



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: Michael H. Schill, President
RE: Recommendation to rename Cedar Hall as Unthank Hall
DATE: May 23, 2017

At the start of this academic year, you made the decision to remove Frederick Dunn's name from a wing of the Hamilton Residence Hall and instructed me to come forward with a recommendation for a permanent name at the end of the year. That time is now upon us.

As you know, I wanted this to be an inclusive process. After developing a list of criteria in coordination with the Black Student Task Force, we then solicited nominations from students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members. Nineteen names were provided to a committee which I charged with evaluating those suggestions and ultimately recommending names for my consideration. (The committee charge and criteria are attached.)

I would like to reiterate my gratitude to the committee members for their thoughtful work, especially given the timeframe within which they had to act. It was clear that each member reflected deeply on the criteria and this honor.

The group submitted a list of four people after whom it recommended we permanently rename Cedar Hall (see attached). Each of these four – and indeed the others suggested – is inspiring in their own right. As the committee members said in their memo to me, a recommendation of four particular individuals was in no way a vote *against* the others. And in that same vein, my final recommendation here is in no way a vote *against* the others.

Based on historical records and information gathered on these four inspiring individuals, a meeting with the committee about the finalists, and subsequent conversations with various individuals and groups, I have decided to formally recommend that we permanently name this wing **Unthank Hall**, after DeNorval Unthank, Jr.

Mr. Unthank was a University of Oregon alumnus, graduating in 1951 with a degree in Architecture – the first black graduate from School of Architecture and Allied Arts (AAA). He went on to have a successful career here in the Eugene-Springfield area, designing many public and private buildings.

His works include our own McKenzie Hall, meaning that students can see and experience a tangible example of Unthank's success and lasting legacy. This physical space is a reminder to us all that this extraordinary man overcame racial discrimination as a child in Portland as well as discrimination and overt acts of hatred at the University of Oregon.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Mr. Unthank was an unwavering advocate for minority populations, especially the black community in Oregon and in Portland, specifically. He worked with community organizations in Portland on projects such as Albina Housing, the Interstate Firehouse Cultural

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Center, the Mt. Olive Baptist Church, and several developments focused on low-income housing and assisted living.

In addition to being an alumnus, Unthank remained dedicated to the University of Oregon. He served as a visiting lecturer in AAA and became an associate professor in the school for eight years in the 1970s. His impact on students thus extended far beyond creating a physical place for them to learn and engage. To him, design, education, and opportunity were intertwined.

In 2004, AAA established a memorial scholarship fund in his honor thanks to contributions from family, friends, clients, and colleagues. While this scholarship has helped architecture students realize their potential and is a fitting tribute to Unthank, I believe now is the time we recognize his contributions to the UO, the Eugene-Springfield region, and to the state of Oregon through a more overt and tangible honor.

I think ahead to the freshmen who will eagerly unpack belongings into Unthank Hall and who will be inspired by this tremendous man to make their own lasting impact on our university, state, and nation.

For your information, I am attaching a few documents about DeNorval Unthank, Jr.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation.