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OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF BLACK LAWYERS

Re: Removal of Confederate Monuments Located at North Carolina Courthouses

April 6, 2021

A key goal of the North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers (NCABL) is the promotion of justice and equality for the Black North Carolina community. Confederate monuments positioned on courthouse lawns are offensive to the dignity of Black people and to the guarantees in our federal and state constitutions. They further serve as an affront to the very centers of justice to which they decorate.

In North Carolina, the vast majority of these monuments were erected between 1890 and 1920. This is the same period that many white North Carolinians were engaged in a well-orchestrated and brutal campaign to strip Black people of every constitutional and statutory right they had been afforded during Reconstruction. The primary purpose of these monuments was not to honor the Confederate dead but to celebrate white supremacy in the then-present and to ensure that its legacy would endure. A corollary purpose was the intimidation of the Black community, which explains why so many were placed in the courthouse square. Such intimidation tactics in places designated for the exercise of basic rights were later mirrored in efforts to stop the Black vote.

We agree with the National Consortium On Racial And Ethnic Fairness In The Courts that "symbols of inhumanity positioned outside courthouses and centers of government power are a constant reminder of prejudice and racism against Black and Brown people, and therefore are inherently incompatible with a judiciary that should be dedicated to the constitutional assurance of justice and equality under the law."

On February 14, 2021, the North Carolina Commission On Racial And Ethnic Disparities in the Criminal Justice System (NC CRED) launched a campaign to remove Confederate monuments from courtyards across the State of North Carolina. The North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers supports and stands in solidarity with this campaign and commits to partnering with this effort and others to bring dignity to this State and its Black citizens by the removal of these monuments.

Sincerely,

Nana Asante-Smith
President, North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers