

Resolution

Amending the Name of Manly Hall

WHEREAS, diversity, inclusion, and respect are fundamental values of the University of Alabama System;

WHEREAS, under Board Rule 411, the Board of Trustees has the exclusive discretion to amend, remove, or withdraw any naming at any time and for any reason; and

WHEREAS, on June 8, 2020, the President Pro Tempore of the Board of Trustees appointed a working group of Trustees to conduct a comprehensive review of the names of buildings, structures, and spaces on all UA System campuses; and

WHEREAS, the working group's review is governed by the institutional best interests of the University of Alabama System, recognizing that although no person is infallible and widespread views commonly change over time, the Board of Trustees must take great care to demonstrate and honor the current values of the University of Alabama System; and

WHEREAS, the working group's initial inquiry is to determine whether an individual after whom a building, structure, or space is named made any substantial, lasting, and unique contributions to the University of Alabama System; and

WHEREAS, if the working group concludes that an individual made substantial, lasting, and unique contributions, the working group will then weigh those contributions against any actions the individual took, or views the individual had, that are inconsistent with the current values of the University of Alabama System, taking into consideration the prevalent moral, religious, and political norms of the individual's time; and

WHEREAS, based upon consultation with several historical experts and its own investigation, the working group reviewed the historical record as it relates to Dr. Basil Manly, the second president of the University of Alabama; and

WHEREAS, the working group concluded that Dr. Manly made a substantial and lasting contribution to the University of Alabama; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Manly served an eighteen-year tenure as president of the University of Alabama and significantly raised the academic reputation of the university by increasing the available coursework and retaining several renowned faculty members, even after all but one faculty member left the university upon the resignation of Alva Woods, the University of Alabama's first president; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Manly also guided the institution through numerous student

revolts – a more common problem in the frontier environment of Alabama in the 1840s and 1850s – and instituted a new code of conduct for faculty and students; and

WHEREAS, in June 1884, in recognition of this contribution, the Board of Trustees approved Manly Hall as the name of the building on the Southwest corner of Woods Quad;

WHEREAS, having concluded Dr. Manly made a substantial and lasting contribution to the University of Alabama, the working group then examined whether Dr. Manly's actions and views were lawful at the time expressed and, considering the prevalent moral, religious, or political norms of the time, whether his views or activities were so egregious as to outweigh even meaningful contributions; and

WHEREAS, the working group found that Dr. Manly used his position as a religious and educational leader to provide a religious “defense” of white supremacy that many white Southerners adopted to preserve the institution of slavery; and

WHEREAS, as an ordained minister, Dr. Manly misused the Bible to promote white supremacy, arguing, for example, that the curse on Canaan to be “a servant of servants” in the book of Genesis was to be fulfilled through the perpetual bondage of the African race; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Manly also argued that slavery was “the providence of God,” and, therefore, part of the divinely ordained hierarchical order of Christian society, and that opposing slavery was disobeying the will of God; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Manly labored so vigorously to defend the institution of slavery in the South that he wrote the resolution adopted by the Alabama State Baptist Convention urging Alabama to secede from the United States, arguing that the federal government did not sufficiently respect southerners' constitutional rights with respect to slaves, who he described as “our peculiar property”; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Manly, while President of the University of Alabama, recorded in his diary that “by the order” and in the presence of the University faculty, he personally whipped a University-owned slave servant named Sam for refusing to obey an order and then whipped him again, “very severely,” because he did not seem “humbled”; and

WHEREAS, based upon these findings, the working group recommended that the Board of Trustees remove Dr. Manly's name from the building currently called Manly Hall;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees that the name of Manly Hall on the Tuscaloosa campus is hereby amended to Presidents Hall;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University of Alabama prepare an appropriate display approved by the Board of Trustees that commemorates the service of all past Presidents of the University of Alabama;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University of Alabama prepare a display inside Presidents Hall with the following language drafted by a historical expert retained by the Board of Trustees:

In 1886, the University of Alabama Board of Trustees named this building in honor of Basil Manly, Sr., the University's second president. Dr. Manly took office in 1837, at a chaotic time for the University, and he labored for eighteen years to bring order to campus life. He also strengthened the faculty and raised the University's academic standards. His time as president was a major chapter in the life of the University of Alabama.

Dr. Manly began his career in South Carolina as a Baptist preacher with a special interest in education. The University of North Carolina awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1837, the year he was appointed president of the University of Alabama. While he led the University, Dr. Manly also continued to preach and to promote Baptist denominational interests. After his retirement from the University for health reasons in 1855, he returned to the pulpit, serving as minister of the First Baptist Church in Montgomery from 1859 to 1864.

Dr. Manly was also a major proponent of slavery. As an educational and religious leader, he proclaimed for four decades that slavery was ordained by God. His pronouncements helped build a religious justification for slavery and to harden white Southerners' determination to defend the institution. In 1845, Dr. Manly led southern Baptists in breaking away from the national Baptist General Convention over the issue of slavery. This split prefigured his support fifteen years

later for Alabama's secession from the Union and for the creation of the Confederacy, to which he gave his ministerial blessings. As a substantial slaveholder himself, he used flogging, sometimes administered by his own hands, to punish enslaved people he owned and those owned by the University.

Dr. Manly's personal actions and his vigorous, long-time advocacy of slavery conflict profoundly with the values of the University of Alabama System as we see them today. For this reason, the University of Alabama Board of Trustees voted on November 13, 2020, to remove his name from this building. The Board also called for the placement of this plaque to acknowledge Dr. Manly's services and to explain its reasons, despite those services, for the name change.