



**MURFREESBORO BRANCH
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION for the ADVANCEMENT
of COLORED PEOPLE**

OFFICIAL POSITION STATEMENT

FORREST HALL TASK FORCE

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The Murfreesboro Branch of the NAACP takes the position that the university should have the name of Forrest Hall changed. The membership agrees that a building representing the Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest should not be on any university campus building.

In 1968, I had been a student during the time of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s death and had been a part of the protest to remove the emblem of the Confederate General Forrest on the horse from the University Center wall led by Sylvester Brooks. Furthermore, the students were concerned about the image that was being portrayed around the campus in sports and as well as the mascot with the Raider outfit and horse.

In the 1960s, more African American students were beginning to attend the university following the opening in 1962 as well as to other International students. The first African American female, Mrs. Olivia Woods, who attended in 1962 is still residing in Rutherford County at the age of 95 and a member of Allen Chapel AME Church.

Middle Tennessee State University opened its doors to minorities prior to forced integration by the Rutherford County Schools. In 1968, downtown Murfreesboro had public businesses with the White Only/Colored Only signs posted to separate the races in waiting rooms, restrooms and water foundations. The young adults of the Murfreesboro community and the MTSU students began to protest businesses in the late 1960s and early 1970s following the sitting-ins in Nashville.

Special thank you was given to Coach Dean Hayes, MTSU Track Coach, who reached out to the Murfreesboro community by giving a scholarship to Robert Mallard for track, who attended Holloway High School. Coach Hayes solicited International students as well to come to Middle Tennessee State University. The university was changing and more minorities were willing to come to Murfreesboro for academics and to play sports.

More students voiced their concerns then, and the university made major changes in its mascot over the years because of the diverse campus. I had an opportunity to work with students in Social Work and the Murfreesboro community from 1976-78 for hands-on experiences with social issues and how to resolve them.

When we, as African Americans think of the name of Nathan Bedford Forrest, Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), and how he massacred and murdered people of color at Fort Pillow in West Tennessee, which included men, women and children his name should not be honored at this institution of higher learning.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) stands with the students, faculty, staff, alumni and the community with changing the name of Forrest Hall. The NAACP and the AME Church are partners in the fight for equal justice for all regardless of their race or national origin.

On June 17 of 2015, Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina lost nine members of their congregation because the young man wanted a “Race Riot.” Praises to God, family members of the deceased showed him their true hearts by saying “we forgive you.” As a member of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, I had an opportunity to travel to Charleston, South Carolina last

year and met some of the relatives. In my conversations, we observed that this young man passed over 100 churches from his home to get to Mother Emanuel AME Church during a Wednesday Bible Study.

His hate for a race of people different from his own causes all of us to rethink what we are allowing to continue here at Middle Tennessee State University. We are trying not to relive those dark days, but to learn from them and move forward as one for all regardless of race or national origin.

For those individuals who are not aware, Mother Emanuel AME Church is the oldest AME Church in the South. Its history has housed all civil rights leaders who have fought for changes in legislation to include better treatment for all people regardless of race and national origin.

South Carolina State Legislators and the Governor came together to remove their Confederate Flag from the state property and placed it in a museum because of the photos of the young man with the confederate flag. The pastor of Mother Emanuel AME Church then, Senator Pinckney, was a member of the South Carolina State Senate.

We, NAACP would like the Forrest Hall Task Force Committee to consider the request of the faculty, staff, students and alumni as well as the community to move forward by placing the name of Nathan Bedford Forrest and his military experiences in a museum or with the Center for Historic Preservation.