etc. be likewise investigated to see whether any of those families also had a slaveholder in their ranks. More importantly, should

not such investigations be extended to the families of SUNY New Paltz's current administrators and faculty members? After all, would it not be hypocritical in the extreme to expunge the names of slave-holding families from SUNY New Paltz buildings, while descendants of slave owners hold sway in the classroom and in the admin building?

Sincerely,

Michael Deyo