



North Carolina Central University Alumni Association, Inc. • 2223 Fayetteville Street • Durham, North Carolina 27707 • (919) 530-5222

## OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

February 10, 2019

Greetings NCCU Alumni and Friends,

It's not often I communicate with our Alumni family in writing, but after reading an article that was published in the News & Observer, I felt compelled to respond. The article, "Clyde Hoey is NC Central's Silent Sam; He should go too." is written by Dr. Walter C. Farrell, Jr. and Dr. Al-Tony Gilmore, two of NCCU's distinguished Alumni. Although I understand, agree and appreciate the intent and context of the article, I disagree with the accuracy of a few of the statements, or at the least, some were misleading. As President of the NCCU Alumni Association, part of my responsibility in this role is to communicate with our Chancellor, Dr. Johnson O. Akinleye, participate in all the Board of Trustee meetings and help mentor our Student Government Association. Therefore, I would like to share with you where we are as it pertains to the renaming of the Hoey Administration Building, hopefully clarifying the article's misleading statements.

The first item is the timeline. In February 2018, the Student Government Association President, Michael Hopkins, contacted me to inquire if the Alumni Association would support an initiative to change the name of the Hoey Administration Building; it was not two years as the article indicated. Based on the information the students presented, I agreed that the matter should be addressed, and I was confident that we could generate support from the Alumni body if we had a process in place that is factual and informative for all stakeholders.

On March 01, 2018, the Student Government Association Leadership and I decided that we would host student/ alumni forums and conduct surveys to seek support for this initiative. The forums were hosted, and surveys were conducted through mid-April 2018. On April 23, 2018, the Student Government President presented the results to the Chancellor and NCCU Board of Trustees. All stakeholders agreed to move forward, but there were two major concerns: the proper procedures to change the name of a state-owned facility and the accuracy of the history pertaining to Clyde Hoey. Out of this meeting the Board of Trustees agreed to move the process forward and set forth several action items:

- Research proper protocol for name change of a state supported institution.
- Review the documented history of Clyde Hoey through the University's historian.
- Research other buildings and structures on campus that may render name change removing.

At the June 2018 Board of Trustee meeting, the proper protocol and the history of Clyde Hoey were presented and discussed. The charge also included a comprehensive review of all named buildings on campus. After reviewing all the information, it was decided to again reach out to our Alumni to reaffirm our commitment and to solicit any suggestions for a new name of the Hoey Administration Building.

The Students provided their recommendation for a new name on December 4th and the Alumni Association again rendered input in various forms through December 22, 2018. Our findings showed that 95 percent of Alumni agreed a name change is needed and 57 percent indicated it should be named James E. Shepard, after our founder. This information was shared with the Board of Trustees. As a result, the

Board of Trustees will officially vote on this initiative on February 27, 2019. The next step in the process will be to present this information to the University of North Carolina Board of Governors. I am confident that the initiative will be approved by both NCCU Board of Trustees and UNC Board of Governors.

Alumni who have been actively engaged in the Alumni Association via alumni meetings and social media outlets know we have actively solicited Alumni input and feedback. Additionally, please know that the renaming has the support of our Chancellor. He has addressed the Alumni on several occasions, expressing his unwavering support for changing the name of the Administration Building and any other structure on campus that doesn't reflect the values of the University or may be insensitive to the African-American community. In my 15 years in various leadership roles in Alumni Association, I have never experienced such commitment from a Chancellor who has tendered his or her support to the Alumni Association and he makes himself available when we request him.

Ultimately, we don't want anything to reflect negatively on the University or any of its stakeholders. Our goal is to proceed through proper channels while teaching our student leaders and student body the importance of protocol and how to effect change with the upmost respect and dignity. We should commend NCCU Student Government, Chancellor Akinleye, and NCCU Board of Trustees for doing their due diligence in our quest for the name change of the Hoey Administration Building. As one of the premier HBCUs in the United States, let's embrace and appreciate the process so the outcome will have a positive impact on "Our Beloved Alma Mater".

In Truth and Service,

Samuel E. Cooper  
National President  
NCCU Alumni Association