

“What’s in a name?”

The University of Oregon, De-Naming Controversies, and the Ethics of Public Memory

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If a man has done evil during his life he must not be complimented in marble
— Senator Charles Sumner (1865)¹

“WHAT’S IN A NAME?” Juliet Capulet asks Romeo Montague in Shakespeare’s famous play, suggesting that names shouldn’t matter: “That which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet.”² Juliet is mistaken. Names do matter, particularly when assigned honorifically to buildings on college campuses, where such names have recently aroused intense controversy. What are the implications of those names, and what might it mean to remove or retain them in the context of new challenges to the namesake’s reputation? These questions have roiled academe and washed over into the broader American public sphere, most prominently in 2016 and 2017 at Yale and Princeton, where some contested the appropriateness of John C. Calhoun and Woodrow Wilson as iconic names for a residence college (Yale) and a school of public and international affairs (Princeton).³

A similar kerfuffle erupted recently at the University of Oregon, where African American students raised questions about a more obscure pair of building icons — Frederic S. Dunn (1872–1937) and Matthew P. Deady (1824–1893). Dunn Hall, so named in 1962 to honor a former University of Oregon Classics professor who, as it turns out, also served as the Exalted Cyclops of the Eugene Klavern of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, has since been de-named, at the recommendation of University of Oregon President Michael H. Schill. Schill recommended a different fate for Deady Hall. It will continue to celebrate the life and contributions of Judge Matthew Deady, a lifelong racist who supported the institution of slavery, staunchly advocated black exclusion from Oregon (“If we are compelled to have the colored race amongst us, they should be slaves,” he wrote), and, although he accepted



University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives

DEADY HALL is pictured here on October 19, 1876, on the first day of classes at the University of Oregon. The building was known as the “Old Building” until it was renamed after Judge Matthew P. Deady in 1893.

the logic and necessity of emancipation in the wake of the Civil War and followed the letter of the law as a judge, never disavowed his racist views or worked publicly to promote racial equality. As late as 1890, for example, Deady wrote, “The slave trade and Negro slavery were the means providential or otherwise by which the negro was educated and prepared for his present career of self-dependence.” Deady and Dunn are historical figures somewhat less known than Calhoun, the prominent antebellum South Carolina Senator, Secretary of State, Secretary of War, U.S. Vice President, and fierce proponent of slavery; or Wilson, the professional historian who became New Jersey governor, Princeton University president, and the twenty-eighth president of the United States. But they raise important local questions no less fraught than those that have attracted national attention. A Deady or a

Dunn Hall by some other name, to paraphrase Shakespeare, might indeed smell more sweet.⁴

The stakes in such controversies might seem low. Naming and de-naming are symbolic acts that do not, by themselves, materially end discrimination on campus, expand student access and inclusion, diversify university populations, or directly improve curriculum or teaching effectiveness. Historians might be pleased that brash questioning about the slaveholders or white supremacists that continue to nominate our campus buildings raises awareness of the past, prods historical inquiry, and implicitly argues the relevance of history itself. History, it seems, matters. But Black Lives *really* Matter, and the crises of discrimination, inequality, and even violence affecting communities of color, which precipitate this questioning, are real, embodied, and can be a matter of life or death.

Racism and discrimination in Oregon run deep historically, remain embedded, and continue to have consequences. As one recent study of Multnomah County showed, for example, communities of color earn half the incomes and suffer double the poverty rates of white Oregonians. Wealth and housing statistics expose even greater disparities. In the United States, for every dollar of wealth among whites, African Americans possess six cents. Evidence suggests that the situation in Oregon is worse, as black Oregonians, from territorial days to the late twentieth century, endured particular barriers to wealth accumulation with restrictions on land acquisition, bans on home ownership, sunset laws (outlawing black and Chinese residence), and redlining (discriminatory real estate loan and insurance policies). In “green” Oregon, proud of its pioneering environmentalist history, people of color live inordinately in the state’s most marginal and polluted spaces, exposed to poisoned air, water, and soil, and prone to natural disaster. Black Oregonians experience 75 percent higher rates of infant mortality than their white fellow citizens. Researchers found a quarter of public school students of color in Multnomah County faced racial harassment during a thirty-day study period. Closer to the University of Oregon campus, the City of Eugene reported 139 incidents of hate and bias attacks in 2017 (with race as “the leading motivating factor”) — a 70 percent increase over the previous year — and in April 2018, hateful graffiti appeared on a public building that the City Council had just voted to rename after the recently deceased, beloved Edwin Coleman, Jr., a University of Oregon English professor, activist, and African American community leader. Such defacement exposed the existence and virulence of racism and conveyed a threat of menace locally, exposing the links between memorial naming and the so-called real world that is present — sometimes violently — on colleges campuses and in our communities, not merely in a place such as Charlottesville, Virginia, but in Oregon as well.⁵

These questions about honorific naming opportunities, then, are not just academic — they are *edifying*. They can be monumental, like the edifices they metaphorically raise or raze. The words *edify*, *edification*, and *edifice* all come from the same Latin root (*aedes*, ‘house’ or ‘temple’; *aedificare*, a verb ‘to erect a house’), and historically, they have overlapped in meaning. Deady Hall, like any number of similar university buildings in Oregon or elsewhere, is an edifice — most commonly defined as a large, imposing building. Within it, the Department of Mathematics strives to edify or effect the edification of its students — it endeavors to promote their mathematical instruction and improvement. Such layered, antique meanings and connotations, which date to the fourteenth century, suggest that at some deep level the naming and de-naming controversies surrounding university edifices involve matters both material and moral, emblematic and physical, structural and personal, historical and contemporary. Edification on college campuses represents an ongoing effort to construct and reconstruct — literally and figuratively — to improve the built and human landscapes of American colleges and universities and of the United States itself.⁶

In that spirit, this essay offers as a case study the failed de-naming of Deady Hall. It comments on the substance and meaning of Oregon’s historical past, but its chief purpose is to assess the role of that past in Oregon’s present, not as “history” but, rather, as “public memory.” Our focus is on historical consciousness — that is, the way that popular senses of the past can impinge on the lives of contemporary Oregonians, and vice versa. This essay, then, is neither a history of the notable figures Frederic Dunn or Matthew Deady nor a chronicle of university politics, student activism, or civil rights in Oregon. The Dunn and Deady de-naming affair is an interesting episode in these larger stories, but our purpose in this case study is to illuminate the workings of public memory in Oregon and the United States, to explore how we commonly comprehend and use the past in the present, what constraints the past imposes on us, how it represents or identifies us, and how it is shaped or recast to serve the purposes of our own times.

Greater clarity on these matters — particularly on the differences between history and public memory — can help us in addressing the persistent challenges we face in reckoning with the legacy of our commemorative landscape, whether in Charlottesville or Eugene, New Orleans or Portland. As America’s statues, squares, and structures memorializing historical figures take on new meanings amid fresh revelations and shifting social circumstances, such clarity can assist us in developing criteria for assessing the suitability of iconic names and monumental figures — criteria that are historically informed, civically responsible, and broadly democratic.

THE OREGON CONTROVERSY

On November 17, 2015, Frederic S. Dunn and Matthew P. Deady suddenly became famous. Following up on a November 12 protest on the Eugene campus, the newly formed Black Student Task Force (BSTF) presented President Schill and his administration with a list of twelve demands. To address problems of racism and marginalization, the students called for initiatives including the creation of an African American opportunities program, funding of new scholarships, support for an academic residential community, endowment and construction of a Black Cultural Center, hiring of African American advisors and black faculty across academic disciplines, and expansion of programming on black history and contemporary affairs. At the very top of their list: the demand that the University of Oregon “change the names of all the KKK related buildings on campus,” with the specification that “DEADY Hall will be the first building to be renamed.”⁷

The BSTF demands commanded serious attention, particularly in the wake of dramatic events that had just unsettled the University of Missouri main campus, including African American protest demonstrations in response to a series of racist incidents, a student hunger strike, the university football team’s threat to boycott an upcoming game, and the forced resignation of the University of Missouri Systems president, followed by that of the campus’s chancellor. Schill responded quickly and earnestly, assuring the BSTF, “I would be focused on this regardless of whether the president at Missouri was fired or not, whether there were protests elsewhere, whether there were protests here. I care about the issues and I want to move forward.”⁸

Schill created thirteen working groups to address the BSTF’s “concerns,” and those groups met through winter and spring academic terms. Meanwhile, he formed a committee to provide advice on setting criteria for his decision-making on the de-naming of university buildings, and he appointed a panel of three historians to research the historical records of Dunn and Deady. In April 2016, Schill issued his first recommendations, which addressed some of the BSTF demands, although not the status of Dunn or Deady Hall. In August, the president made the historians’ report public and invited comments on the merits of retaining (or removing) the names of the two notables. Then, on September 1, Schill wrote the university community, detailing his principles and criteria for evaluating building icons and announcing his decision to remove Frederic Dunn’s name from Dunn Hall. With the approval of the Board of Trustees on September 9, the edifice became, momentarily, Cedar Hall.⁹

Later that fall, a series of disturbing episodes, including a law professor’s appearance in blackface and slurs and threats targeting the Black Student Union, aggravated the situation on campus. Black student leaders convened a rally on November 11, 2016, where they criticized the administration for its



Savannah Blake/KVAL.com

IN NOVEMBER 2015, Black Women of Achievement hosted a demonstration at the University of Oregon to stand in solidarity with University of Missouri students who demonstrated against racist incidents on campus.

lack of progress and staunchly reaffirmed their call to de-name Deady Hall. On January 25, 2017, Schill wrote the university community with an update, announcing his commitment to build a new black cultural center and his decision not to rename Deady Hall. According to the process Schill had outlined earlier, that was the end of it: “If I decide not to recommend such a denaming,” he had written, “the matter will be deemed closed.” And it remains officially closed today. The larger issues of representation, equity, and ethics raised by the controversy persist, and much remains unsettled. Those issues, particularly as they center on the role of public memory in civic life, merit analysis.¹⁰

HISTORICAL JUDGMENT, HISTORY, AND PUBLIC MEMORY

On the surface, de-naming controversies hinge on historical judgments, but ultimately the past and present are intertwined. We cannot always or exclusively privilege the judgmental criteria of the past over those of our own present. We should distinguish between history and public memory

and recognize that acts of naming, de-naming, and renaming are more a product of the latter than the former. The oft-expressed claim that de-naming “erases” history does not hold up well under scrutiny, nor does the assumption that de-naming necessarily indulges in the errors of anachronism — that is, of considering things out of place and out of time. If de-naming reflects “identity politics,” as some have asserted, we might also notice that so, too, does opposition to it. The decision to name or de-name university structures requires judgments based in an ethics of memory and the intention to cultivate equitable, productive, and sustaining relations within campus communities.

Judgment is at the heart of historical study but is also a matter of considerable debate among historians — because history is not merely descriptive but unavoidably interpretive. To write or speak about the past is to assess it on some level, and to memorialize historic figures by attaching their names to buildings is to render a decidedly positive judgment. Edifice naming is seldom if ever neutral: it preserves and celebrates the designated notable and uses that person to edify.¹¹

But *judgment* often implies *ethical* or *moral* evaluation, and scholars have differed on how or even if such assessment is appropriate. Historians are particularly wary of committing one of the profession’s greatest sins: anachronism. We are warned against ascribing values, ideas, assumptions, or evaluations of behavior from our own time to the historical settings, events, people, or processes we study. We are trained to resist imposing our own beliefs or worldviews on the past, thereby misunderstanding and misrepresenting it. And, yet, all history is of course a product of the present in which historians write it, and history will always be read in some future, in the context of forthcoming, new presents.

Professional historians do not monopolize public discussions of the past or considerations about how historical lessons might or should be applied. Instead, historical discourse occurs broadly in the realm of public memory — the collective sense of the past that matters to us all. Public memory comprises the big stories we share that explain our world, shape our collective identity, and guide and impel our aspirations. Public memory is less defined by how the past determines the present than by how present concerns affect what we remember, how we remember, how we value those memories, and how we deploy their lessons in our lives. As the historian Peter Novick has explained, “collective memory” can be ahistorical, even anti-historical. It is often averse to historical complexity and ambiguity. It deemphasizes the passage of time, in a sense denying the “pastness” of its subject and insisting on its continuing presence. Public, or collective, memory can produce simplifications, even distortions, of the past, at least from the perspective

of professional historians, who embrace scholarly detachment, multiple perspectives, complexity, contingency, and ambiguity.¹²

Historians sometimes fear that things get lost or garbled in understandings of the past that public memory provides, particularly when this memory is poorly grounded in the factual record or is saturated with prejudice. But at its best, public memory is the means through which history is translated, shared widely, and applied democratically — a tool through which the public informs, molds, and represents itself collectively. It operates broadly in ways academic history does not, stretching beyond the world of our little-read monographs and technical, jargon-filled articles. When we speak of knowing and appreciating our history, then, we may in fact be talking about public memory. Indeed, many of the treasured functions attributed to history are actually provided by public memory — including our practical understanding of the past, which defines group identity and purpose, grounded in common experience, values, and principles. While public memory’s collective, diffused, non-scholarly construction can be a liability, it can have its advantages as well. Ideally, such memory represents a dynamic consensus, built upon shared knowledge and experience. Through its ongoing rehearsal and public narration, public memory invites community confirmation or challenge, as new information and new circumstances arise.¹³

Naming controversies on American college and university campuses operate in this dynamic realm of public memory. Although we constantly hear about threats to history — supposedly, its erasure — that de-naming presents, history in these instances is not really at risk because it is not really at stake. Still, when Yale University President Peter Salovey announced his decision to rename Calhoun College, he nonetheless remained “concerned about erasing history.” Expressing a similar apprehension, Schill took the opposite path by rejecting Deady Hall’s de-naming. He wrote that removing the Deady name “threatens to obscure history and hide the ugliness of our past.”¹⁴ Let us examine those claims, briefly turning our attention to Yale, and then, more systematically focusing on the University of Oregon.

THE ERASURE OF HISTORY?

John C. Calhoun’s status as an American historical figure is hardly in doubt, and removing the Calhoun name from a Yale residential college will have a trifling impact on the quality or integrity of American history. “History” is not the issue. The 2017 renaming may erode local knowledge that Calhoun was among the many Yale alumni who went on to achieve public notoriety, and perhaps, eventually, fewer people will recall that Yale once named a residential college after the antebellum Southern fire-eater. Maybe, then, it is the “erasure” of Yale’s own history that worried some officials? Writing in

The Nation, Yale student Dasia Moore suggested as much. Moore quoted a student observation that Yale’s “obsession with its own history” was “a crucial impediment to the school’s progression into the future,” and she noted the irony of the setting, amid the venerable confines of a simulated Gothic Yale, much of which was actually built in the twentieth century.¹⁵

On the University of Oregon campus, until the recent events inspired by the activism of African American students, few would have been able to

produce a single biographical fact about either Deady or Dunn. For most, they were simply arbitrary names designating university structures — no more resonant than those named generically, such as Oregon Hall or the Volcanology Building. But recent self-scrutiny in the context of Black Lives Matter, the nationwide confrontation with our public commemorative landscape, and local, racially charged incidents shaking the university community provoked new interest in Oregon icons, and Dunn and Deady went from nobodies to causes célèbres.

The controversy called new attention to the university’s and the state’s histories, and the historical investigation Schill commissioned, by an impressive trio of historians of the American West, David Alan Johnson, Quintard Taylor, and Marsha Weisiger, shed new light on these forgotten figures. Their scholarly report helpfully illuminated the historical records of Deady and Dunn and enriched local public memory. These developments advanced historical knowledge, not historical erasure. And the report itself will remain a part of the historical record, even if both or neither campus buildings were to be de-named. What is

at stake, then, is not history but public memory.¹⁶

Dunn Hall was one of several housing units within the Hamilton Complex, an undergraduate residence facility built in the 1960s and with each unit named for former illustrious (now obscure) University of Oregon faculty. One of them,

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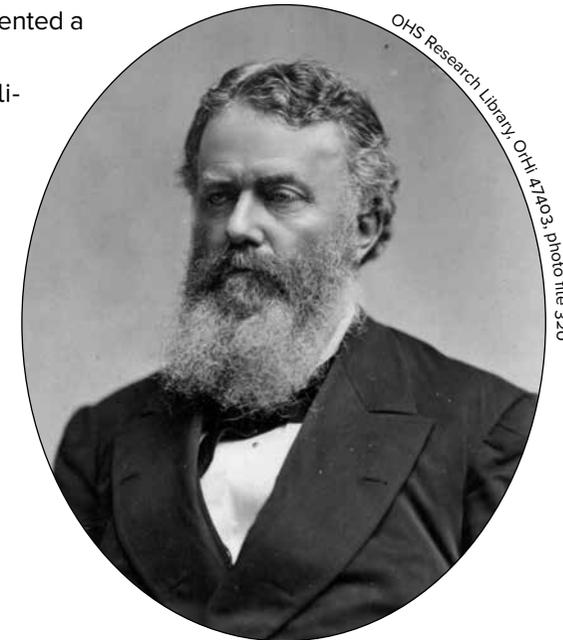


FREDERIC S. DUNN was a classics professor at the University of Oregon (UO) from 1898 until his retirement in 1937. During the 1920s, Dunn helped lead Eugene’s Klavern (chapter) of the Ku Klux Klan as its Exalted Cyclops. This photograph is of Dunn in 1892 as an undergraduate student at UO.

Dunn, the University of Oregon Classics professor and the Exalted Cyclops of the Eugene Klavern of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, was thus memorialized and honored posthumously beginning in 1962, when Hamilton opened. Dunn’s racist record should have disqualified him from such an honor in the 1960s — whether judged on the terms of his own time, or on those of the Civil Rights era — and presumably his obscurity from then until about 2015 explains his name’s endurance. The original designation, then, was less an act of “history” than of amnesia — of poorly informed public memory. Removing the name in 2016 neither challenged history nor threatened sacred university tradition but instead represented a renovation of public memory.

Deady Hall raised more complicated questions. The historical record shows that Deady was an unreformed racist with particular animosity toward African Americans, an advocate of slavery, and a steadfast promoter of black exclusion from Oregon. After the Civil War, in which he supported the Union, he accepted slave emancipation and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Deady believed in law and order. His efforts as a federal judge to enforce the law and dampen violence against Chinese denizens and Chinese Americans in the Pacific Northwest were admirable and today represent perhaps the strongest evidence for those seeking to redeem or refurbish his reputation. Deady’s record merits deeper scrutiny.

Deady arrived in Oregon Territory from Ohio in the late 1840s. By 1850, he had secured a seat in the territorial legislature and within a year had moved up to the territory’s Council, or upper house, which designated him as its presiding officer. A presidential appointment to the territorial court helped launch Deady’s judicial career in Oregon and bolstered his campaign to be elected as a delegate



OHS Research Library, OHI 47403, photo file 320

MATTHEW P. DEADY, pictured here in 1878, was a prominent lawyer, judge, and politician in Oregon. Deady held pro-slavery views, favoring Oregon’s entry into the Union as a slave state. As president of the 1857 Constitutional Convention, he supported Black exclusion from Oregon. The University of Oregon named an academic building in his honor in 1893.

Matthew Douglas, Co. Or. 20445
July 28th 1857

Dear Simpson.

Yours of the 22^d ult. came to hand some days since. It found me in the midst of harvest or it should have been answered sooner. I was glad to hear from you, and very glad to learn that you had ranged yourself upon the side of the white race, the Constitution and the institutions of your country. Depend upon it in the controversy that is now going on, there is no middle ground between the positions represented by the so called Abolitionists and for slavery men. For a few years Oregon as a free state may be ~~subject~~ ^{and is} to the Constitution and render back the fugitive, but it is only a question of time when ~~she~~ ^{and is} in imitation of Massachusetts and Ohio she will enact laws annulling the one and charter the other.

For myself I have a short but simple way of disposing of the questions connected with the ~~slavery~~ ^{slavery} of Negroes in Oregon. There are some millions of Africans owned as property in the United States, and whatever shallow-brains or Smatter-much may say about 'property in man,' they are just as much property as horses,

IN A LETTER to Benjamin Simpson on July 28, 1857, Matthew Deady revealed his racism and views on slavery, writing that blacks “are just as much property as horses[,] cattle or land, because the law that creates all property makes them such.” The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution changed his mind about slavery’s legality, as did the Fourteenth Amendment about black citizenship, but neither substantially altered his evaluation of non-whites.

mainstream positions among his fellow, all-white, delegates. Deady’s language for the constitutional section on suffrage read: “No person, other than those of the white race, shall have the right of suffrage,” but he was amenable to a revision that went ever further, specifying that such persons must be “pure white.”¹⁷

He embraced the U.S. Supreme Court’s notorious 1857 *Dred Scott* decision, which held that enslaved people would remain enslaved (“property”) even if they moved to free states and that African Americans were not (and never would be) eligible for citizenship. Inelegantly, Deady wrote in July 1857, “There are some millions of Africans owned as property in the United States, and whatever shallow-brains or Smatter-much [babblers] may say about ‘property in man,’ they are just as much property as horses[,] cattle or land, because the law which creates all property makes them such.” Deady was more radically proslavery than most other Oregonians of his day. His advocacy of the exclusion of all blacks from Oregon — whether enslaved or free — and his denial of voting rights for non-whites were more

Arguments in favor of retaining Deady’s iconic status on the University of Oregon campus depend heavily on his supposed metamorphosis during the Civil War and his postbellum record as a federal judge (he was first appointed in 1859), ruling on behalf of besieged Chinese inhabitants later in the nineteenth century. During the crisis of disunion, Deady did switch parties, condemned secession as treason, and supported Lincoln, whom he called a “man of Providence . . . appointed to counteract and restrain the destructive elements of anarchy.” Deady deplored anarchy. Above all else, he supported stability, order, and the rule of law, and, as laws and precedents shifted, so did Deady’s enforcement of them, even if they ran against his own preferences. His support for the Thirteenth Amendment (which banned slavery in 1864), for example, was “equivocal at best,” according to one legal historian. But as it became the law of the land, along with the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments (establishing African American citizenship and black male voting rights), he accepted and defended these new legal standards — all without changing his former belief in white supremacy.¹⁸

In this vein, Deady defended the Chinese from the bench, as was his duty based on rights established by the U.S. Constitution and specific treaty obligations. He objected to anti-Chinese mob violence, even as he placed the Chinese, along with African Americans, well below whites on his racial hierarchy. In an instruction to a jury in 1886, Deady declared, “An evil spirit is abroad in this land, — not only here, but everywhere. It tramples down the law of the country and fosters riot and anarchy.” Here he called out vicious anti-Chinese vigilantes in Oregon and across the West, as they violated Deady’s most sacred principle: law and order. “Freedom, law, and order are so far subverted, and a tyranny is set up in our midst most gross and galling.” His rejection of chaos and lawlessness, however, never required an abandonment of a racial hierarchy, with whites at the top. In the 1850s, as Deady sought to limit voting rights in Oregon, excluding Chinese as well as free blacks, he wrote that “The negro was superior to the Chinaman.” Later, he shifted his assessment, placing the “Congo negro” (his fraught term) below the “intermediate” and “much better qualified” “red and yellow races,” even though African Americans were now entitled to vote by the Fifteenth Amendment. Either way, for Deady, non-whites remained essentially inferior.

A similar assessment can be made about Deady’s position vis-à-vis American Indians, whom he consistently characterized in racist language, even when displaying condescending sympathy for their plight. Deady especially lamented the tumult and disorder that surrounded Indian-white relations, no matter who was to blame. Native people fit above blacks on Deady’s hierarchy of humanity, but their lack of whiteness excluded them from the right to naturalize as citizens or to vote — that is, short of a Constitutional amendment

that would create an exception to the rule, as it had for African Americans. In his influential 1880 *In re Camille* decision, Deady established a race prerequisite for U.S. citizenship of greater than 50 percent “white” blood, which itself became part of the larger legal, political, and legislative structure of race-based immigration restriction that lasted until the 1965 U.S. Immigration Act. Such, then, was the career, evolution, and legacy of Judge Matthew P. Deady.

The University of Oregon’s Deady Hall was built in 1876 but did not carry the Deady name until 1893 (the year of his death). Its memorial designation in 1893, like other designations, was an act of public memory — in this case (unlike Yale’s Calhoun College) not so far removed from the life of its historical referent. Like public memory more generally, it was an act of construction (or reconstruction) — of edification. Public memory is not exactly residual; it is manufactured, sometimes even achieving greater power and vitality at a distance from the events or people it remembers, commemorates, or celebrates. The philosopher Avishai Margalit refers to this (not uncommon) phenomenon as “memories of memories.”¹⁹ Remembering implies — indeed, often requires — forgetting. Public memory, or history for that matter, cannot preserve the entire past but presents a version of it, one that obscures as well as recollects. So, we might ask, what version of Matthew Deady was recalled, and what version of Matthew Deady was obscured, when the university’s “Old Building” officially became Deady Hall in 1893?

The 1890s was a decade of heightened ethnocentrism as native-born white Americans reacted fearfully to unprecedented urbanization, industrialization, and new waves of immigration, and as the American South (with the complicity of the North and West) restored white supremacy through Jim Crow policies. The Pacific Northwest shared in these national trends. Beginning in the 1880s, waves of immigrants to Oregon increasingly included newcomers from eastern and southern Europe, while new restrictions actively curtailed Asian immigration. By 1890, some 37 percent of Portland residents had not been born in the United States, and by 1900, Oregon’s foreign-born population stood at nearly 17 percent, a figure above the U.S. national average. The transcontinental railroad had arrived in Portland in 1883, and in its wake Portland’s diversity increased, along with its opportunity to industrialize and participate more actively in the national and international market economy. Oregon’s African American population more than doubled in the 1890s, although it remained relatively low until the 1940s, when wartime employment opportunities for blacks increased. Urbanization swelled in the state as well, with the percentage of urban Oregonians doubling between 1880 and 1900 (to 32.2 percent). Portland, Salem, and Eugene all experienced rapid growth — the latter two small cities by as much as 300 percent. As the pioneer generation ebbed in the 1890s, it was eulogized and celebrated



OHQ Research Library, OHQ 35244, photo file 868

BY THE 1890s, many migrants who originally traveled over the Oregon Trail had died, and organizations such as the Oregon Pioneer Association (OPA) eulogized and nostalgically celebrated those pioneers. Here, OPA members pose for a photograph at the 1894 annual meeting.

nostalgically, sometimes in an antimodern fashion that expressed fear as well as excitement about the emerging, twentieth-century industrial world. The timing of the renaming of the so-called Old Building at the University of Oregon was thus weighty. We might, then, consider that moment — and the original resolution to honor Deady — as well as our equally weighty present context in assessing the recent Deady Hall controversy.²⁰

PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA FOR ETHICAL JUDGMENT

The University of Oregon was, of course, not the first college or university to confront such dilemmas, and so it is useful to at least briefly explore how others have responded. Yale’s case is particularly instructive because it models how these difficult decisions can be made, in ways that are systematic, transparent, informed, and inclusive.

On August 1, 2016, Salovey appointed a committee of faculty (including some of its most distinguished historians) alumni, and students to study Yale’s renaming decisions. Their charge was both to assess the life and legacy of

John C. Calhoun and to formulate general guidelines for the university to employ in this and future controversies. In November 2016, the committee issued its report — an informed, thoughtful, and perceptive narrative of the Calhoun College debate and its context as well as a broader statement of values and principles. The committee embraced the necessity of ethical judgments applied to historical figures, although only under certain conditions. According to the report, “There is a strong presumption against renaming a building on the basis of the values associated with its namesake. Such a renaming should be considered only in exceptional circumstances.” The report culminated with a nuanced statement of principles and how they might be applied in the Calhoun case and beyond. It recommended beginning with the following question: “Is a principal legacy of the namesake fundamentally at odds with the mission of the University?” The question, of course, is complicated, but the committee was explicit that “a principal legacy of racism and bigotry would contradict” Yale’s larger mission.²¹

Second, the committee recommended asking the question: “Was the relevant principal legacy significantly contested in the time and place in which the namesake lived?” Employing the “standards of the namesake’s time and place” aligned the prescribed process with the conventional practices of academic historians and distanced the university from “a relativist view of history and ethics,” the committee observed. “Paying attention to the standards of the time also usefully distinguishes those who actively promoted some morally odious practice, or dedicated much of their lives to upholding that practice, on the one hand, from those whose relationship to such a practice was unexceptional, on the other.”²²

The Yale committee further counseled decision makers to ask, “Did the University, at the time of a naming, honor a namesake for reasons that are fundamentally at odds with the mission of the University?” In proposing such a question, the committee endorsed judging the historic namesake on his own terms, but it also advocated consideration of those who made such naming decisions, thus acknowledging the relevance of other historical contexts, including the realms of public memory within which naming, de-naming, and renaming occur. The committee cited examples from the University of Texas at Austin, Duke University, and the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill, where buildings had been deliberately named for Ku Klux Klan figures, with the intention of honoring their association. At UNC, for example, Saunders Hall was renamed in 2015, even though historians could not definitively establish that its namesake, William L. Saunders, had actually been a KKK member. Nonetheless, the fact that the original naming honor in 1922, thirty years after his death, had been conferred based on the belief that he had been affiliated with the Klan convinced UNC officials to remove Saunders’s name.²³

Finally, the committee’s prescribed procedures asked, “Does a building whose namesake has a principal legacy fundamentally at odds with the University’s mission, or which was named for reasons fundamentally at odds with the University’s mission, play a substantial role in forming community at the University?” The criterion acknowledges that campus spaces vary and perform different functions — some are more central than others to the university community and to the university’s public reputation. Note that such an assessment is grounded firmly in the present; it balances historically based moral judgments with contemporary ones — as does the committee’s recommendation that the university’s formal procedure “for considering whether to alter a building name on account of the values associated with its namesake . . . should incorporate community input and scholarly expertise.” As Moore put it: “Students were invested in history, of course, and felt strongly that Yale was obligated to teach and preserve the past in all its glory and shame, but most believed that Yale could carry out its responsibility to history without compromising its commitment to its present-day student body.” Moore recalled, “Every single listening session, meeting, and individual conversation about renaming and symbolism eventually circled around to the importance of community.”²⁴

Despite its antipathy to anachronism, the committee’s recommended process embraced the necessity and humanity of judgments that weighed multiple contexts of time and place — the present, the previous presents of naming moments, and the often more distant namesake’s world. The committee concluded, “Changing a name is thus not synonymous with erasing history,” while retention of a name does not in itself satisfy the university’s responsibility to history and public memory: “When a name is retained, there may be obligations on the University to ensure that preservation does not have the effect of distorting history.” In short, in the face of calls to de-name or rename iconic buildings, even doing nothing (that is, retaining a building’s name) is to do something.²⁵

AGENCY AND THE SHAME OR BLAMEWORTHINESS OF DISPUTED NAMESAKES

The careful process adopted at Yale, as well as the more unilateral and ad hoc procedure adopted at the University of Oregon, placed particular emphasis on a historically informed assessment of those notables being considered or reconsidered as college building icons. They asked, at least implicitly: Are such figures worthy, unworthy, or even blameworthy as historical actors?

Such assessments often hinge on the matter of “agency” or “moral responsibility” — the capacity to do good, or to not do bad. If a person has

been forced to commit a crime, say, or if she suffered a serious physical or mental condition that prevented her from understanding or avoiding the offensive act, then we would likely judge her differently, perhaps holding her blameless. Likewise, some might argue, historical actors lacked the knowledge and means to fully and unconditionally achieve, retroactively, the standards of greatness established in later times.

Considerations and reconsiderations of building namesakes, then, often become complicated trans-historical character assessments. Frequently, these judgments are grounded in the norms and values of the notable's own time and place, and therefore an icon, when subsequently called into question, might be exonerated for displaying values and behaviors now considered dishonorable or shameful because he or she could not have been reasonably expected to transcend the social climate of the time. If conventional historical judgments determine that a latter-day hero's behavior was in line with standards of his or her own day, is it not unfair to blame him or her today?²⁶

But translating historical figures into bronze, stone, bricks, and mortar is not pure historical evaluation. It bestows honor to the icon *now*. As a result, it calls for an evaluation of current or potential building icons within both historical *and* contemporary contexts. We can ask: How did those among whom the building namesake lived understand his life and achievements? And how do those of the present, living in a different world perhaps governed by different values and standards, judge him? As the namesake enters and resides in this contemporary world — commanding considerable attention and honor — we might determine what conditions that namesake must satisfy to continue to merit the notoriety and praise bestowed on him as an icon.

At its best, public memory grows out of, and contributes to, a fair and virtuous simplification of the past. It is historically accurate, informed by an understanding of various figures' values, ambitions, beliefs, and achievements. It is also abridged and shaded with value judgments (honor and dishonor, praise and blame, pride and shame) that both respond to and form our collective self-understanding. Public memory has a dual nature in that it is a product of the sense of the past that it then helps to shape. Naming and de-naming decisions are therefore accountable to our current desires and values as much as, if not more than, the desires and values that characterized the honored figures' eras. As a result, those decisions are inevitably ethical and political, and it is no surprise that they so often provoke animated skirmishes.

Political pundits often depict naming disputes as conflicts between the desire to preserve history or tradition (or "heritage," another fraught concept) and efforts to create "safe spaces." But seeing naming controversies exclusively through this lens distorts our view. The stakes are greater. To name a building after a person is to honor him or her, and in that honoring we express,



Courtesy of Samuel Marshall and the Emerald Media Group

IN NOVEMBER 2015, the University of Oregon's Black Student Task Force (BSTF) presented President Michael Schill with a list of twelve demands to address issues of racism and marginalization on campus. This photo was taken at a student demonstration on campus.

and perhaps encourage others to adopt, a set of values. Those who wish to de-name, then, may not be primarily concerned about hurt feelings or emotional "safety." Rather, they may wish to expose the potent connections (or discrepancies) between words and deeds and call attention to festering historical legacies. And they aim to influence public memory — to uphold an ethics of memory, to change or solidify institutional values, and to forge a new sense of community and collective identity.

In a guest viewpoint published in the University of Oregon's student newspaper, the *Daily Emerald*, the BSTF demanded the de-naming of Deady Hall by the fall of 2016. It asserted, "We have a right to the same sense of comfort and opportunity to succeed as all students." But it went further in its condemnation of the icon and university inaction: "The fact that we must have this discussion in 2016 is embarrassing. At the same time that administrators are telling us *ad nauseum* how they want the UO to be considered a top research institution, we still have to explain why it's to the university's benefit to stop celebrating Oregon's racist history." "Safe space" rhetoric, then, is to some extent regrettable, as it invites caricatures of supposedly weak "snowflake" students demanding change as a means of shielding them from emotional discomfort.²⁷ In fact, proponents of de-naming seem to sug-

gest that names such as Yale's Calhoun College or Oregon's Deady Hall are more shameful, ignorant, and insulting than psychologically injurious. Their demand that institutions espouse and express *good* values, that they do not force community members to compromise their dignity and integrity, goes beyond concerns about pleasure and pain. Indeed, it expresses a commitment to a just and inclusive community forged to uphold and advance the stated missions of these universities.

A focus on the role of public memory might also promote more charitable interpretations of the opponents of de-naming. If de-naming efforts are part of a fight over our collective sense of identity, one may object to them for reasons that go beyond a reflexive clinging to history or tradition: De-naming disputes may hinge on questions of a figure's "principal legacy," to borrow a phrase from Yale, and whether that legacy is consistent with some set of shared values. These two kinds of questions lie at the intersection of public memory and ethics. A third kind of conflict, perhaps the most intractable and beyond our scope here, concerns fundamental disagreement over what our values *ought to be*. In any case, when those opposed to de-naming decry the "erasure of history," they may be best understood as objecting to something more serious — the shifting, and even deliberate re-shaping, of cultural standards and aspirations.

AUTOPSY OF A FAILED DE-NAMING: DEADY HALL AS A CASE STUDY

When, on January 25, 2017, Schill announced his decision to preserve the name of Matthew Deady on the university edifice, a lengthy letter explaining his decision reiterated the assumptions and principles that informed his deliberations, which he had outlined in an earlier letter in September 2016. The Deady case was complicated, and the historians' report that Schill had commissioned, while authoritative, illuminating, and nuanced in the best scholarly fashion, did not (and could not) automatically render a decision. It fell to Schill — based on the procedures and standards he created — to unilaterally adjudicate this fraught question of public memory.²⁸

Some of Schill's protocols paralleled those employed at Yale University and elsewhere. "Bigotry and racism have no place in our society or in our university," he affirmed, and he embraced a particular responsibility for insuring the inclusion of those "who often feel isolated and alienated as a result of their chronic underrepresentation on campus and the legacy of racism in this state and nation." Schill echoed the Yale committee's position that de-naming decisions should not be taken lightly and that de-naming advocates should bear the burden of proof. He distinguished between naming and de-naming, arguing that they "are not identical actions and should

be governed by separate decision-making processes and considerations." Schill had a point, but unlike the Yale committee, he failed to account for their similarity as instances when decision-makers render judgments that reflect not merely on a building's namesake but also on the university as an institution and community. Both regular namings and extraordinary de-namings represent singular moments that require value judgments on the suitability of honorees, informed by history and the present.

Schill cautioned that, in de-naming cases, "Many decades may have passed since the person whose name is on a building was alive, and information will typically be less complete than in a naming decision." Historians might object that history offers perspective and that the documentary record and our ability to explore it more deeply expand over time, informing us not only about historical figures being considered as namesakes but also about those decision makers (and their motives and prejudices) who, in the past, sought to elevate those figures. Historical study, unlike contemporary judgments, can contextualize and consider the positions of those not actually consulted or taken seriously at the time — of those, say, who were victimized by or who contested the racism or xenophobia of the era, such as the abolitionists whom Deady once denounced as "tyrannical, arbitrary, fanatical, meddling . . . [and] rank."²⁹

Wary of anachronism, Schill wrote, "Contemporary decision-makers will often be limited in their ability to evaluate the behavior of people who lived in circumstances and with cultural mores very different from our own," presumably implying that we should only evaluate building icons on their terms, setting aside consideration of our own community standards. And then, raising the stakes, Schill observed that de-naming is "an act associated with ignominy and the destruction of reputation." He warned, in a gesture of lawyerly fairness, "We should normally be careful when we do this, particularly because the person involved will seldom be available to defend himself or herself." Willfully injuring another's reputation is often referred to as "defamation," yet Schill rightly avoided the term and its legal implications, perhaps because defamation requires not merely injury but also falsehood. In de-naming, we confront facts — truths — that were formerly obscured. De-naming terminates the praise formerly bestowed on a building's former icon; and it can go further, reducing the namesake's public reputation, at least in the short run. But the ultimate fate of the honored notable whose name disappears from a building is more likely anonymity than infamy — erasure not from history but from public memory.

Presumably, if amid contentious debate a de-naming demand is ultimately rejected, the ignominy attached to the controversial figure may linger, particularly if — as Schill and others recommend — interpretive markers or

exhibits present the acts or events that have rendered the honoree notorious in the present. And, when de-naming does not occur, by implication, decision makers themselves provide the defense that dead icons cannot mount, as they reaffirm the university's position honoring the building's namesake. That idolization happens in our present. The renewal of an icon is itself a history-making act, which says something not only about more distant, historical worlds but also about us.

"Finally," Schill wrote, "denaming threatens to obscure history and hide the ugliness of our past, which is contrary to our institution's values of promoting lifelong learning and sharing knowledge." The sentiment, although conventional in its concern about "erasing history," becomes contradictory in the context of Schill's previously articulated principles. If, say, in the case of Matthew Deady, one wished to preserve his name on Deady Hall so as to honestly confront the past, acknowledge the ugliness of Oregon's history, and register how it has violated university values, then are we not associating Deady with reputation-destroying "ignominy" in the process? Ironically, taking the opposite step — de-naming Deady Hall — would remove the spotlight from Deady. And it would seem to eliminate any need for Deady to publicly defend himself from the grave. Namesake buildings do not speak in complex and nuanced ways about the men or women they celebrate — if they resonate at all, they offer praise, they edify. Should the University of Oregon wish to remember Deady and the early history of Oregon, in all its shame and ugliness, then it could do so through other means — via a historical plaque, for example, that assesses Deady as a complicated historical figure without lionizing him.

Schill promised to erect such markers for *both* Deady Hall and the former Dunn Hall, to "remind all visitors of their histories and of the continuing project of inclusion and diversity." But if historical interpretation is appropriate for both sites, then it becomes less clear how either option — de-naming or not — is essential to the preservation of history, or how such interpretative exhibitions fully mitigate or compensate for the ongoing commitment to idolize in brick and mortar a namesake who held "racist views" judged "abhorrent and contrary to the principles of our university."

Yet, in applying his principles, Schill ultimately determined that "the facts set forth in the historians' report do not support overturning the presumption against denaming Deady Hall." The triple negative suggests the tortured nature of the president's justification. Schill found Deady's historical accomplishments to be "exceptional," particularly his "formative role" as a regent in nurturing the University of Oregon in its early years and especially "his work in persuading Northern Pacific Railroad president Henry Villard to donate to the university that kept its doors open in the 1880s."

For Schill, Deady's work as Oregon's first federal judge and as a university fundraiser outweighed his record on the other side of the balance sheet. Schill admitted, "Of course, Deady was also a deeply flawed man." He acknowledged that Deady "held racist views which I find abhorrent and contrary to the principles of our university," that "his support of slavery prior to the Civil War cannot be excused," and that "his support for the 1849 exclusion act [cannot] be ignored." Nor, Schill argued, did "the fact that Deady's views and actions were shared by many Oregonians at the time he lived . . . excuse them." Nonetheless, Schill excused the inexcusable in his decision, bolstering his position with the evidence of Deady's faithful application of the law in the late nineteenth century, which protected Chinese inhabitants who faced discrimination and violence at the hands of American nativists.³⁰

A year earlier, the Oregon BSTF challenged the view "that Deady [had] atoned for his anti-black racism by advocating for Chinese immigrants." Such actions did not "change the fact that his policies continuously aimed to exclude blacks," they wrote. Moreover, the group's editorial commented, "to lump blacks and Chinese immigrants together as if all non-white people are the same is insulting to both groups."³¹

"The fact that Deady Hall will remain a symbol of racial intolerance for many of our students is troubling," Schill admitted, and he acknowledged that "the process of naming or denaming a building has symbolic value." Yet, in his justification not to de-name, he discounted the value of symbols: "symbols are less important than actions that affect the material circumstances of members of our community." Few would dispute the need for action, but symbols are not inconsequential, nor are symbols and actions mutually exclusive; indeed symbolic acts themselves often constitute "actions" — particularly in the wake of a lengthy controversy with symbolism at its center. Schill himself signaled the importance of the symbolic act of de-naming Dunn Hall. Ironically, among the list of proposed initiatives that followed in Schill's letter was the commencement of the process to rename Cedar (né Dunn) Hall — that is, the search for a more appropriate symbol, as he put it, "someone who will embody the values of achievement, tolerance, and equity."³²

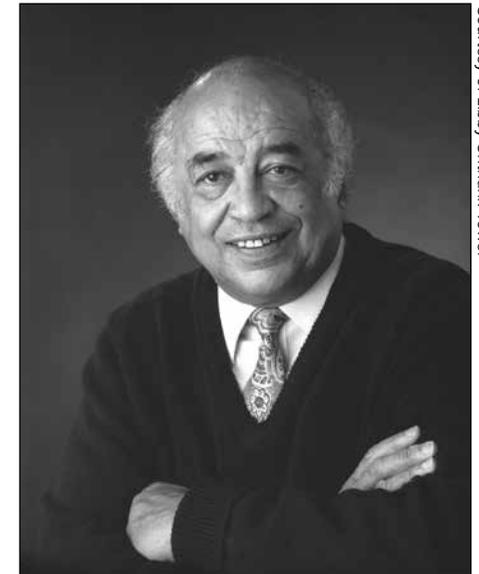
Schill found that symbol in DeNorval Unthank, Jr., the first African American graduate of the university's architecture program in 1951 who went on to a successful public and professional career in Eugene. While a student at UO, Unthank had endured racial intimidation on campus, revealing the state's persistent hostility toward people of color. As graduation approached in May 1951, UO students burned a cross on the lawn of the Gamma Phi Beta sorority house after learning that Unthank was dating one of its members, a white woman, Doris Burgess. The two nonetheless continued dating and soon married, not locally but in Washington State to avoid Oregon's Act to

Prohibit the Intermarriage of Races (1866), a ban repealed in 1951. In July 2017, Schill and the Board of Trustees thus bestowed upon Cedar Hall the appropriately symbolic appellation Unthank Hall. “What and whom we choose to memorialize from the past also serve as powerful symbols of the present,” Moore had written. “Our community [at Yale] was engaged in an important struggle over how symbolism and history assert themselves in our lives, and how they impact diverse communities differently.” Such a struggle was occurring at Oregon, too.³³

Despite a professed deference to history, the University of Oregon and other institutions have at times pushed history aside, in the interest of perceived current needs. The BSTF cited the removal of a sexist plaque from the Erb Memorial Union in 1986 and the de-naming of Grayson Hall, which became McKenzie Hall in 2002. That building had been completed in 1970 — in fact, with the help of DeNorval Unthank and his architectural firm — and had acquired the Grayson name in 1999. But when its namesake, Jeffrey L. Grayson, was indicted in October 2001 on twenty-two felony counts, including mail fraud, conspiracy, money laundering, witness tampering, and making illegal payoffs, the university returned his donation and renamed Grayson Hall after a nearby scenic river, the McKenzie. Considering the university’s renaming history, the BSTF suggested, “actively working to ban blacks from the state would seem like a worthy offense for changing the name of a building.”³⁴

Oregon was willing as well to abandon McArthur Court in 2011, an arena built in 1926 and named for Clifton N. McArthur, student-athlete, first UO student body president, and a U.S. Representative from Oregon. The venerable and still serviceable basketball facility had been often extolled for its historical value, not to mention the “home court” advantage it offered; *The Sporting News* had rated it “the best gym in America” in 2001. It was replaced by a lavish and expensive new facility, named after the recently deceased son of Nike founder Phil Knight: Matthew Knight Arena. The politics of the move are complicated and beyond the scope of this essay. It is worth noting, however, that as “Matt Court” replaced outmoded “Mac Court” on campus, Oregon’s old track stadium acquired new life, renovation, and a fresh branding, explicitly designated on its new high-tech scoreboard as “Historic Hayward Field.” In a further twist, “historic” Hayward Field itself “became history,” suffering demolition in 2018 as it gives way to a modernistic new Hayward Field being constructed to make Eugene a suitable venue for the 2021 International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Outdoor Championships. With its historic East Grandstands now razed — albeit with some pieces preserved as relics — the site made famous by the much beloved track icon Steve Prefontaine and his epic deeds became, in the words of one mourner, “post-Fontaine.”³⁵

Similarly, in a 1999 rebranding effort the university largely set aside its historical seal, dating to 1878 — designed in fact by UO Regent Matthew P. Deady — showing Mount Hood at its center, surrounded by a Latin rendering of the university’s name and the motto, *Mens Agitat Molem*. The university administration instead adopted a new single “O,” minus the “U,” and mandated that it be used on letterhead, signage, and nearly every other instance in which the university “brand” was displayed. History here seemed less important than marketing needs and opportunities, with no mention of the perils of historical erasure. Marketing is of the moment, and it succeeds (or fails) in the present, not in the past, even when the entity advertised has a history. We might ask: Is public memory and its concrete embodiment in iconic buildings — presumably with its greater respect for history — similar, at least to the extent that it must show respect for the present?³⁶



Courtesy of Libby Unthank Tower

CONCLUSION

Naming controversies, like the ones that have arisen at the University of Oregon and elsewhere, raise complicated questions about history, public memory, ethical judgment, and American society and political culture. Their emergence produces challenging moments that require new judgments and new actions that should be grounded in historical understanding but that also demand attention to contemporary community experience and standards, ethical principles, and the social contexts that envelop the human and built landscapes of American colleges and universities. Historical facts do not speak for themselves. Nor can public discussion in such circumstances proceed without an attention to history. Consideration of both the past and the present — through a careful, historically informed presentism — will produce more just, humane, and democratic discussions and outcomes. Deference to history does not require that we ignore the complicated social realities of our campuses, nation, and world. A certain

IN JULY 2017, the University of Oregon renamed the residence hall formerly memorializing Professor Frederic S. Dunn (tainted by his Ku Klux Klan membership) for DeNorval Unthank, Jr. (pictured here), who, in 1951, earned the first UO architecture degree awarded to an African American student and went on to a notable career as an architect and community leader.



THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON administration's professed deference to history, mobilized to reject the de-naming of Deady Hall, failed to save its iconic track stadium, despite its official designation as "Historic Hayward Field," pictured here during the 2017 NCAA Track and Field Championships. Note the "Historic" branding displayed on the scoreboard and trackside banner. The stadium itself became "history," when it was demolished in 2018 to make way for a new, futuristic Hayward Field.

presentism in naming and de-naming decisions is not only unavoidable but salutary — because the past itself is too vast to recreate in full; because history requires translation and application in the present that produces it; because our world changes and we must adjust to it; and because historical assessments that focus exclusively on the standards of icons' own times cannot monopolize the history-making and the edification that occurs every time we consider whose name to attach to or detach from a public building.

Naming debates occur within communities. Once they emerge publicly they destabilize social relations, and once they are resolved they can restore social order, ideally strengthening the community, or at least allowing it to return to its previous somnolence. Poor resolutions, however, undermine community, eroding trust and depressing faith and investment in the institution. Either way, such controversies cannot solve themselves. Once raised, questions about building namesakes are subject to historical and ethical judgment, and a resolution to maintain a name is no less a judgment than to remove it. Suc-

cessful proceedings will likely be broad-based, particularly on the campuses of public universities, historically informed, and ethically responsible.

Those critical of reconsidering the iconic figures whose names adorn university structures complain not only about the dangers of historical erasure but also question the motives of those initiating the reexamination, often chalking up their efforts to "identity politics." Assessing the charge is well beyond the scope of this essay, but it is important to acknowledge that matters of inclusion and exclusion are clearly implicated in these debates on multiple layers — who represents the university and who belongs? And matters of identity fuel both proponents and opponents in these controversies. Among the most enigmatic statements in the bible, contained in the gospel of Matthew, is Christ's command: "Let the dead bury their dead" (Matthew 8:22). The prophet urged his followers to focus on their pressing, immediate spiritual quest, in their real world, not to dwell on the past. But in that impatience to move ahead, the past is with us even if it lacks a veto. Bodies do not stay buried. The past inserts itself into our lives, and its symbols define us and our mission as we seek collectively to promote the edification of American universities. Indeed, what's in a name?

NOTES

1. Senator Charles Sumner, February 23, 1865, *Congressional Globe: Containing the Debates and Proceedings of the Second Session of the Thirty-Eighth Congress* (Washington, D.C.: F. & J. Rives, 1865), 1013.

2. Juliet offers these lines in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, scene 2.

3. See Zainab Hamid and David Yaffe-Bellany, "University Task Force Recommends Renaming of Calhoun," *Yale Daily News*, February 2, 2017, <http://yaledailynews.com/blog/2017/02/02/university-task-force-recommends-renaming-of-calhoun/> (accessed March 1, 2019); Noah Remnick, "After Protests, Yale Says It Will Drop John Calhoun's Name From Building," *New York Times*, February 11, 2017, A20; Gabriel Fisher, "Princeton and the Fight Over Woodrow Wilson's Legacy," *New Yorker*, November 25, 2015, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/princeton-and-the-fight-over-woodrow-wilsons-legacy> (accessed March 19, 2019); and "Princeton Will

Keep Woodrow Wilson's Name on Building Despite Controversy," *Guardian*, April 4, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/apr/04/princeton-woodrow-wilson-building-name> (accessed March 19, 2019). For a more recent controversy, see Susan Svrluga, "Duke History Professors Ask to Rename Building Honoring White Supremacist Who Dedicated 'Silent Sam' Statue," *Washington Post*, August 27, 2018.

4. On Deady and Dunn, see David Alan Johnson, Quintard Taylor, and Marsha Weisiger, "Report on the History of Matthew P. Deady and Frederic S. Dunn," commissioned by Michael Schill, University of Oregon president [hereafter, "Historians' Report"], August 9, 2016, https://president.uoregon.edu/sites/president2.uoregon.edu/files/deady_dunn_final_report_08-05-16.pdf (accessed March 1, 2019).

5. See "Communities of Color in Multnomah County [Oregon]: An Unsettling

Profile,” Coalition of Communities of Color and Portland State University, <http://www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org> (accessed March 1, 2019), 7–9, 50, 62, 64–65; City of Eugene, “Hate and Bias Crime and Incident Report, January 1, 2017 – December 31, 2017,” March 10, 2018, 3, <https://www.eugene-or.gov/DocumentCenter/View/39256/2017-Hate-and-Bias-Report?bidId=> (accessed March 1, 2019); Chelsea Deffenbacher, “Hate and Bias Crimes in Eugene Doubled from 2016 to 2017, Report Shows,” *Eugene Register-Guard*, September 23, 2018; Chelsea Deffenbacher, “FBI Ranks Eugene Top of State in Hate Crimes,” *Register-Guard*, November 14, 2018; and Chelsea Deffenbacher and Christian Hill, “Building Renamed for Icon Defaced,” *Register-Guard*, April 28, 2018. On environmental racism in Oregon and Eugene, see Ellen Stroud, “Troubled Waters in Ecotopia: Environmental Racism in Portland, Oregon,” *Radical History Review* 74 (1999): 65–95; Andrew Riley and Eline Leemans, “Equity, Environmental Justice, and Industrial Pollution in Portland,” *Read the Dirt*, October 14, 2012, <http://readthedirt.org/equity-environmental-justice-and-industrial-pollution-in-portland> (accessed March 1, 2019); “Environmental Justice,” OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon [Organizing People, Activating Leaders], <http://www.opalpdx.org/ej-101/> (accessed March 1, 2019); Kelly Groth, “Brownfield Redevelopment and Community Involvement: A Case Study in the City of Eugene, Oregon,” Beyond Toxics & Centro Latino Americano Environmental Justice White Paper, June 2013, https://www.beyondtoxics.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/KGroth_White-Paper_2013.pdf (accessed March 1, 2019); and Alison Guzman and Lisa Arkin, “Environmental Justice in West Eugene: Families, Health and Air Pollution, 2011–2012,” Beyond Toxics and Centro Latino Americano, https://www.beyondtoxics.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/EnvJusticeWestEugene-FamiliesHealthAir-Pollution_FULLreport_7-9-13-BESTwebres.pdf (accessed March 1, 2019).

6. We develop these themes — naming and de-naming, history and public memory, ethics of memory — at greater length in “Let the Dead Bury Their Dead”: On De-Naming Controversies, Moral Evaluation, and Public

Memory.” We draw on that essay in progress here to frame our case study.

7. David Pluviose, “Students Fight for Change at University of Oregon,” *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, August 8, 2016, <https://diverseeducation.com/article/85928/> (accessed March 1, 2019); Max Thornberry, “Black Student Task Force: 12 Demands — One Year Later,” *Daily Emerald*, November 16, 2016, <https://www.dailyemerald.com/2016/11/17/cover-black-student-task-force-12-demands-one-year-later/> (accessed March 1, 2019). The November 12 demonstration expressed solidarity with Black students at the University of Missouri, which culminated in the resignation of the president of the University of Missouri System (one the students’ demands) as well as the Chancellor of the University of Missouri, Columbia. Simultaneously, the BSTF sought to call attention to African Americans’ struggles with racism and marginalization at the University of Oregon. On the dramatic events at Miz-zou, see Michael Pearson, “A Timeline of the University of Missouri Protests,” *CNN*, November 10, 2015, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/11/09/us/missouri-protest-timeline/index.html> (accessed March 1, 2019); and John Eligon and Richard Pérez-Peña, “University of Missouri Protests Spur a Day of Change,” *New York Times*, November 9, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/10/us/university-of-missouri-system-president-resigns.html>; Elahe Izadi, “The Incidents that Led to the University of Missouri President’s Resignation,” *Washington Post*, November 9, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2015/11/09/the-incidents-that-led-to-the-university-of-missouri-presidents-resignation/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.23b6805edaeg (accessed March 1, 2019).

8. Quoted in Pluviose, “Students Fight for Change.” On the political risks facing university presidents in such controversies, see Julia Jacobs, “U.N.C. Chancellor to Leave Early After Ordering Removal of ‘Silent Sam’ Statue’s Base,” *New York Times*, January 15, 2019.

9. “Concerns” is Schill’s term, used here for the taskforce’s demands, “UO Taking Action on African-American Student Issues,” *Around the O*, April 26, 2016, <https://around.uoregon.edu/content/uo-taking-action-african-american-student-issues> (accessed

March 1, 2019); Michael Schill, “Deady Hall and Update on Black students’ demands,” January 25, 2017, <https://president.uoregon.edu/deady-hall-and-update-black-students-demands> (accessed March 1, 2019); Johnson, Taylor, and Weisiger, “Historians’ Report.”

10. Schill, “Process for Considering the Denaming of Deady and Dunn Hall,” May 6, 2016, <https://president.uoregon.edu/content/process-considering-denaming-deady-and-dunn-halls> (accessed March 11, 2019); Diane Dietz, “Hundreds gather to protest racist incidents on UO campus,” *Eugene Register-Guard*, November 12, 2016; Thornberry, “Black Student Task Force: 12 Demands — One Year Later”; Schill, “Deady Hall and Update,” January 25, 2017

11. In some instances, and in the context of decreased public support for higher education, very large gifts, rather than extraordinary public service or accomplishments, are the means through which names are attached to buildings. In such cases, edification might be construed narrowly to mean enabling construction of an edifice, although one might less cynically interpret building-naming in such circumstances as recognizing the virtue of generosity — the edifying deed becomes the “edification” (the construction) itself. The rules for naming at the University of Oregon are specified in Policy No. IV.07.01, “Facilities, Naming Of,” which assigns major responsibility to the Vice President for Advancement (fundraising) and specifies, “Naming opportunities are generally reserved for donors.” Nevertheless, buildings might be named in extraordinary circumstances, providing no monetary benefit, “in posthumous recognition of unusually meritorious service to the University or to society at large.” See <https://policies.uoregon.edu/vol-4-finance-administration-infrastructure/ch-7-property-facilities-planning-sustainability> (accessed March 1, 2019).

12. Peter Novick offers an informed and cogent brief explanation of the concept of collective memory, beginning with the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, and its historiography in *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 3–4. See also Carl Becker’s classic 1926 essay, “What Are Historical Facts?” *The Western Po-*

litical Quarterly 8:3 (September 1955): 327–40. Terms such as “public memory,” “collective memory,” and “shared memory” are often assigned particular, technical definitions, which vary from scholar to scholar; we use them here less technically and largely interchangeably.

13. Public memory at its best requires that it’s well informed historically, but it also depends on the civic virtue of and equal representation among the public. Historical knowledge mediated by a public sphere infused with racism, sexism, xenophobia, and other prejudices will produce a noxious and oppressive public memory. See Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002).

14. “After Protests, Yale Says It Will Drop John Calhoun’s Name,” *New York Times*, February 12, 2017; Schill, “Deady Hall and Update,” January 25, 2017. Virtually every naming controversy produces expressions of the threat of erasure that history supposedly faces.

15. Dasia Moore, “When Does Renaming a Building Make Sense?” *The Nation*, February 17, 2017, <https://www.thenation.com/article/when-does-renaming-a-building-make-sense/> (accessed March 7, 2019).

16. The University of Oregon Black Student Task Force issued its demands on November 17, 2015, including the call to “change the names of all the KKK related buildings on campus; see http://static1.squarespace.com/static/541e2ec8e4b042b085c464d9/t/5651440ae4b0a376ef7e6b72/1448166410921/UO+Black+Student+Task+Force_ListOfDemands_2015+%281%29.pdf (accessed March 1, 2019). For the university’s response, see the “Process for considering the denaming of Deady and Dunn Halls,” Office of the President, the University of Oregon at <https://president.uoregon.edu/content/process-considering-denaming-deady-and-dunn-halls>. See also “Historians’ Report.” Schill announced in a letter, “Deady and Dunn Halls — Next Steps,” September 1, 2016, that he would recommend the de-naming of Dunn Hall (see <https://president.uoregon.edu/content/deady-and-dunn-halls-next-steps>). The acceptance of this recommendation by the Board of Trustees was announced September 9, 2016; see <https://around.uoregon.edu/content/trustees-accept->

presidents-proposal-dename-dunn-hall (accessed March 1, 2019).

17. These paragraphs are indebted to, and quote from, the commissioned “Historians’ Report.”

18. See, for example, Schill’s reasoning, in “Deady Hall and Update” January 25, 2017; see also “Opinion: Coleman’s Many Hats,” *Register-Guard*, January 25, 2017, which referenced Professor Ed Coleman’s position on the controversy: “He argued against trying to erase from history people with racially checkered pasts such as Matthew Deady and Joseph Lane. “Forgive this brother,” he wrote about Deady, saying “any trace of bigotry early in the man’s life had been replaced by his defense of Indians and Chinese immigrants,” <https://www.registerguard.com/rg/opinion/35210145-78/colemans-many-hats.html.csp> (accessed March 1, 2019). And see “Historians’ Report,” 8–13, which also quotes Ralph James Mooney, “Matthew Deady and the Federal Judicial Response to Racism in the Early West,” *Oregon Law Review*, 63 (1984): 630n12 (Deady was “equivocal at best toward the 13th amendment”), 12n8.

19. Margalit, *Ethics of Memory*, esp. 8, 51–60.

20. On these late nineteenth century trends, see William Robbins, “Political and Economic Culture, 1870–1920: Railroads, Race, and the Transformation of Oregon,” The Oregon History Project, <https://oregonhistoryproject.org/narratives/this-land-oregon/political-and-economic-culture-1870-1920/railroads-race-and-the-transformation-of-oregon/#.W5GNUNhKhyo> (accessed March 1, 2019). On fin-de-siècle anxiety in late nineteenth century Oregon, see Peter Boag, “Death and Oregon’s Settler Generation: Connecting Parricide, Agricultural Decline, and Dying Pioneers at the Turn of the Century,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 115: 3 (Fall 2014): 344–79.

21. “Report of the Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming,” November 21, 2016, Office of the President, Yale University, pp. 18, 19, 20, http://president.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/CEPR_FINAL_12-2-16.pdf (accessed March 1, 2019).

22. *Ibid.*, 20.

23. *Ibid.*, 8–9, 21; Jane Stancill, “UNC-Chapel Hill Trustees to Rename Saunders Hall ‘Carolina Hall,’” *News & Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.), May 28, 2015, <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/education/article22503351.html#storylink=cpy> (accessed March 1, 2019).

24. Report of the Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming, 21–22; Moore, “Renaming.”

25. Report of the Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming, 22–23. Similarly, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill Board of Trustee Alston Gardner was quoted with regard to the renaming of Saunders Hall, “We’re not changing history, we’re not rewriting it. . . . We’re shining a bright light on it” (Stancill, “UNC Renames Saunders Hall”).

26. In the philosophical literature, such assessments are further complicated by interest in the “deep self” and its relationship to moral responsibility. See, for example, Susan Wolf, “Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility,” in *Responsibility, Character, and the Emotions*, ed. Ferdinand Schoeman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Gary Watson, “Free Agency,” in *Free Will*, ed. Gary Watson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 337–51; and Nomy Arpaly and Timothy Schroeder, “Praise, Blame and the Whole Self,” *Philosophical Studies* 93:2 (February 1999): 161–88. On the deep self and the propriety of blame, see Samuel Reis-Dennis, “Responsibility and the Shallow Self,” *Philosophical Studies* 175:2 (February 2018), 483–501.

27. BSTF, “Guest Viewpoint: Deady Hall Name Must Change,” *Daily Emerald*, February 13, 2016, https://www.dailyemerald.com/opinion/op-ed/guest-viewpoint-deady-hall-name-must-change/article_8b40caf3-4fd3-5c1c-ae61-7a294ca187af.html (accessed March 7, 2019). While “safe space” demands have been voiced by students in the course of de-naming controversies, such rhetoric has also proven to be a resource for conservative critics of universities in their polemics — sometimes ascribing the demand to students even when it’s absent from their discourse.

28. Schill, “Deady Hall and Update,” January 25, 2017. Quotations below taken from this letter unless otherwise indicated.

29. Deady quoted in Johnson, Taylor, and

Weisiger, “Historians’ Report,” 9.

30. See Johnson, Taylor, and Weisiger, “Historians’ Report.” As we have seen, Deady expressed a proslavery position at odds with most of his contemporaries; he had been an energetic proponent of the 1849 exclusion law (as Schill noted), which specified that “it shall not be lawful for any negro or mulatto to enter into, or reside” in Oregon. That law was rescinded in 1854 but later ensconced in the Oregon Constitution, in a clause prohibiting “blacks from being in the state, owning property, and making contracts.” As Greg Nokes notes in *The Oregon Encyclopedia* entry titled “Black Exclusion Laws in Oregon”: “Oregon thus became the only free state admitted to the Union with an exclusion clause in its constitution,” https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/exclusion_laws/#.WLMe8LYrKqA (accessed March 1, 2019).

31. BSTF, “Guest Viewpoint,” *Daily Emerald*, February 13, 2016.

32. Schill, “Deady Hall and Update,” January 25, 2017

33. On the UO cross-burning incident of 1951, see Kristina Nelson, KVAL TV Report, “Cross Burned on UO Sorority Lawn 60 Years Ago,” March 22, 2011, <https://kval.com/archive/cross-burned-on-uo-sorority-lawn-60-years-ago> (accessed May 21, 2019). On Oregon’s racist anti-miscegenation laws, see, K. Keith Richard, “Unwelcome Settlers: Black and Mulatto Oregon Pioneers,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 84:1 (1983): 29–55; Peggy Pascoe, “Race, Gender, and Intercultural Relations: The Case of Interracial Marriage,” *Frontiers* 12 (1991): 5–18.

“With a Simple Sign, Unthank Hall Takes Its Place on UO campus,” July 12, 2017, <https://around.uoregon.edu/content/simple-sign-unthank-hall-takes-its-place-uo-campus> (accessed March 1, 2019). See also, “DeNorval Unthank Jr.: Builder of Community; Racism Denamed — How the UO Got Unthank Hall,” on the university’s website in celebration of Black History Month, February 2018, <https://around.uoregon.edu/BHM2018> (accessed March 1, 2019); and Moore, “Renaming.”

34. BSTF, “Guest Viewpoint,” *Daily Emerald*, February 13, 2016; “The Architecture of McKenzie Hall,” at [\[uoregon.edu/architecture/oregon/mckenzie\]\(https://library.uoregon.edu/architecture/oregon/mckenzie\) \(accessed March 1, 2019\); Jeff Manning, “UO Agrees to Return Grayson Donation,” *Oregonian*, December 8, 2001, from Laborers.org, \[https://web.archive.org/web/2016080811405/http://www.laborers.org/Oregon_UO_12-08-01.htm\]\(https://web.archive.org/web/2016080811405/http://www.laborers.org/Oregon_UO_12-08-01.htm\) \(accessed March 7, 2019\). On the UO naming rules, adopted and revised subsequently, see UO Policy No. IV.07.01 in footnote 11.](https://library.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

35. See Jeff Agase, “Oregon pits visiting teams against McArthur Court,” *Daily Bruin*, December 8, 2002, <http://dailybruin.com/2002/12/08/oregon-pits-visiting-teams-aga> (accessed March 1, 2019). See also Tom Hoffarth, “Few arenas like Oregon’s Big Mac,” *Pasadena Star-News*, January 30, 2010, <https://www.pasadenastarnews.com/2010/01/30/few-arenas-like-oregons-big-mac/> (accessed March 1, 2019). According to Hoffarth, “No other place in the conference — or the rest of the country, for that matter — has quite the feel of Mac Court, constructed three years before the Great Depression, when Calvin Coolidge was president.” Hoffarth expressed some surprise at “historic” Mac Court’s demotion: “Still, on a campus that maintains legendary track and field site Hayward Field — opened in 1919 for football — deeming . . . Mac Court outdated seems a bit out of character.” On the history and renovation (demolition) of “Historic Hayward Field,” see the university’s elaborate promotional presentation on its website: https://around.uoregon.edu/hayward?utm_source=homepage&utm_campaign=spotlight (accessed March 1, 2019). Thanks to Rich Glauber for this assessment of Hayward Field’s demolition.

36. On the new Oregon “O” (1999) see the University of Oregon site, “Style Guide,” “About the Brand,” which also has a link to information about the Great Seal: <https://brand.uoregon.edu/logo-system> (accessed March 1, 2019). The university’s motto is taken from Virgil’s *Aeneid*. According the UO website, Deady’s preferred translation was “mind moves the mass,” though popularly it is understood to mean “minds move mountains,” <https://brand.uoregon.edu/great-seal> (accessed March 1, 2019).