

Thank you again for considering this matter, and for your work on behalf of the county. My name is Emily Moose and I am a resident of Chatham County, here in that capacity alone.

My great-great-grandmother was a Daughter of the Confederacy, and while I don't share their views, I qualify to be one. My great-great-grandfather fought for the Confederate army and I'm told lived out his final years with a Union bullet lodged in his neck. Growing up in North Carolina, I heard the 'Lost Cause' narrative my whole childhood. Things like, "we were always good to our slaves;" or "it was a different time." I was an adult before I acknowledged that the only purpose of these lies was to protect the speaker from their own conscience, validate their blindness to another person's humanity and normalize the brutality inflicted in the name of white supremacy. If a child can be convinced that another person didn't suffer as a slave, perhaps it's easier for that child to grow into an adult that sees some humans as less human than others.

I'm not going to pass that lie onto the next generation, and I don't believe our civic spaces or schools should, either. The United Daughters of the Confederacy (or UDC) aggressively portrayed slavery as generally benign and immaterial to the Civil War. As a mother, I am deeply disturbed at how effective they were in indoctrinating an always-captive audience, our children, into internalizing a false and insidious history. What they did affected every child in every school that used textbooks influenced by the UDC—whether their parents supported the Confederacy or not. Moreover, their false narrative is still being taught, and is being illustrated and reinforced by the monument in front of our courthouse. My hope for my children—and all children—is that Chatham County will serve as a model for undoing the damage done, and have the courage to tell our full story.

In the previous presentations we heard the broader historical context of this effort by the UDC to glorify the Confederacy. Let's look specifically at Chatham's monument. In the early 1900's, over 40 years after the end of the Civil War—before which, 86 per cent of the white male voters in Chatham County rejected secession—the UDC led a three-year, in their words "uphill," campaign to erect this statue of an unknown Confederate soldier. This campaign was consistent with similar UDC efforts across the state and country, many of which have now been removed or relocated with community support.

On July 8, 1907, the Commissioners sitting in your seats authorized the Winnie Davis Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy to cut down a tree in front of the courthouse and erect the monument you see today, granting that it may "remain in the care and keeping" of the UDC. The full license agreement is included in your packet for reference.

The dedication speech in Pittsboro glorified the Confederate effort to defend slavery and the "southern race"—which implicitly meant the white race. This particular chapter of the UDC subsequently contributed funds toward a banner for the Ku Klux Klan. Other local dedication speeches to these UDC-inspired monuments explicitly promoted white supremacy, with one such speech given by a leader of the Wilmington Coup who openly called for the murder of any black person attempting to vote. The dedication speeches of that time are included in our documentation.

I understand and respect that some see their heritage in this statue; my own great-grandmother would say that monuments like this are simply teaching history and should stay put. If I could speak with her, I'd tell her that I love her, but I don't agree with her, and neither does the historical record. This statue is not instructive, objective history, but a message from the United Daughters of the Confederacy at the beginning of the 20th Century—a message we have been repeating on their behalf for over a hundred years. And while some suggest it may remain as a teachable reminder of the mistakes of the past, this statue doesn't say, "We made a mistake." Outside of a museum or cemetery and divorced from historical context, a symbol this ambiguous is

not a good teacher. If this statue personifies today's UDC then they should have it to cherish for themselves, whether in a cemetery, museum, or another location outside of our civic space.

History has shown us that no one is immune from oppression, and while in this particular case it was race, random differences have always been used to justify the denial of humanity, whether it's ethnicity, religion, gender, geography, tribe, language or countless others. If we truly believe in equity, liberty and justice for all, and genuinely pursue those precious American values, we should uphold them unequivocally.

In addition to our values, as commissioners you have compelling economic reasons to reconsider the iconic welcome mat of our County. We are striving to present ourselves as a world-class community, ready for investment from employers offering good jobs. These employers seek communities that welcome everyone, where the value of basic human rights is not in question. This monument drives away many who would enrich our community, and I urge you to consider the economic implications of inaction.

We do not seek to change history; we cannot. No matter your views on the Civil War, **a statue defending one group's subjugation of another blocks the door to our county's most prominent symbol of justice and government.** Regardless of our ethnicity, background or political persuasion, this impacts us as Americans and as human beings. The American Historical Association supports community decisions to remove monuments like ours, saying, "What changes with such removals is what American communities decide is worthy of civic honor." Having lived here for over a decade, I know that as a community that values fairness, justice, equity, neighborliness, representative democracy, truth and rule of law, we can take action to better demonstrate those values.

We have presented a petition to you with over 900 signatures from residents of Chatham County, most of which have been hand-gathered, and which cross geographic, political and demographic lines. This has been a neighbor-to-neighbor community effort. Everyone who signed this petition has a story about why this monument didn't represent our community in 1907 and doesn't today. We are as much a part of history as those who came before us, and must now decide if this is the message we want to send about our community, because that's what we do every day it stands. As commissioners, please ask yourselves: Would you erect this statue today? And if the answer is no, then it's time to return it to its rightful owner without delay.

In your packet you have a summary of the facts around this statue, including the clear legal case for removal. The license states that this monument is the private property of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and the County has merely authorized its placement here. It is fully within your rights to rescind that authorization, and we propose that you do so immediately. It's past time for Chatham County Commissioners to exercise their duty of care by removing this symbol which rebukes equal protection under the law and constitutes a threat to the general welfare of all Chatham's citizens.

We hereby request that you terminate the license agreement with the United Daughters of the Confederacy and require them to remove their private property from our civic space. In the spirit of the final words of the Pledge of Allegiance recited earlier, "with liberty and justice for all," we eagerly await your swift action.