



## Legacy Commission



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History is about what happened in the past while commemoration is about the present. We put up statues and celebrate holidays to honor figures from the past who embody some quality we admire....as society changes, the qualities we care about shift.

Heather Cox Richardson, Historian

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### **Introduction**

In the 21st century, Charlotte is a city that is growing fast, simultaneously becoming more racially and ethnically diverse and socioeconomically disparate. A mosaic of longtime residents and newcomers from across the U.S. and around the world creates both a dynamic cultural landscape and new challenges that force us to consider issues of equity and inclusion.

There is a legacy of racial discrimination in Charlotte that has denied African Americans and other people of color the opportunities to participate fully in the city's government, civic life, economy and educational advancement. Vestiges of this legacy are symbolically represented in streets, monuments, and buildings named in honor of slave owners, champions of the Confederacy, and proponents of white supremacy.

The Legacy Commission believes that the continued memorialization of slave owners, Confederate leaders, and white supremacists on street signs does not reflect the values that Charlotte upholds today and is a direct affront to descendants of the enslaved and oppressed African Americans who labored to build this city.

The Commission recommends changing street names and reimagining civic spaces to create a new symbolic landscape that is representative of the dynamic and diverse city Charlotte has become and reflective of the inclusive vision it strives to achieve.

### **The Charge**

Engage in a comprehensive study of street names and monuments in the City of Charlotte that honor a legacy of Confederate soldiers, slave owners and segregationists. Study may include a detailed historical explanation of the naming and a detailed explanation of all recommended changes by the end of October 2020.



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The community engagement process will inform the final determination of any recommended changes presented by the Commission. City Council and other authorizing bodies may adopt the final recommendations and timeframe for implementation. All street name changes and monument name changes will begin a new history that is inclusive of contributions made by our country's most worthy citizens.

### **Commission Review Process**

#### Orientation

Appointed by the Mayor and City Council members, the fifteen-person Legacy Commission participated in an orientation session on July 27, 2020 and then met virtually six times during August, September, and October.

Early discussion focused on the significance of symbols such as monuments and street names. Commission members stated that symbols matter. They are important because "they communicate who matters"; they convey "who we are and what we value." Concern was expressed that many symbols from our past do not reflect what we believe in today and some are morally abhorrent. They send a dehumanizing message when celebrating and honoring individuals who advocated for discrimination and bigotry. Examples were given of current street names that do not align with contemporary Charlotte's vision as an inclusive city. It was expressed that the need for racial healing and reconciliation required action. It was agreed that any proposed changes would be based on solid historical research and clear criteria.

#### Historical Background

Historical context was deemed essential to understanding the reasons for the current landscape of monuments and street names. Presentations by consulting historians Dr. Karen Cox and Dr. Willie Griffin provided critical and foundational information about the historical background nationally and locally and documentation about monuments and street names in Charlotte. Summaries of their presentations are included below:

### **Understanding the Lost Cause and Charlotte's Role in Perpetuating Its Myths**

#### Karen L. Cox, Professor of History, UNC Charlotte

Our understanding of why Charlotte erected monuments and named streets in honor of former Confederate leaders, some of whom were slaveholders, is directly tied to the Lost Cause myth that developed in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War. Among its many tenets, the Lost Cause held that the war was a battle to defend states' rights and was never about slavery. By distancing themselves from the true purpose of the Confederacy—which was to create a



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separate nation built on the perpetuation of human slavery—white southerners recast the war as a just cause and southern soldiers as noble and virtuous defenders of constitutional liberty. Less than two decades after the war ended, the Lost Cause turned into a celebration of the Confederacy. And during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, monuments were erected in public spaces and streets were named for local and regional Confederate leaders. In the 1950s, as a response to a burgeoning civil rights movement, public schools were also being named for Confederate leaders. At no point were African Americans involved in decision-making about monuments or the naming of streets or schools, because they were denied the full rights of citizenship, including the right to vote on such matters.

Charlotte was not immune to the Lost Cause. It erected a monument to the Confederate dead in Elmwood Cemetery in 1887, and from June 4-7, 1929, the city hosted the 39<sup>th</sup> reunion of Confederate veterans during which time it erected a marker that reads, in part, that these same men “preserved the Anglo-Saxon civilization of the South.” This nod to white supremacy in the city is part of a larger legacy of racism consistent with Jim Crow segregation of the period. Later, in 1948, the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected a marker to the Confederate secretary of state, Judah P. Benjamin. Then, in 1977, a group dedicated a marker to Confederate soldiers from Mecklenburg County on the grounds of what is now Old City Hall.

Charlotte was also in lockstep with the Lost Cause in other ways. In 1958 the city was host to “Old South Week,” which was sponsored by Kappa Alpha fraternity chapters from across the state. The group held a “secession ceremony” on the steps of the Mecklenburg County Courthouse and, for a brief time during these festivities, Tryon Street was renamed “Confederate Avenue.” In addition to the monument added to the grounds of City Hall in 1977, the city permitted a Confederate parade to take place in Uptown in 1996, where men dressed in Confederate uniforms marched through city streets to celebrate the addition of several new Confederate markers inside Elmwood Cemetery.

In sum, while Charlotte’s image as a city of the New South has existed for decades, the truth is that the Queen City also has ties to the Lost Cause, including its myths about the Old South and the Confederacy.

### **Slavery, the Civil War, and the Rise of White Supremacy in Charlotte, NC**

Willie J. Griffin, Staff Historian, Levine Museum of the New South

Charlotte’s New South image obscures its connections to the large slave plantation economy of the Old South. In this region enslaved labor grew wheat, corn, and cotton, was widely used to mine gold, and was fundamentally important to the antebellum way of life. Charlotte was an essential part of the Old South and home to some of the most imposing plantations in the North



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Carolina Piedmont. Cedar Grove, one of the largest of dozens of plantations, was an example of the prominence of slavery in Mecklenburg County. In 1840, Cedar Grove was more than 1400 acres and thrived through the labor of over one hundred enslaved persons of African descent. The discovery of gold at the turn of the nineteenth century precipitated the country's first gold rush, and by the 1820s and 1830s, massive gold mining operations emerged across Mecklenburg County. There were an estimated 5000 enslaved people forced to labor in mining operations in the county during the height of the gold rush. On average, four slaves could earn their owners 140 to 163 dollars every two weeks. The profitability of slavery in Mecklenburg County can be gleaned from the enslaved population numbers, which, from the time of the gold rush until the outbreak of the Civil War, consistently ranged between 35 to 40 percent of the entire population.

Charlotte was not a site of major Civil War battles, but it made significant contributions to the Confederate cause. Daniel H. Hill, a former Davidson College professor and then superintendent of North Carolina Military Institute of Charlotte, emerged as a leader who guided the city's course of action. The military school produced three separate regiments of soldiers that fought under the Confederacy including: the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment North Carolina Volunteers (Charlotte Greys), the 49<sup>th</sup> Regiment North Carolina Troops Company F (Mecklenburg Guards), and the 30<sup>th</sup> Regiment North Carolina Troops Company K (Mecklenburg Beauregards). As commanding officer of the Charlotte Greys, Hill first seized the local branch of the United States Mint, which immediately began printing Confederate money. He then led the regiment into the first significant conflict of the Civil War following the attack of Fort Sumter and quickly rose through the ranks to Major General and division commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. The Confederacy chose Charlotte as the relocation site for its Navy Yard in May 1862 because it was an important railroad center. Two weeks after the Confederacy surrendered at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, the Confederate Cabinet met for the last time in the home of William Phifer on South Tryon Street. Phifer, one of the largest slaveowners in Charlotte, had opened his home as the headquarters of General Pierre G.T. Beauregard earlier in the year.

From the late 1880s to the turn of the twentieth century Charlotte's policy makers and media fueled the rise of white supremacy across the state. When the interracial fusion movement gained traction the state Democratic Party implemented plans for a political takeover in Wilmington to neutralize the movement's political gains. To aid this effort, the *Charlotte Observer* assigned local journalist, Red Buck Bryant, to write anti-black and anti-fusion articles. Throughout the period the newspaper regularly produced articles and political cartoons that stoked racial divisions among readers. African Americans were often portrayed as violent criminals who were unworthy of the political ballot. In 1900 the state constitutional amendment that instituted a poll tax and literacy tests was passed. The amendment ultimately disenfranchised African Americans.



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Charlotte's political leaders oversaw the formation of local clubs which maintained white supremacy, elevated white labor, and protected the amendment.

### Deliberations about Confederate Monuments

Dr. Cox reviewed the approaches taken by four other cities, Atlanta, Dallas, Louisville, and Richmond, to evaluate their Confederate monuments and street names.

Dr. Griffin provided a description of Confederate monuments and markers in Elmwood Cemetery.

### **Confederate Monuments at Elmwood Cemetery**

The Major Egbert A. Ross Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp 1423 maintains the Confederate section of Elmwood Cemetery. It is approximately 50 x 50 square feet and is enclosed by a wrought iron fence that is about four feet high. At the center of the section is a large granite obelisk that rests atop a large base of five granite steps that form the foundation of the structure. The obelisk was dedicated on June 30, 1887 by "Women of Charlotte" to honor the Confederate soldiers of Mecklenburg County, and it is the oldest known Confederate monument in the city. In addition to the obelisk, there are approximately one hundred small granite headstones of Confederate veterans and eight six-foot memorials. Two of these memorials were dedicated to Confederate officers General Ambrose P. Hill Jr. and Colonel Thomas S. Kenan, neither of whom have apparent connections to Charlotte. Hill was born in Culpeper, Virginia and died in battle in Virginia, his memorial is undated. Kenan was born in Kenansville, North Carolina, and following the war served as Attorney General of North Carolina from 1877 through 1885. Kenan's monument was dedicated in 1895. Three of the memorials were dedicated in honor of the Confederate Navy Yard in 1910, the Confederate Memorial Association of Charlotte in 1977, and the North Carolina Military Institute in 1994. The final three six-foot memorials were dedicated between 1999 and 2001 and honor three separate regiments from Charlotte, which include the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment North Carolina Volunteers (Charlotte Greys), the 49<sup>th</sup> Regiment North Carolina Troops Company F (Mecklenburg Guards), and the 30<sup>th</sup> Regiment North Carolina Troops Company K (Mecklenburg Beauregards).

Relying on counsel from City staff, it was determined that there are no Confederate monuments currently in public spaces controlled by the City of Charlotte, beyond those located in Elmwood Cemetery. Commissions in other cities and scholars who have written about the topic have largely agreed that cemeteries, along with battlefields, are appropriate locations for Confederate monuments.



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*The Commission shares the view that memorialization is appropriate in a cemetery setting. The Commission recommends placement of interpretive panels to give context to the origins of the various Confederate monuments and markers located in Elmwood Cemetery. The Commission further recommends that the City, through City Council when necessary and under its legal authority, reserve the right to accept or deny any future requests, whether public or private, for relocation or installation of monuments or markers on City property, including in public cemeteries.*

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### Deliberations about Current Street Names

Dr. Griffin presented an initial list of more than 70 city streets named in honor of slavery, slave owners, Confederate veterans, and supporters of white supremacy or romanticized notions of the antebellum South. He also provided biographical information about the individuals and families for whom the streets were named. In some cases, there was not clear documentation about which individual in a particular family was being honored by the street naming.

Before considering any recommendations to change street names, the Commission discussed what criteria should be used to weigh changes. There was broad agreement that priority should be placed on streets named for:

1. Confederate leaders and officers. They championed slavery and led a war against the United States.
2. Individuals who actively fought against equality, including leaders and vocal advocates of post-Civil War white supremacist groups, those who campaigned for political office on a platform promoting white supremacy, and elected officials who supported and implemented Jim Crow laws. These individuals used racist rhetoric, acts of racial intimidation and at times, violence against African Americans. They actively sought to deny African Americans the right to vote and the right to equal access to public places.

Commission members also affirmed the need for solid historical documentation for all recommendations and the need for public input.

In reviewing the names on the list presented by Dr. Griffin, a Commission member noted that many streets have ties to slavery. “Nearly every person-named street that dates back before the 1880s commemorates a family that enslaved people. These include major center-city



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streets (Tryon, Alexander, Brevard, Caldwell, Davidson and more) as well as avenues in old farm areas that are now suburban (Berryhill, Rea, Johnston and more) and also streets named after US founding fathers (Washington, Madison, Van Buren, Jefferson, Ben Franklin).” It was also observed that numerous street names were associated with the pre-Civil War era and references to romanticized popular culture about that era. (Dixie Drive, Cotton Planter Lane, Plantation Woods Drive, Scarlet Drive, Rhett Court and Taragate Court).

Polling of Commission members underscored a clear consensus.

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*The highest priority for change should be streets named for leaders of the Confederacy and white supremacists who actively fought to defend slavery and against racial equality. The Commission recommends that the City move expeditiously to change the names of the streets listed below:*

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### **Jefferson Davis Street**

During the Civil War, Jefferson Davis served as President of the Confederate States from 1861 to 1865. At the war’s end, he encouraged reconciliation and implored Southerners to be loyal to the Union. However, by the 1880s, former Confederates saw him as a hero of the Lost Cause of the Confederacy. Jefferson Davis was born in Fairview, Kentucky, and died in New Orleans, Louisiana. He had no extensive ties to Charlotte, beyond retreating to the city during the last days of the Civil War and holding his final executive cabinet meeting at William Phifer’s home. There is a Jefferson Davis Street located in the Druid Hill community in West Charlotte. The street is dead-ended at both ends and has only one cross street, Moretz Avenue.

### **W Hill Street**

Daniel H. Hill was a Confederate officer who spent time before and after the Civil War in Charlotte. He was born in York County, South Carolina, on July 12, 1821, and died in Charlotte on September 24, 1889. Hill served on the faculties of Washington College (later Washington and Lee University) from 1849 to 1854 and Davidson College from 1854 through 1859, when he became principal of the North Carolina Military Academy in Charlotte. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he was commissioned as a colonel and led The Charlotte Greys, a local regiment, in usurping the city’s branch of the U.S. Mint. He quickly rose to brigadier general to major general and commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. Hill is remembered for his college textbook, Elements of Algebra, and for leading critical strategic victories during the war, and finally for editing a Charlotte-based magazine, The Land We Love, which was influential



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throughout the South from 1866 through 1869. Hill eventually became a prominent educator in the South, serving as presidents of Arkansas Industrial University, Middle Georgia Military and Agricultural College. Hill was also instrumental in writing several Civil War histories. West Hill Street is named in his honor. The street is located in uptown Charlotte and extends east from McNinch Street to Eldridge Street, just outside Bank of America Stadium. The street again picks up on the east side of the stadium, stretching from South Church Street across South Tryon and becomes East Hill for one city block ending at South College Street.

### **Stonewall Street and Jackson Avenue**

Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson was born in Clarksburg, Virginia, in 1824 and died in Guinea, Virginia, in 1863. As an 1846 graduate of West Point, he sided with the Confederacy at the start of the Civil War and quickly rose in prominence. Military historians regard him as the most gifted tactical commander in the Confederacy, and his military exploits became legendary and were an essential element of the ideology of the Lost Cause. There are several streets named in honor of Stonewall Jackson. The most prominent is East Stonewall Street, located in uptown Charlotte. The street extends from South Mint and South Graham, at Bank of America Stadium, east to Kenilworth Avenue. For many years, local defenders of Jackson’s legacy claimed the street was named to honor his second wife, Mary Anna Morrison, whom he married in 1857. She was from North Carolina, where her father was President of Davidson College. Following their marriage, the couple lived in Lexington, Virginia, where Jackson was a Virginia Military Institute professor. Following Jackson’s death, she moved to Charlotte into a home was located on East Third Street, which is now East Stonewall Street. There is a Stonewall Jackson Homes Drive located in a private low-income rental community at 5751 Airport Drive off West Boulevard. According to a 1947 Charlotte News article, Jackson Avenue, located off East 10th Street, directly across from Piedmont Open IB Middle School, is also named in honor of Stonewall Jackson.

### **Phifer Avenue**

William Phifer was from Catawba and came to Charlotte in 1852. He inherited a great deal of land, money, and enslaved Africans. Phifer owned approximately 28 enslaved people, making him one of the two largest slave owners in the city. The Phifer home occupied an entire block, from Phifer Avenue to College Street to Eleventh Street, and included a well-designed garden, a sixty-foot well, a springhouse, a carriage house, a garden house, and smokehouse. It was part of his larger four- thousand-acre estate. In early 1865, Phifer’s property served as the headquarters for General Pierre G.T. Beauregard, and two weeks after the Confederacy officially surrendered at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, the Confederate Cabinet met for the last





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time in Phifer's home. Today, Phifer Avenue connects North Tryon to North College between East 9th and East 11th Streets. The street runs perpendicular to the Hal Marshall Center.

### **Aycock Lane**

Beyond Charles Brantley Aycock (Wayne County) and William Brantley Aycock (Wilson County), there are no other famous or influential persons from North Carolina who carry the Aycock name. William was a longtime law professor at UNC School of Law and served as chancellor of UNC from 1957 until 1964. Aycock Lane is most likely named in honor of Charles Aycock, who, beginning in 1900, served as the state's 50th governor. According to historian H. Leon Prather, Aycock was the "king of oratory" and the "Democratic Moses who led North Carolina out of the darkness and chaos of Negro domination." Aycock is remembered as the primary architect of the state's White Supremacy Movement, which fully emerged in 1898 and was responsible for disfranchising African Americans in 1901. He is fondly referred to as North Carolina's "education governor." The street is located in a subdivision just south of Dilworth, off of Scaleybark Road.

### **Barringer Drive**

Barringer is a prominent family name in the Mecklenburg and Cabarrus County region. John Paul Barringer and his eldest son, John Sr., were members of the Mecklenburg Militia during the Revolutionary War. When John Paul died in 1807, he was 86 years old and owned 13 slaves and hundreds of acres of land in Cabarrus County. By 1838, John Sr. owned three plantations, two stores, a tannery, and a cotton mill around Concord. Although he owned as many as 15 slaves, he eventually reached the point where he was no longer in favor of the institution. But instead of granting them freedom, he deeded them to his son, Paul Brandon, who took them further south to Mississippi. His three other sons, Rufus, Moreau, and Victor, were all lawyers and served the state as elected politicians. In the 1850s, Rufus was a prominent Whig, a forerunner of the Republican Party, who favored African American suffrage. Initially, he was against secession, but after the state seceded, he was among the first to volunteer. Rufus rose to the brigadier general's rank, but he served as a Republican after the war. Rufus was the father of Warren C. Coleman, who was perhaps the wealthiest African American in North Carolina from Reconstruction through the turn of the twentieth century. Barringer advocated for African American rights following the Civil War, yet his sons, Paul B. Barringer and Osmand M. Barringer, espoused white supremacy ideals. Paul became a leader in the field of "scientific" racism at the University of Virginia in the late 1800s, and Osmand was a leader in the local white supremacy club movement in Charlotte at the turn of the twentieth century. Osmand also fought against the desegregation of public facilities in Charlotte in the 1950s. According to Osmand, Barringer Drive was named in his honor. The street is located in West Charlotte. It



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extends south from West Boulevard, snaking across Remount Road and Clanton Road before coming to an end at Pressley Road.

### **Morrison Boulevard**

Cameron A. Morrison was a prominent leader of the ‘Red Shirts,’ the paramilitary wing of the state Democratic Party’s White Supremacy campaign that worked to suppress and terrorize black voters in North Carolina in the late 1890s. In 1920, Morrison successfully ran for Governor of North Carolina on the platform that he fought gloriously for the cause of White Supremacy. Morrison served as the state’s 55th governor and is commonly referred to as the “Good Roads Governor.” Under his leadership, the government systematically made use of black convict labor to help build state roads. In the mid-1920s, Morrison purchased upwards of 3000 acres in what is now South Charlotte to build his Morrocroft Estate. Over the years, most of the land surrounding his home was sold to local developers. Today, the area comprises Barclay Downs and South Park. Morrison Boulevard and Governor Morrison Street are named in his honor. There are several other prominent buildings and apartments named in Morrison’s memory, including Southpark Morrison, Morrison Condos, Morrison Family YMCA, and Morrison Library. The name of the Morrison Library was recently changed to the South Park Library because of the association of Morrison with white supremacy.

### **Zebulon Avenue**

Zebulon Baird Vance entered politics in North Carolina in the 1850s. In 1854 he was elected to Congress and again in 1859. In 1861, after the South succeeded from the Union, Vance refused to serve on the Confederate Congress, instead choosing to fight. He eventually rose to the rank of colonel of the Twenty-sixth North Carolina Regiment. In 1862, he accepted the Conservative party nomination for Governor and handily defeated Democratic candidate, William Johnston of Mecklenburg County. Vance was North Carolina’s Confederate Governor from 1862 through 1865. His re-election as Governor in 1877 symbolized the return to power of slavery-era leaders. Zebulon Avenue is located in the Smallwood community off of Rozzelles Ferry Road.

Commission members raised the issue of the feasibility for renaming scores of other streets named for slave owners and names glorifying the antebellum South and the Confederacy. The Commission welcomes public feedback on determining the scope of street renaming and acknowledges the need for additional historical analysis.



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*The Commission supports and encourages the efforts of neighborhoods and developers that petition for additional street name changes based on ties to slavery, the Confederacy, white supremacy or glorification of the Antebellum South.*

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### **A New Commemorative Landscape**

#### Criteria for Naming Streets in the Future

Streets are often named for geographic locations, ideas or individuals.

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*When the City considers naming a street for an individual, the Commission recommends using the following criteria to assess the worthiness of the proposed individual:*

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Recognize those who have had an important and positive impact on the city, state or nation.

- Give priority to those who have had a significant connection to Charlotte and contributed to the city's progress.
- Honor individuals who represent the diversity of the city's history.
- Honor individuals whose contributions have been overlooked in the past. (African Americans, Native Americans, Latinx, Asians, women.)
- To ensure the benefit of historical judgment, no street should be named for a living person, and not until the individual has been deceased for a period of no less than five years.
- Establish a standard for weighing morally repugnant past deeds and words against any important and positive impact the individual had on the city, state, or nation.
- Consider loosening its street-naming policies, when appropriate, to allow for streets to carry both first and last names of historically significant figures.
- The naming process should include public input and engage historians, historic preservationists, and museum professionals to ensure appropriate historical context and documentation.



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*The Commission invites the public to submit for future consideration the names of historically significant individuals such as those listed below:*

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- **Dr. Reginald Hawkins:** nicknamed “Hawk,” was a lifelong civil rights activist who played a central role in integrating Charlotte schools, hospitals, and public spaces, and in 1968 became the first African American since Reconstruction to run for governor of North Carolina. Born on Armistice Day and raised in Beaufort, North Carolina, Hawkins moved to Charlotte to attend college and remained a resident of the city.
- **Ishmael Titus:** Slave that fought with the colonies in the American Revolution. After his master, wealthy planter Lawrence Ross was drafted for a one-year tour, Ross offered his slave Titus as a substitute to serve in his place. For fighting in his master’s war for “independence,” Titus was promised his freedom in exchange. During his service Titus fought in the battles of Deep River and Kings Mountain. Later he enlisted under General Greene and was in the battle of Guilford Courthouse. Titus survived the war, was freed, and lived to be over 100.
- **Harry Golden:** Jewish-American humorist and Charlotte resident was a writer and publisher of the Carolina Israelite and author of many popular best-seller books including Only in America. Golden was a national celebrity throughout the 1950s and 60s not only for his many best-selling books but for his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. He was a regular on national talk shows such as Face the Nation, The Tonight Show and the Today Show. So impressed with his actions and advocacy for African-Americans, that MLK pointed him out in his Letter from a Birmingham Jail as a white ally that “got it.”
- **Count Vincent de Rivafinoli:** Italian Aristocrat that came to the village of Charlotte in the 1830s to upgrade and operate the many budding gold mines in the region. Within months of his arrival he greatly improved the gold mining industry by implementing modern mining procedures and with the use of industrial innovations such as steam driven water pumps. His actions allowed the mines to go to great depths (100s of feet) and in turn produced great wealth. So impressive was the gold yield his implementations made possible, that the U.S. government located a branch of the U.S. Mint in Charlotte – quite a feat for a town of just over 700 people. Not only did the city’s “new golden age” distinguish Charlotte from the other villages in the Piedmont



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but set in motion the growth and development that helped make us the city we are today!

- **Julius Chambers** - Julius Chambers (1936 - 2013) came to Charlotte in 1964 and built one of the South's first interracial law firms, which became renowned for precedent-setting Civil Rights work of national impact. His most famous case in front of the U.S. Supreme Court was *Swann v Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools*, the 1971 landmark decision which made busing for a racial balance part of school policy in localities across the United States. Among his other important victories were lawsuits that made it easier to sue against employment discrimination and that desegregated the workforce in Carolina textile mills. Chambers went on to head the national NAACP Legal Defense Fund and serve as Chancellor at North Carolina Central University, while always retaining strong ties to Charlotte.
  - *Stonewall Street*, now being considered for renaming, would be a particularly apt place to mark Chambers' legacy. In 1973 he developed *East Independence Plaza* office tower at 700 E. *Stonewall Street*, corner of *McDowell Street*, more recently known as *Walton Plaza* (see attached essays). *East Independence Plaza* was one of only a handful of Black-developed office towers anywhere in the United States in that era. Chambers' law firm occupied the top floor from 1973 to 1994. *Stonewall Street* also runs alongside the *Harvey Gantt Center for African American Art and Culture*, making it even more appropriate to consider giving the street an African American name.
- **King Hagler** (anglicized name - sometimes spelled Haigler) - Catawba "head man" or king from ca.1749 - 1763. Befriended first white settler in Mecklenburg County, *Thomas Spratt* (There is a statue of the two on Charlotte's Trail of History). King Hagler worked to achieve peace with rival Native American peoples and to negotiate land deals with white settlers. He supported the colonists and the British in The French and Indian War. King Hagler obtained agreement from the governors of North and South Carolina to recognize specific land for the Catawba. Hagler Drive exists in the Derita area of North Charlotte so King Hagler is suggested as name to be used if chosen.
- **Kelly Alexander Senior**: Pioneer in North Carolina's NAACP (August 18, 1915 – April 2, 1985) was Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and a civil rights activist. He was born in Charlotte, North Carolina to Zechariah and Louise Alexander. His father was the owner of the Alexander Funeral Home, the only black funeral home in Charlotte. He played football at Second Ward High School, becoming known as "Ship-wreck Kelly." Alexander studied at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and Renouard College of Embalming in New York City before returning to Charlotte to help run his father's business



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- **Annie Alexander:** First female to practice medicine in the South. In her 40-year career, she made her mark on the medical profession. She was elected in 1909 for the first of several terms as president of the Mecklenburg County Medical Society. She also served on the boards of both Saint Peter’s Hospital and Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte. She was active in the community, supporting civic organizations like the Charlotte YMCA and the Florence Crittenton Maternity Home. During World War I, Dr. Alexander received a commission with the Army and worked in the U.S. Health Service.
- **Elizabeth “Libby” Randolph:** Played a leading role in starting CMS kindergarten and rose to become Associate Superintendent during the implementation of busing. Elizabeth “Libby” Randolph was Principal at University Park Elementary. During the 1960s as a CMS administrator she launched kindergarten classes across the school district. She rose to become Assistant Superintendent in the 1970s, the first African American female in top administration, and was named WBT Woman of the Year — the city’s highest honor. The main building of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools administrative campus is named in her memory.
- **Elizabeth “Liz” Hair:** Hair was the first woman elected to the Mecklenburg County Commission. She helped create the county’s first affirmative action plan, the Charlotte Women’s Political Caucus and the Mecklenburg County Democratic Women’s Club.
- **Gladys Tillett:** Tillett was a leader of Suffrage efforts statewide in the 1920s and served as a US Delegate to the UN in the 1940s. Beginning in the 1930s, Mrs. Tillett held numerous positions in the Democratic party and in 1936 was director of the Speakers Bureau of the Women's Division of the Democratic National Committee—a post she held again in 1940. In 1943 she became the first woman to be named assistant to the chairman of the Democratic National Convention. The next year she became the first woman to address the convention, and she returned to address it again in 1948.

### Opportunities for Future Commemoration

**To achieve the City’s 21<sup>st</sup> century vision, future commemoration must be rooted in a firm commitment to truth, education, and inclusion. An understanding of Charlotte’s history is essential to addressing contemporary challenges and should inform the ways in which we rectify persistent racial inequality.**



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*The Commission recommends that the City educate residents about Charlotte's ties to slavery, the Confederacy, and white supremacy, and how the legacy of slavery and segregation continue to impact people's lives and shape the community today. The Commission recommends the following programming:*

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- Offer presentations about this history to elected officials and staff of the City, County and Charlotte Mecklenburg School.
- Provide educational materials about this history to CMS and other local schools.
- Post online resources about this history, which will be available and accessible to all who are interested.

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*The Commission recommends that the City reimagine its commemorative landscape to align with the values and diversity of today's Charlotte:*

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- Provide context for the Confederate monuments and markers in Elmwood Cemetery.
- Create commemorative spaces across the city that feature Charlotteans of all backgrounds who advocated for positive change.
- Connect with and support the efforts of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Remembrance Commission to install a memorial from the National Memorial for Peace and Justice that commemorates the deaths of Joe McNeely and Willie McDaniel, the victims of the two documented lynchings in Charlotte.
- Create a wall with names of enslaved people who lived in Charlotte.

Such commemorative spaces would help residents deepen their understanding of Charlotte's full history, support public dialogue around past inequities and show how they shape present day realities, and begin to write a more inclusive narrative.



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*To support this work, the Commission recommends that the City of Charlotte apply for a grant from the Mellon Foundation's Monuments Project.*

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The largest humanities philanthropy in the United States, the Mellon Foundation has pledged to spend \$250 million over five years “to help reimagine the country’s approach to monuments and memorials, in an effort to better reflect the nation’s diversity and highlight those who have often been denied historical recognition.” The Foundation’s Monuments Project will support the creation of new monuments, memorials, or historic storytelling spaces, contextualize existing monuments or memorials through installations, research, and education, and relocate existing monuments or memorials.

### **Conclusion**

Like other cities across the country, Charlotte is reckoning with the lingering impact of past inequality and injustice. The Legacy Commission supports the City’s ongoing work to realize a new inclusive vision. It urges the City to offer programming that explains the historical roots of today’s inequities and to develop policies that dismantle the cumulative effects of systemic racial and economic discrimination grounded in history. By breaking down past barriers and instituting new policies that offer fairness, access and opportunity, the City will create a more equitable and just future for all residents.

By changing street names and reimagining civic spaces, Charlotte will begin to create a new symbolic landscape representative of the dynamic and diverse city it has become and reflective of the inclusive vision it strives to achieve.