

A Message from the President

It has been nearly six years since the unjust and unlawful removal of all of the Confederate Monuments from Richmond Virginia. At the time this progressive partisan legislation was passed, guidelines and an application process was put in place that would provide historical organizations or battlefields the opportunity to take possession of the statues and move them to locations where they would be appreciated and cared for. With the help of Jeb's descendants, the JEB Stuart Birthplace Trust gathered donations and put a plan in place to have the Stuart Monument moved to Laurel Hill. Many organizations also made applications to acquire the other statues that were taken down. The process was followed by the Trust to the letter, at no cost to the city of Richmond. We, along with all the other applicants were promptly ignored and every statue and historic marker was given to the Black History Museum in Richmond, an organization that did not apply for them. Not willing to give up, a proposal was put together and delivered to the museum by a Stuart family member offering a partnership with the Stuart Monument and requesting a meeting, or at least start a dialogue. That was nearly two years ago, we received no response. It appears that the powers that be in the City of Richmond have no intention of allowing legitimate historical organizations to acquire these monuments. When one reads the comments of city officials and leaders of the Black History Museum and couple that with the mockery of a display of the damaged Jefferson Davis Statue by the Valentine Museum, plus the destructive actions taken by the City of Charlottesville it would hard not to come to that conclusion. As most of you know the Lee Monument in Charlottesville was melted down and destroyed. This destruction was posted online, some called it a public execution. The Jackson Monument from Charlottesville was shipped off to the Museum of Contemporary Art in California, cut into pieces and reattached in a grotesque, vindictive manner. It, along with other Confederate Statues are on display in a negative display at the MOCA. Today, all of the statues from Richmond along with the damaged pieces of their pedestals lie on the ground at a wastewater treatment plant in Richmond. The Black History Museum has a survey on their website wanting thoughts on the future of these statues. In reality, there is no plan other than allowing these historic works of art to be forgotten and eventually melted down or sold for scrap. The historical integrity of Monument Avenue has been destroyed. The claim that the Avenue will be "re-imaged", appears will not take place. We are told as a society we need to be more inclusive and diverse. From a historical perspective that would be ideal. We need more monuments and interpretive signs that tell of all our collective history, not tear down the ones we have for political

and ideological reasons. Monument Avenue could have been the showcase for the Country. There could have been statues to many prominent Virginians, men and woman, black, white, Native American that could have told the complete history of this great Commonwealth. You cannot claim to be inclusive and diverse and remove and destroy the history of one group of people to pacify the feelings of another. That is selective history. History should out there to reflect upon, to debate and learn from, not torn down hidden away or destroyed. Politicians now use history as a pawn in this climate of identity politics. Our elected officials can no longer be counted on to vote the will of the people on our history, heritage and culture. Make no mistake, this monument removal cancel culture nonsense runs much deeper than Confederate statues. Look at the removal of the Lewis and Clark and the George Rogers Clark statues in Charlottesville and numerous others around the country. Nothing shows this more than the disgraceful actions of the villains on the so called naming commission in the taking down of the Reconciliation Monument from the Confederate section of Arlington National Cemetery. It is now up to us, those who appreciate, understand and accept the complexities of American History. Many individuals and groups such as defendarlington.org are pushing back and taking up the standard to preserve our history and culture. There has been some progress. The Arlington Monument has been ordered by the President to be restored. Other monuments have been saved and moved to other locations. I urge you to get involved. One such group is the Virginia Council. The mission of this organization which was formed in the spring of 2021 after two years of divisive and destructive actions across Virginia is to take action to save the State's monuments and historic sites. The JEB Stuart Birthplace Preservation Trust supports the efforts of this fine group of people. To preserve history, advance prosperity for all Virginians please contact thevirginaCouncil.org, donate and get involved. "History is not there for you to like or dislike, it is there for you to learn from it, and if it offends you, even better, because you are less likely to repeat it. It is not yours to erase, it belongs to all of us."

Ronnie S. Haynes

President JEB Stuart Birthplace Preservation Trust