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What a Name Stands For: Stanley Porteus

KAYLEE MIKI



Honors 101 (Introduction to Research and Creative Work at Mānoa)

Mentor: 'Ilima Long

Social views on the relationship between psychology and race have evolved worldwide and in Hawai'i, since the time of Stanley Porteus, who researched during the height of the eugenics movement. In 1974, the University of Hawai'i named a building after Dr. Porteus to honor his achievements in the field of psychology. Research through the University's archives and original copies of his works will be analyzed. Using these original works and documents, this paper will first evaluate why his contributions to the field of psychology were significant enough to justify the decision of the Board of Regents to name a building after him. The paper will then analyze how changing views in the 1990s on psychology and race fueled the backlash against the naming of Porteus Hall. Newspaper clippings from the period and the original documents outlining the naming and renaming of Porteus Hall will be evaluated. The unique setting of the University as an academic institution that has a culturally diverse student and faculty body in Hawai'i will be considered to evaluate why the building was renamed in 1998. The conclusion demonstrates that while Dr. Porteus made impactful academic contributions to the field of psychology, ultimately, the views he expressed, though in line with his time, were derogatory and critical of the ethnic minorities that make up a large portion of the University's population, and a building at the University should not be named after him.

Introduction

The field of psychology has often been plagued with research that is now considered false and derogatory but was once viewed as significant and even ground-breaking. As society develops, accepted societal views and perspectives change. When reflecting on history and the impacts of those who researched in a different time, it is necessary to evaluate it

with the lens of the time along with the perspective of society today.

The building now known as Saunders Hall at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa initially held the name Porteus Hall in honor of Dr. Stanley Porteus, a former professor at the University of Hawai'i famous for his work in psychology. By the ethical standards set today, his work outlining the qualities of minority races that earned him fame and recognition in the 1930s through the 1950s is now considered demeaning toward



I am a freshman majoring in Finance and International Business at the University of Hawai'i with the aim of going to law school and working in the realm of public policy. This research paper was written for my HON 101 class instructed by 'Ilima Long. While not a typical topic for a business major, my passion for it grew as I dove deeper into the research. As a researcher, I learned how to use the University Archives and how to manage researching, analyzing, and writing, solely using primary sources, something I never did before. Through the process, I discovered that learning at a university level is not about being boxed into your chosen area of study, but rather, exploring different avenues and allowing your curiosity to thrive.

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those races. Extensive research was conducted in the University of Hawai'i's archives to complete this evaluation of Dr. Porteus and the University's decision to name a building after him.

While Dr. Porteus significantly contributed to the field of psychology during his career, the University of Hawai'i Board of Regent's decision to name the social science building after him was inappropriate because as a university that is home to an ethnically diverse student body, and as an institution that is situated in indigenous lands, it has a responsibility to first, and foremost, uphold a model that represents and respects its students and community. The lack of awareness the University had for the larger community it impacts through whom they name buildings after raises the question of how institutions and organizations across the country choose to commemorate people who, although not recognized because of their beliefs, still held and supported racist positions.

Recommendations to Name New Building Porteus Hall 1969–1974

When naming a building at the University, there is a set of policies that the Board of Regents must follow. In naming Porteus Hall, there were sections of Section 19-13 of the policy that were relevant: Section (a) and Section (c). Section (a) of the policy outlines the qualifications of a person who campus facilities can be named after. It states that "facilities of the University may be named for a person: (1) who was actively connected with the University after a period of five years have elapsed after his retirement, severance of active connection with the University, or death, or (2) who had made a significant financial contribution to the University."¹ In Section (c) it sets additional guidelines that a professor whom a building is to be named after must be "distinguished" or "have made significant contributions to the [University's] academic and cultural life."² The Social Science building was named after Dr. Porteus in 1974, and although Dr. Porteus died in 1972, the five year waiting period in Section (a) was met because he retired in 1948.³ However, whether or not Dr. Porteus met the requirements for Section (c) could be debated, hence the controversy surrounding the naming of Porteus Hall.

1 Typescript of "Amendment to Policy Statement on Naming of Campus Improvements," 1972, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

2 Correspondence from Sylvia Yuen to Dean O. Smith "Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Porteus Hall," 25 May 1998, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

3 Elizabeth Dole Porteus, *Let's Go Exploring: The Life of Stanley D. Porteus*. (Honolulu: Ku Pa'a Inc., 1991), 97.

George Chaplin, then editor of the Honolulu Advertiser, was the first person to suggest that the Board name the then new Social Science building after Dr. Porteus to honor his contributions to the field of psychology. On February 28, 1969, Chaplin sent a letter to the Chairman of the Board, Robert Cushing, outlining his reasons for the suggestion. He wrote about the "international fame" Dr. Porteus achieved for his Maze Tests that got him an invitation to "direct research at the Vineland (N.J.) Training School, then a world leader in the field of mental testing and the study of the mentally retarded."⁴ In terms of his contribution to the University of Hawai'i, Chaplin spoke of how the University at the time had a faculty of only 60 men of professorial rank with a "few outstanding men caught, like Dr. Porteus."⁵ To emphasize his national reputation, Chaplin went on to say how Dr. Porteus was "one of 23 experts on the subject [of lobotomy] from all over U.S.A. summoned to Columbia University in 1951 for consultation and conference."⁶ In addition, over his entire career, Dr. Porteus had published 20 books, several important monographs, and 80 scientific articles making him a well-published researcher.⁷ Due to Dr. Porteus's local, national, and international accomplishments, Chaplin claimed he was a man deserving of the high honor of having a building named after him.

The Maze Test that garnered Dr. Porteus so much attention is a mostly non-verbal intelligence test. Dr. Porteus developed this test to assess the planning capacity of a person in a restricted situation and based it on the idea that planning is a key element of intelligent behavior. He conducted several studies where the Maze Test served to differentiate between individuals with higher and lower intellect.⁸ There are three versions of the Maze Test: the Vineland revision, the Extension, and the Supplement. The Vineland revision, the original test, consists of twelve unique maze designs of increasing difficulty. Administrators instruct participants to complete the mazes by using a pencil to draw a line from the starting point to the endpoint of the maze without lifting the pencil, crossing or bumping into lines, or entering dead ends or blocked alleys. Participants are evaluated using the Test Age (TA) and Quantitative Score (Q-Score). TA is calculated by looking at the highest level of maze completed and the number of trials taken to complete each level. The Q-Score takes into account the errors

4 George Chaplin, "Letter to Robert Cushing," *The Honolulu Advertiser* (Honolulu, HI), 28 February 1969, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i (hereafter cited as Chaplin, University Archives).

5 Chaplin, University Archives.

6 Chaplin, University Archives.

7 Chaplin, University Archives.

8 Catherine Tuvblad et al. "Heritability and Longitudinal Stability of Planning and Behavioral Disinhibition Based on the Porteus Maze Test." *Behavior Genetics* 47, no. 2 (March 2017), 164.

in style and strategy, including crossing lines, cutting corners, going in the wrong direction, drawing a wavy line, and lifting the pencil; the higher the Q-Score, the lower the quality of performance the participant had.⁹ While during this time other intelligence tests existed, like the Stanford-Binet intelligence test, the Porteus Maze Test gave psychologist a simple way to evaluate motor intelligence.

The accomplishments and honors included in Chaplin's letter only touched the surface of the recognition Dr. Porteus received locally, nationally, and internationally. In 1939, Dr. Porteus received the honor of a nomination as a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts of England to award "the distinguished work" he had done with "racial psychology and mental tests."¹⁰ Years later in 1955, he was named among the "most important contributors in the field of clinical psychology" by the American Psychological Association. Only 14 people were chosen from around the world, and Dr. Porteus was the only Australian selected.¹¹ The Maze Test that he is so famous for was declared by the former president of the American Psychological Association and editor of the *Journal of Consulting Psychology* in 1950 as being "one of the great original contributions to psychometry of the first half of the century."¹²

Although Chaplin sent his letter in 1969, the recommendation did not receive serious attention until 1972, when Professor William Lebra, then the Director of the Social Sciences Research Institution and a Professor of Anthropology, recommended the building be named after Dr. Porteus.¹³ Dr. Lebra chaired a faculty committee given the responsibility to suggest names for new buildings. In late 1972, the recommendation reached the Manoa Campus Naming Policy Committee, a campus-wide committee composed of faculty and administration. This committee unanimously endorsed Dr. Lebra's recommendation and it went to the Manoa Chancellor at the time, Dr. Wytze Gorter. After construction began in 1973, Dr. Gorter asked the committee to review their decision.¹⁴ On April 19, 1974, the Chairman of the Campus Naming Policy Committee, Frederick Y. Smith, sent a response to the Chancellor saying "the committee so recommends" the building be named after

Dr. Porteus who "as a distinguished faculty member" of the University "made significant contributions to the academic life of the University."¹⁵ After this memo was received, the Chancellor approved the recommendation, and it went to the Acting President, Fujio Matsuda, who then submitted it to the Board of Regents. In July of 1974, the Board of Regents approved the recommendation.¹⁶ The recommendation passed through the different levels of the University's authority with little opposition.

Opposition to Naming Porteus Hall 1974

It was only when the information became public that the decision to name a building after Dr. Porteus received obvious opposition. In the Fall of 1974, after the decision to name the building Porteus Hall was released, the "Coalition to Rename Porteus Hall" was formed by students and faculty who believed he "promoted racist views which were detrimental to society, and that, therefore, the name of Porteus ought not to be given to the building."¹⁷ Members of this coalition included Robert S. Cahill of the Department of Political Science and Danny Steinberg of the Department of English as a Second Language who were both vocal opponents. In December 1974, a subcommittee of the Board met with 60 members of the Coalition to Rename Porteus Hall. At its conclusion, the students "requested that the Committee hold a public hearing to enable 'full and open discussions on the issue.'"¹⁸ The Regents agreed to it and held a public hearing on April 23, 1975.¹⁹

At this hearing, Professor Cahill provided testimony against the naming of the building. He started by introducing the issue of racism. He claimed it was relevant because, he said, "much of the published work of Dr. Porteus seems to many of us—certainly to me—to represent little more than the political ideology of white supremacy dressed up in the legiti-

9 Tuvblad et al., 165.

10 "Porteus Is Honored by British Society," *Star Bulletin*, 23 January 1939, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

11 "Dr. Porteus Rated Among Leaders in Special Field," *Star Bulletin*, 4 February 1955, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

12 "New Science Discovery to List S. D. Porteus," *Star Bulletin*, 20 November 1964, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

13 Correspondence from Sylvia Yuen to Dean O. Smith, 8.

14 Correspondence from Sylvia Yuen to Dean O. Smith, 8.

15 Letter from Frederick Y. Smith to Chancellor Wytze Gorter, April 19, 1974, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

16 Correspondence from Sylvia Yuen to Dean O. Smith, 10.

17 Jane Takahashi, "Building a Rainbow: A History of the Buildings and Grounds of the University of Hawai'i-Manoa Campus," *Hui O Students*, 1983, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

18 Minutes of the Regents' Subcommittee on Physical Facilities and Planning, 11 December 1974, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

19 President's Memorandum, Section Labeled: Porteus Hall, 15 May 1975, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 13.

mating garments of science.”²⁰ As mentioned in the previous section, Dr. Porteus was known for publishing an impressive number of works. Here Professor Cahill emphasized the content of these works, not just the sheer number. For example, *Temperament and Race* was one of Dr. Porteus’s most well-known works. In his testimony, Cahill pointed out how this book was “written to and for a white audience, even though it was written primarily about the non-white population of Hawai’i.”²¹ The University of Hawai’i is meant to be for the people of Hawai’i, and, as Cahill pointed out, naming a building after a man who stood for white supremacy and held racial views against the people of Hawai’i would be in complete disregard to the University’s place in its surrounding community.

People in support of Dr. Porteus have argued that his views expressed in *Temperament and Race* changed over time, but Professor Cahill provided evidence in his testimony that this was certainly not the case. Looking at Porteus’s autobiography published in 1969, Professor Cahill noted the contradictions Dr. Porteus made when evaluating his previous work. He misrepresented his earlier position on racial inheritance and environmental and cultural determinants of racial differences in test performance when writing about it in his autobiography and told the reader little about his position at the time of the autobiography.²² In this section of his testimony, Cahill asserted his stance that Porteus’s views on the differences in mental ability according to race had not changed as drastically as others claimed.

Danny Steinberg was another person who actively opposed the naming of Porteus Hall. He wrote a paper in February 1975 outlining Dr. Porteus’s views on different racial groups using quotes from Dr. Porteus’s own works. Steinberg broke down Dr. Porteus’s views according to the different ethnic groups to reveal to people the derogatory remarks he made about the majority of Hawai’i’s population. When writing about the indigenous people of his home country, Australia, Dr. Porteus said “the memory span of the aborigines for numbers was less than that of a six year old white child” and that this “deficiency of rote memory indicates an inability on the part of the aborigine to assimilate more than the rudiments of white education.”²³ He called the Hawaiians “interesting people” whose “worst defects” include “deficiency of planning capacity, extreme suggestibility, and instability of interest.”²⁴ In addition, he wrote that the crimes Hawaiians commit “are liable to be committed by a people not

wholly mature.”²⁵ He admired the Japanese in academia who were “industrious” and “frequently [made] excellent grades,” but condemned the Japanese culture, describing the people as “aggressive” and “unscrupulous.”²⁶ Steinberg used examples like these to show that the quality and quantity of Dr. Porteus’s data had little scientific basis. The degrading language Dr. Porteus used to evaluate the minority ethnicities in his studies indicated just how strongly he believed in his racist views.

Support for Naming Porteus Hall 1975

While many people protested the naming of Porteus Hall, during this conflict several people also voiced their support for naming the hall in honor of Dr. Porteus. One of these people was Ronald C. Johnson from the University’s Department of Psychology. After reading Dr. Steinberg’s critique of Dr. Porteus, Dr. Johnson felt he needed to respond to defend the professor in question.

In the response he submitted to President Fujio Matsuda, Dr. Johnson wrote not to reject the falsities in research that Dr. Steinberg pointed out in his paper, but rather, let it bring a level of understanding as to why Dr. Porteus interpreted the data the way he did and put into context Porteus’s viewpoint. Throughout the response, Dr. Johnson emphasized that studies on race differences in test scores exist[ed].²⁷ The views on race that Dr. Porteus held were not out of line with other researchers during his time. In response to Dr. Steinberg’s use of quotations from Dr. Porteus’s old publications, Dr. Johnson pointed out how it “is the nature of science” to have former publications “proven substantially incorrect” and that the man should not be judged for positions he took in the past that have since changed.²⁸ In addition, Dr. Johnson claimed that Dr. Steinberg took these quotes from Dr. Porteus’s work out of context.²⁹ Dr. Johnson explicitly said in this response multiple times that he “think[s] [Porteus] wrong on a variety of issues” and that he “disagree[s] with Porteus.”³⁰ While this response was in support of naming the building after Dr. Porteus, Dr. Johnson made clear he did not support Dr. Porteus’s work and beliefs in racial psychology. Those who stood in support of Dr. Porteus realized the views he held and the associations he made between behavior and race were wrong, but they valued the work he did. Many viewed

20 Robert S. Cahill, “Testimony to the Board of Regents,” 23 April 1975, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai’i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai’i (hereafter cited as Cahill, University Archives).

21 Cahill, University Archives, 2.

22 Cahill, University Archives, 9.

23 Danny Steinberg, *Stanley Porteus’ Views on Race*. (Honolulu, Hawai’i, 1975), 5.

24 Steinberg, 10.

25 Steinberg, 10.

26 Steinberg, 11.

27 Correspondence from Ronald Johnson to Dr. Fujio Matsuda, President of the University of Hawai’i, 1 April 1975, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai’i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai’i, 10.

28 Correspondence from Ronald Johnson to Dr. Fujio Matsuda, 13.

29 Correspondence from Ronald Johnson to Dr. Fujio Matsuda, 14.

30 Correspondence from Ronald Johnson to Dr. Fujio Matsuda, 14.

naming the building after him as not honoring the beliefs he held, but what he accomplished as a man and as a researcher.

In May 1975, the Board of Regents supported President Matsuda in his decision that Porteus Hall did not need to be renamed. Despite holding a public hearing in April, in the President's statement concerning Porteus Hall, he said that the decision not to rename the Hall was already approved. The hearing was "for the purpose of listening to [the Coalition's] concerns regarding the issues of racism and not for the purpose of reconsidering the naming of Porteus Hall."³¹ The Administration did not feel the need to take into consideration the voices of the community, but rather held the hearing only as a courtesy to them. In this same statement, the President said, "the Board feels that when it approved the naming of the social science building, 'Stanley David Porteus Hall,' [it] received positive recommendations from the Manoa Campus Naming Policy Committee and the Manoa Chancellor."³²

Renaming Porteus Hall 1997

The fight to rename Porteus Hall restarted in November 1997 when a student association staged mock hangings at the Hall to demand its renaming. This was the first public demonstration by the new coalition dubbed "Hana Hou Coalition." At the rally held on this same day, Associated Student of UH-Manoa (ASUH) President Mamo Kim said that it was time for President Kenneth Mortimer to hear the University community out on this issue.³³ She was not the only student or community member to speak out. Haunani-Kay Trask, then Director of Hawaiian Studies, addressed the crowd at the rally and pointed out how "astounding" it was that the University had a building "named after someone who supported a hierarchy of races, especially given the university's motto."³⁴ The University's motto is *Maluna a'e o nā lāhui a pau ke ola ke kanaka* meaning "above all nations is humanity."³⁵ Every person that steps onto campus is human. Despite the outward differences in eye color, skin color, age, and language, it is our humanness that connects us at the core, and that is what matters. While Dr. Porteus may have been a great scientist during his time, the importance of what the University stands for is reflected through the symbolic representations that the University associates itself with, like

the buildings on campus, the art it displays, and the organizations it receives support from. In naming a building after Dr. Porteus, the University was not condoning the racist thoughts Dr. Porteus expressed and the racial psychology he believed in.

The concerns surrounding the renaming of the building went beyond the University's walls and out into the community. Local newspapers published articles on the subject in addition to receiving and publishing a plethora of "Letters to the Editor" from people around the island and even from mainland America, both in support of the renaming and in opposition. The Honolulu Star Bulletin published a piece about how the University needed to rename Porteus Hall because the thinking Dr. Porteus represented was "inappropriate for modern-day commemoration" especially at a University that "strives to promote diversity and enlightenment."³⁶

The Star Bulletin published two contrasting pieces written by two people with different interests in this issue, Betty Porteus and David Stannard. Porteus spoke in defense of her father-in-law Dr. Porteus. She recounted the "compassionate way he treated his patients of all races" and how his work "represented significant first steps in the field."³⁷ While his reputation and name were falling under harsh scrutiny and criticism, Porteus aimed to humanize Dr. Porteus and portray him in a different light. In response to this piece, Stannard, a professor of American Studies at the University of Hawai'i, bluntly laid out Dr. Porteus's views on different races, his white supremacist opinion, and his work with eugenics, the ideology of "race improvement."³⁸ He argued that regardless of what the family of Dr. Porteus feels, the building must be renamed because those people the University honors in that way serve "as a public symbol of what the University stands for."³⁹ While Porteus focused on the interpersonal aspects of her father-in-law, Professor Stannard expressed his opinions on the matter based on the evidence found in Dr. Porteus's published work.

In 1997, the ASUH submitted a resolution to President Kenneth Mortimer requesting that Porteus Hall be renamed. To handle this case, the Vice President and Interim Executive Vice Chancellor Dean Smith set up an Ad Hoc committee. On this committee was a variety of different people from different communities in the University including two undergraduate stu-

31 President's Memorandum, Section Labeled: Porteus Hall, 13.

32 President's Memorandum, Section Labeled: Porteus Hall, 14.

33 Susan Miller, "What's in a Name," *Honolulu Weekly*, 2 December 1997, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

34 Steve Murray, "Students want hall renamed," *Ka Leo O Hawai'i* XCII Edition, 20 November 1997, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

35 "About UH Mānoa," *University of Hawai'i at Mānoa*, accessed April 19, 2020, <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/about/>.

36 John M. Flanagan, "Rename Porteus Hall," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 27 November 1997, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

37 Betty Porteus, "Renaming Porteus Hall would insult a great scientist," *Star Bulletin*, 6 December 1997, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

38 David Stannard, "Why Porteus Hall must be renamed," *Star Bulletin*, 12 December 1997, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai'i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

39 Stannard, University Archives.

dents, Malia Gibson and Tom (Pohaku) Stone.⁴⁰ Professor Sylvia Yuan was the Chairperson for this Committee.⁴¹ This committee was tasked with the responsibility to “analyze all aspects of the renaming proposition and to recommend appropriate action.”⁴² The Committee analyzed the legal issues, costs to the University, precedent that would be set if the committee so chose to recommend renaming Porteus Hall, the value of higher education outlined in the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Handbook of Accreditation, and most importantly they looked at the Mission of the University of Hawai‘i and what it meant. Along with fact finding, the Ad Hoc committee accepted testimonies from people around the island both in favor of renaming and in opposition. One of the many testimonies they received was from the ASUH President C. Mamo Kim who argued that the Board of Regents and Ad Hoc Committee needed to first and foremost “consider the welfare of the University” and “the feelings of the campus community: the students and the faculty” before “the feelings of Porteus’ family.”⁴³

The students who protested for the renaming of Porteus Hall were not aiming to “besmirch the memory of Professor Porteus” as a man from Waipahu suggested in his letter to the editor published by the *Star Bulletin*, but rather, they were prioritizing the needs of the University community over the individual family which is what the Board of Regents should have done in 1974.⁴⁴ The culture of the University should be the top priority for any one working there who has the power to set it. Buildings and the names they hold are symbols of what the University represents. Regardless of how outstanding a person’s achievements, it was the Boards responsibility to pick a person who properly represented the values of the University and its community. After hearing and reading through many other testimonies from groups like the Japanese American Citizens League, the Office for Women’s Research, and the Afro American Lawyers Association of Hawai‘i and thoroughly evaluating their fact-finding phase, the Ad Hoc Committee concluded that Porteus Hall should be renamed.⁴⁵

Conclusion

Institutions of higher learning represent their students, faculty, and surrounding community. Even though Stanley Porteus

40 Correspondence from Sylvia Yuen to Dean O. Smith, 2.

41 Correspondence from Sylvia Yuen to Dean O. Smith, 1.

42 Correspondence from Sylvia Yuen to Dean O. Smith, 2.

43 Correspondence from C. Mamo Kim to Board of Regents and the Porteus Ad Hoc Committee, 4 March 1998, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai‘i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai‘i.

44 John Kingsley, “Porteus is besmirched by hate-filled students,” *Star Bulletin*, 13 December 1997, A1998:002, Committee on the Renaming of Porteus Hall, University Archives at the University of Hawai‘i, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai‘i.

45 Correspondence from Sylvia Yuen to Dean O. Smith, 5.

made significant contributions to the field of psychology, the principles he stood for and his perspective of minority ethnic groups do not align with the University of Hawai‘i’s Mission as an institution and no longer align with socially and scientifically accepted values. His racist views against indigenous people undermine the goal of the University to be a place of higher education for people of all ethnicities and backgrounds, especially Hawaiians.

As insignificant as it may seem to some, the improper naming of the Social Science building at the University of Hawai‘i raises the question of how institutions, academic or not, honor people who they deemed to have made significant contributions to society and the community. For example, while Thomas Jefferson was one of the Founding Fathers who established the United States of America and served as President, he also owned hundreds of slaves in his lifetime, upholding the idea of white superiority. Across America there exist hundreds of schools and buildings named in his honor. At the University of Hawai‘i, there is Jefferson Hall. Should Jefferson Hall be renamed next? Yes, he played a critical role in establishing the United States, but he also owned slaves and held racist beliefs. While it was once a social norm, the practice of slavery is heavily condemned now.

As social norms shift and perspectives evolve, how are we reflecting these changes in the names plastered across building, streets, parks, airports, and more? What makes a person an important symbol? While it may seem silly and trivial to even think about renaming these places, names have power, and those people that institutions honor through naming buildings after them should stand for the principles and values that not only the institution holds and promotes, but also the greater community who is affected, directly or indirectly, by these seemingly small choices.

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