

The Editor's Corner

April 2020

It has been over two months since we last revised The Editor's Corner, and a great deal has happened in the meantime. Please take a moment to read our updates. As always, we invite your feedback.

The most significant development of the last two months is, of course, the coronavirus pandemic. This has had an effect on everyone in our country and on Washington and Lee. President Dudley announced the closing of the school in mid-March, and the University has continued with online education since that point. I can imagine that some of the more disappointed folks are seniors in the law school and undergraduate body who will not be able to participate in graduation ceremonies. However, everyone in the university community has handled this situation with grace, patience, and understanding. Fortunately, in Lexington, where I live, the effects of the coronavirus have been very mild to this point, but we have deep sympathy for people all over our nation who have not been as fortunate.

As many of you know, the issue of a petition from the law school requesting that graduates be allowed to choose whether to eliminate pictures of George Washington and Robert E. Lee from their diplomas has been denied by the Board of Trustees. A copy of the letter from the Board on this decision appears in our [Letters](#) section. The timeline for this episode is as follows:

- Mid-September 2019 - The Generals Redoubt becomes aware that a petition has appeared in the law school.
- Mid-September - early November 2019 - The petition continues to circulate in the law school and elsewhere, and more individuals sign the petition. At some point during this period or shortly thereafter, the number of those signing the petition slows down.
- November 2019 - The Generals Redoubt publishes on this website our response to the petition. We state that we see this petition as part of a larger effort both within Washington and Lee and beyond to minimize or undermine the history, values, and traditions of the university. We implore the administration and/or the Board of Trustees to deny this petition.

- January 2020 - Not having heard anything more about the petition or the response of the university, we re-iterate our position regarding the petition.
- February 11, 2020 - Petition formally submitted to the Board
- February 14-15 - Board discusses petition and denies it
- February 19 - Board decision publicly announced

We are not sure why the petition was not presented for an almost five-month period after its initial appearance, but we are pleased with the Board's decision. Shortly after the decision was announced we sent out an email blast to everyone on our email list, including Board members, thanking the Board for its decision.

The other major event involving The Generals Redoubt over the last two months was the appearance and speech given by Heather Mac Donald in Lee Chapel on Thursday, March 12th. Heather talked about her new book, *The Diversity Delusion*, for about thirty minutes and then took questions, largely from students, for the next hour. Prior to her appearance, a petition was circulated on campus asking that she not be allowed to speak. Fortunately, this petition did not garner widespread support and was denied by the administration. Since we believe in complete freedom of speech and expression, we had no problem with people expressing their viewpoint through a petition. At the same time, we are pleased that Heather was allowed to speak. During the event, there were no protests or demonstrations of any kind, and several members of the school's administration attended the event. Unlike many other colleges and universities across the country, W&L set an example in civility and openness to different ideological viewpoints that others might wish to consider. For those of you who missed the presentation, it can be viewed [here](#).

Looking forward, The Generals Redoubt is planning on providing support for two more speakers next year, one each in the fall and spring semesters. These presentations must be sponsored by official on-campus organizations such as The College Republicans or The Federalist Society in the law school, but we plan to support such groups in bringing outstanding presenters to Washington and Lee.

We would like to bring your attention to some pertinent literature; links to the articles listed here may be found on the [Articles](#) page:

- "Another Pandemic Known as Social Justice" by Eileen Toplansky. This article appeared in American Thinker.
- "Homogenous: The Political Affiliation of Elite Liberal Arts College Faculty" by Mitchell Langbert. This article was published by The National Association of Scholars.
- "American wasn't founded on White Supremacy: A Rebuttal to the '1619 Project'" by Lucas Morel. This article was published in The American Mind. Professor Morel is Professor of Politics and Chair of the Politics Department at Washington and Lee.

In the next few weeks, Tom Rideout, President of The Generals Redoubt, will be publishing a lead article on the issue of freedom of speech and expression, primarily at Washington and Lee but in other institutions of higher education also. We look forward to this article as we continue to support complete freedom of speech and expression regardless of political or cultural viewpoint.

Finally, we would like to point once again to the success of our annual fund and other fundraising efforts since we formed about a year ago. We have amassed total gifts and pledges of almost \$350,000 since we began in late November 2019. Prior to that, we had already received about \$60,000 in gifts beginning in May 2019. Thus, our total funds raised in less than a year is approximately \$410,000, and folks continue to give. We used some of that money to sponsor our first speaker, Heather Mac Donald, and we will use more of it to provide financial support for speakers next year. We are also exploring initiatives that would further our goals and objectives and might be developed in conjunction with the university. If you have not yet made a gift to The Generals Redoubt, we invite you to do so. Just go to the [Support Us](#) section of the website.

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