

Buildings and Landmarks Review – Research Team Report November 13, 2020

Process

At the direction of the Advisory Team, the Research Team did a preliminary review of all named campus buildings and the Abraham Lincoln statue to determine the individual's public legacies, place them in historical context and consider them against the current mission, vision, and diversity and inclusion values of the university.

1. University archives staff worked to retrieve documents for the research team to review. This included the development of a research checklist to consistently review each individual against material available in the University Archives physical and digital collections along with publicly available information online. The review focused on the words and actions of the individual related to diversity and inclusion topics.
2. A rough biography of the individual was compiled to put their life and work in context and to understand their public legacy, past and present. This included why the building was named after them. Relevant items were scanned or linked in the research checklist and biography.
3. Two members of the Research Team reviewed the compiled files for each of the namesakes. Each namesake was then discussed at a Team meeting. The research questions were considered to determine if change should be recommended for any of the buildings and landmarks reviewed.
4. The Research Team was originally asked to also review the named outdoor spaces and campus landmarks, but time did not allow for this additional research. The Abraham Lincoln statue was included because it is known to be an issue for some Indigenous students.

Review

The Research Team researched and reviewed 23 buildings and one landmark in the fall of 2020.

Below is a chart that very briefly documents what was reviewed, why individuals were recognized, and if the Research Team identified concerns. All compiled research material and meeting notes are available upon request.

Minor concerns – An action or statement was identified that does not reflect current University values but based on current information and the research questions posed it does not indicate that change is needed at this time. These are indicated with a footnote, so the minor concern is documented. No further action is recommended unless new information is identified.

Major concerns – An action(s) and/or statement(s) was identified that does not reflect current University values and the research questions posed indicate significant concerns. These are specifically addressed following the chart.

At this time, the Abraham Lincoln statue was identified as the only major concern and change is recommended.

Name of Building or Landmark	Individual(s) Researched	University Affiliation	Reason for Recognition	Concerns
Abraham Lincoln Statue	Abraham Lincoln	None	President of United States; Donated in 1925 by recent graduating classes	Major concern; change is recommended
Andreas Observatory	Lowell and Nadine Andreas	Community member	Donor; Friend of University	None at this time.
Andreas Theatre	Lowell and Nadine Andreas	Community member	Donor; Friend of University	None at this time.
Armstrong Hall	Grace Armstrong	Faculty; Administrator	Outstanding years of service	None at this time.
Blakeslee Field	C.P. Blakeslee	Coach; Faculty	Outstanding years of service	None at this time.
Carkoski Commons	Chester A. Carkoski	Administrator	Outstanding years of service	None at this time.
Crawford Residence Community	Clarence L. Crawford	President	Outstanding years of service	Minor concern at this time. ¹
Earle J. Wigley Administration Building	Earle Wigley	Faculty; Coach	Outstanding years of service	Minor concern at this time. ²
Earley Center for Performing Arts	Jane Earley	Faculty; Administrator	Outstanding years of service	None at this time.
Ford Hall	Leonard A. Ford	Faculty; Administrator	Outstanding years of service	Minor concern at this time. ³
Julia A. Sears Residence Community	Julia Sears	Principal	Recognition as early female Principal of the institution	None at this time.
Margaret R. Preska Residence Community	Margaret Preska	President	Outstanding years of service	None at this time.
McElroy Residence Community	Frank D. McElroy	President	Outstanding years of service	None at this time.
Morris Hall	Albert B. Morris	Faculty; Administrator	Outstanding years of service	None at this time.

¹ Crawford in at least one speech did not think that discrimination against women was an issue. He did have women in leadership at that time. No other related information found.

² Wigley made a comment in the 1970s related to the mascot change that reflected insensitivity to minority groups. No other related information found.

³ Ford served as a Captain in the Army Reserves and served prior to and into WWII in the area of chemical weapons. No details about his service were found. This mostly left questions about the possible impact of his work.

Name of Building or Landmark	Individual(s) Researched	University Affiliation	Reason for Recognition	Concerns
Myers Field House	Earl "Bud" Myers	Coach; Faculty	Outstanding years of service	None at this time.
Nelson Hall	Maurice Nelson	Faculty; Administrator	Outstanding years of service	None at this time.
Otto Recreation Center	James Robert "Bob" Otto	Coach; Administrator	Outstanding years of service	None at this time.
Pennington Hall	Charles Pennington	Alumni	Donor; Friend of University	None at this time.
Standeford Observatory	Leo V. Standeford	Faculty	Establishing Astronomy program	None at this time.
Taylor Center	Glen Taylor	Alumni	Donor; Friend of University	Minor concern at this time. ⁴
Trafton Science Center	Gilbert Trafton	Faculty	Outstanding years of service; pre-eminent scientist	None at this time.
Wiecking Center	Anna Wiecking; Emma Wiecking	Faculty; Staff	Outstanding years of service	Minor concern at this time. ⁵
Wissink Hall	Gerrit M. Wissink	Faculty; Administrator	Outstanding years of service	None at this time.

Concerns:

Abraham Lincoln statue in the Centennial Student Union:

- Abraham Lincoln has a divided public legacy.⁶ This is also true at our University. African American students at Minnesota State University, Mankato acknowledged Lincoln’s achievements and shortcomings in November 2019 and discussed the importance of sharing a “fuller story” of his legacy. Indigenous students at that meeting agreed after the group heard the words of Dakota men who had been pardoned by Lincoln in 1862.⁷
- Lincoln’s legacy is currently being contested in other states. In late June 2020, students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison called for the removal the Lincoln on their campus based on allegations that he was racist. In October 2020, the Student Government voted to remove the statue because Lincoln was “not pro-Black,” while the

⁴ One of Taylor’s subsidiary companies had a sexual harassment suit filed against it. Taylor himself was not implicated in the news articles.

⁵ Anna and Emma Wiecking both helped organize the Colonial Ball at least once in the 1930s. At that event some students wore blackface as “negros.” The depth of the Wiecking sisters’ involvement is unclear.

⁶ Richard Striner, “[Introduction](#),” in *Lincoln and Race*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2012), p. I. and Abraham Lincoln, “[Fourth Debate with Stephen A. Douglas at Charleston, Illinois, Sept. 18, 1858](#),” in *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy P. Basler (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1954), III, 145–46.

⁷ Documented by meeting attendee Gwen Westerman, 2019

administration maintains that the statue will remain. In October 2020, Portland, Oregon saw statues of Lincoln and Roosevelt torn down because of their treatment of Indigenous people.⁸

- The current location of the Lincoln statue and lack of interpretive material at Minnesota State University, Mankato do not sufficiently foster “inclusiveness, understanding, acceptance, and respect in a multicultural society” as outlined by System diversity and inclusion goals. Because of Lincoln’s order to execute 38 Dakota men in 1862, some Indigenous students and allies regularly request that the statue be moved from the Centennial Student Union. A larger group of students of color would like to consider developing different educational materials reflective of Lincoln’s complex legacy to accompany the statue wherever it is located.⁹
- Lincoln’s actions toward the Dakota people who surrendered in 1862 have significant impact in Mankato, our state, and our region. A more complete representation of the history and Lincoln’s involvement in it, as suggested by the students, may be required. His legacy impacts students, employees, and campus guests who pass the statue every day because of its prominent location, many of whom are unfamiliar with this history.

⁸ Kelly Meyerhofer, “UW-Madison Students Call for Removal of Abraham Lincoln Statue on Bascom Hill,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, June 26, 2020, https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/education/university/uw-madison-students-call-for-removal-of-abraham-lincoln-statue-on-bascom-hill/article_b12c83c9-38a1-5e68-9964-beabe4046d02.html and Mike Baker, "Protesters in Portland Topple Statues of Lincoln and Roosevelt," *New York Times*, October 12, 2020, <http://ezproxy.mnsu.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/docview/2450034128?accountid=12259>.

⁹ Documented in Student Union Board minutes from 2016 and 2018 and from a meeting attended by Gwen Westerman in November 2019.