

10 December 2020

Friends,

Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah! At this time of year, it is appropriate that we focus on that true, Christian gentleman, Robert E. Lee. In the five and a half years from Appomattox to Lee's death, Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant were probably the two most significant figures in America and the leaders of the effort towards reconciliation between North and South. In 1866, Lee stated that "We are all one nation now" and in response to a question from a mother in Virginia, Lee said, "Don't bring up your sons to detest the United States. . . Recollect that we form one country now. Abandon all these local animosities and make your sons Americans."

Although the term, "The New South", was not invented until later in the century, Lee, along with others like Booker T. Washington, was in the forefront of the effort to modernize Southern society and attitudes, to integrate more fully the South into the U.S., and to reject the economy and traditions of the Old South and the slavery-based plantation system. He called for the economic regeneration of the South with a balance of industry, commerce, and agriculture, sectional reconciliation, and racial harmony. His approach to education was both theoretical and practical, and, under his leadership, Washington College (later Washington and Lee University) became the leading educational institution in the South and one of the leading schools in the country.

In the past, some have accused The Generals Redoubt as promoting a racist agenda. We reject that characterization absolutely. We do wish to preserve the history, values, and traditions of the University, but we do not support the Confederacy, The Lost Cause, nor prejudice or discrimination of any kind. Just as Lee sought to bring about reconciliation between the North and

South after the Civil War, we seek dialogue and reconciliation among all the various stakeholders at Washington and Lee. In fact, it is listed as our first goal. In the spirit of the season, we hope that all will consider what we have to say with an open mind and heart.

Attached to this email, you will find two documents emphasizing Lee's leadership and significance, before, during, and, especially, after the Civil War. The first is a letter to the W&L Board of Trustees by Rick Saunders, class of 1965. The second is an article by Christopher Keller, class of 1994 and a Professor of History at the U.S. Army War College. We have also provided a link to a video by Philip Leigh - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdQjQqQ2mdE&feature=youtu.be>, the author of eight books on history particularly regarding the Civil War and Reconstruction, as to why the University should retain its name and continue to honor its namesakes.

Finally, we would like to remind you again about the importance of contributing to The Generals Redoubt annual fund. When we launched the fund in late September, we set a goal of \$500,000 to be achieved by June 30, 2021. I am happy to report that as of December 10th, we have received gifts of approximately \$150,000 with additional pledges of \$150,000 for a total of more than \$300,000. The pledges include a \$100,000 matching pledge made this week by an anonymous alum of which we hope many of you will take advantage. At the rate we are going, we will easily surpass our goal by June 30th. I am sending you a reminder now in case you would like to make a year-end gift. Whenever you decide to make a gift, you may do so by going to our website and clicking the "Support Us" button. If you have questions, you may contact our Treasurer, Barry Brown.

Sincerely,

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Vice President, The Generals Redoubt