

Talented Tenth Activist Student Coalition

Change the Name

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On behalf of the MTSU Talented Tenth Student Activist Coalition, we feel that is highly inappropriate to glorify a man that has been infamously known for his general tactics in the Civil War. We stand in our decision and we demand that the name of the military building be changed. The naming of the military building came about in retaliation to the Brown vs. Board of education case. The name change happened in 1958, 55 years ago. It's time that the university renames the building to someone from a newer era that also embraces diversity. Nathan Bedford Forrest was nothing more of a serial killer murdering anyone that wasn't Anglo-Saxon- particularly blacks. He would not have supported the idea of integrating this university and it's disgusting the university and the community has kept him on the building for all these years.

General Nathan Bedford Forrest was not only the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, but he also leaded one the most bloodiest battles of the civil war at Fort Pillow, Henning, Tennessee. ⁱOn April 24, 1864, both union and confederate soldiers recalled it as being a "massacre" of the union soldiers. However, it wasn't the battle that was gruesome, ⁱⁱit was the aftermath. Forrest ordered his men to show no mercy. A soldier recalled in a letter saying, ⁱⁱⁱ"Negroes would run up to our men, fall upon their knees and with uplifted hands scream for mercy but they were ordered to their feet and

then shot down...Forrest ordered them shot down like dogs." In addition to that, union soldiers were crucified being nailed to their tents and set on fire. After Forrest was under questioning for his actions, one of his defenses were, his men were out of control and he had no control of that- but they celebrated the "victory" first. In all, 64% of blacks and 33% whites were massacred that day.

This battle is just one of the few of the horrendous things that he has done, especially to the minority community. Living in this day and era, how is it possible to have someone with such negative connotations on our campus? According to our university, ^{iv}True Blue is embodying the core values of engagement in the community, committing to reason and not violence, honesty and integrity and RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY. Having Nathan Bedford Forrest on our diverse campus, doesn't represent the ^v29.7% of the minority students here. If the university and community thought of Forrest so highly, then why can't the building be shown on tour guides?

^{vi}Three presidents have come from Tennessee: Andrew Jackson, Andrew Johnson, and James Polk. There are approximately 36 monuments/ recognitions in Tennessee of Nathan Bedford Forrest and that is far more than anyone in the US. We have to stop living in the past and focus on the now and the future. If preserving history is the issue then put his history and "legacy" in a book like everyone else. This man doesn't deserve

so much praise- especially when most of his reputation was made blood, massacres, and war. If MTSU is so diverse and respectful of their students, prove it.

ⁱ James Loewen, *Lies Told Across America*. (pg.250)

ⁱⁱ Pg.250

ⁱⁱⁱ Pg.251

^{iv} MTSU True Blue Pledge

^v MTSU Fall 2015 Census Report (www.mtsu.edu/iepr/.php)

^{vi} The Tennessee State Museum (www.tn4me.org)