

June 8, 2021



OCCRC's Support of NC CRED's Campaign to Remove Confederate Monuments

The Orange County Community Remembrance Coalition (OCCRC) is a group of dedicated organizations and individuals who are working together to engage with our community to raise the collective consciousness about our local and national history – a history that includes racial terrorism and the ongoing legacy of slavery, lynching and racial segregation and their myriad and persistent impact in all aspects of our lives. The primary mission of OCCRC, in collaboration with the Equal Justice Initiative of Montgomery, AL, is to recognize Manly McCauley and other victims of racial terror lynching in Orange County, NC.

The work of OCCRC is to engage in truth telling and to disrupt and overcome the detrimental systems and mindsets that have plagued America for generations, and to help usher forth a future of humanity, equity and justice for all people. It is with this commitment to truth telling and disruption that OCCRC enthusiastically supports the campaign by the North Carolina Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities to remove Confederate monuments from the courthouses of this State.

The legacy of the Confederacy, as told and retold throughout this country since 1865, is antithetical to truth telling. The Confederate monuments that both mark and celebrate the named and unnamed individuals who took up arms against the United States of America are an affront to America and its values. The secession by the Confederate States of America in 1861 was an act of treason. By definition treason is a crime of betrayal against one's country. The Confederacy took up arms against its own government and formed a new one to fight against the United States of America. The Confederate States of America had a singular purpose – the formation of a different country, one in which the ownership of human beings remained legal. From the very beginning, the Confederacy was comprised of people and forces that rejected the United States of America.

Since Robert E. Lee's surrender at the Appomattox Court House in 1865, our country has been awash in Confederate story-telling and false narratives that have consumed this nation. However, the Confederate flag and the monuments to the Confederacy remain treasonous today and representative of those who disavowed their American citizenship.

We are a nation of laws. We have organized our society around the promises of an imperfect Constitution. America is a continuing experiment. We are not our full self yet. We are still growing and learning and changing. And today, the very fact that citizens who avail themselves before a North Carolina court of law to participate in the legal system and to seek a remedy, must first be confronted by a statue memorializing the Confederacy is a mockery to the rule of law and justice before the law.

Our nation's history is dark and painful, but our present promises hope if we work towards a more perfect union. That work must start with truth telling and disruption. The removal of the Confederate monuments on the grounds of the North Carolina courts is one step, among many, that must take place to honor all Americans. The Confederate States of America has no place in the United States of America.