

RESOLUTION TO REMOVE THE NAME OF THE RESIDENCE HALL LOCATED AT 240 KENT STREET ON THE CAMPUS OF VIRGINIA TECH

WHEREAS, the residence hall located on the Blacksburg campus of Virginia Tech at 240 Kent Street was built in 1962 and that year was named officially for Paul Brandon Barringer, a medical doctor, professor and academic administrator who served Virginia Polytechnic Institute as president from 1907 to 1913; and

WHEREAS, at the time, Paul Barringer was deemed a worthy recipient of having this campus building named in his honor as acknowledgement of his service as the institution's leader; and

WHEREAS, an in-depth review of Barringer's presidency reveals a record that can be deemed controversial, marred by conflict with the alumni association, engineering faculty, and the governor that prompted Barringer to resign his post; and

WHEREAS, the Council on Virginia Tech History recently conducted a further review of Paul Barringer's activities, public speeches and writings that were popular throughout the south prior to, during, and for a period subsequent to his time as university president, which demonstrated and celebrated his personal views in support of slavery; and

WHEREAS, Barringer's major claim to fame in his time relates to statements he made to wide audiences on race--statements that are blatantly incongruous with the mission of a modern teaching college or research university--including his unapologetic defense of slavery decades after the Confederacy had suffered military defeat and slavery had been declared at an end, and his insistence that schooling for black southerners be left to whites to handle, and be aimed only at training docile workers, modeled after enslaved workers of an earlier generation; and

WHEREAS, the appropriateness of having a building bearing Barringer's name is counter to the university's commitment to inclusion and diversity and the Principles of Community, which reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination; strive to maintain a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect conducive to positive learning, working, and living; and acknowledge the inherent dignity and value of every individual;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in acknowledgement of the university's pledge to diversity and commitment to an inclusive and welcoming community, the name Paul Barringer will be removed from the residence hall built in 1962 and located at 240 Kent Street and the residence hall will no longer be referred to as Barringer Hall.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution removing the name Paul Barringer from the residence hall built in 1962 and located at 240 Kent Street be approved.

August 13, 2020