

1 October 2018

Honorable Carol L. Folt  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
103 South Building  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

Dear Chancellor Folt,

As members of the Friends of the Library board of directors we write in response to your invitation to the UNC community to help you identify “a safe, legal and alternative location for Silent Sam” on the campus. Although some of us would prefer to seek a solution that removes the monument from the University, for the purposes of this letter we have accepted your request as issued.

We believe that any decision to retain “Silent Sam” on campus should be grounded in the following principles:

- UNC must not hide or avert its eyes from any facet or phase of its history, no matter how glorious or regrettable. True leadership demands the courage to present our story to the world dispassionately, honestly, and in proper context.
- The University’s archives and artifacts must be preserved in a safe, secure environment that affords access to all who are interested, but that does not require anyone to confront information or objects that are offensive to them.
- The University Librarian and her staff, who have dedicated their lives to the pursuit and preservation of thought, history and scholarship, have already led, and should continue to lead, the effort to place this and other University artifacts in proper historical context.

We are proud that research conducted in Wilson’s special collections brought to light information about the monument’s origins, the misbegotten motives of those who placed it on the campus, and the venal and despicable words uttered by Julian Carr at its dedication. The University’s librarians and archivists already have richly informed the discussion about Silent Sam by placing those and many other relevant facts in context at <https://guides.lib.unc.edu/campus-monuments/silent-sam>.

On the other hand, we believe that placing Silent Sam in Wilson Library, as some have proposed, would be extremely costly, logistically challenging, and culturally inappropriate; most importantly, it would seriously threaten, and potentially devastate, the library’s research mission, to which the University’s future progress and reputation are closely tied.

Bringing the statue into the library would add nothing to our understanding of its place in the University’s history but would expose the library’s precious rare books and special collections to damage and the library staff to injury from protests, vandalism and

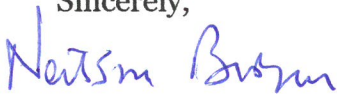
altercations such as have occurred repeatedly in McCorkle Place both before and after the statue was taken down. Moreover, the costly measures required to mitigate such threats, such as subjecting all entrants to scanners and potential searches, inevitably would intimidate and deter students, faculty and other users of Wilson's unique collections. Our goal is to have *more* students, faculty and visitors use the library, not fewer.

Like the Administrative Board of the Library, whose statement of August 27 we applaud and endorse, we believe that Silent Sam belongs in a museum — ideally, one dedicated to the University's history. We urge you and the Board of Trustees to explore the possibility of creating such an institution on campus, perhaps by repurposing Gerrard Hall, the old Playmakers Theatre, or another of the historic campus buildings erected and sanctified by the sweat and labor of slaves.

Wilson Library is *not* a museum and should not become one. It is, rather, the cornerstone of one of America's great academic research libraries — a dynamic service center where UNC faculty and students, as well as unaffiliated researchers, engage directly with rare or unique books, manuscripts, maps and other archival materials. It also is an architectural treasure that includes the Farrington Reading Room, one of the most beautiful and majestic interior spaces in North Carolina. It is, and must remain, a safe, peaceful and welcoming place for study and discovery.

We support you, your Task Force on UNC-Chapel Hill History, and the UNC Board of Trustees in seeking an appropriate place to preserve, secure and contextualize Silent Sam on campus. We agree, however, that neither Wilson Library nor any other campus library should be that place.

Sincerely,



Neilson Brown, Chair

Mary Pleasants Bossong  
Linda L. Butler  
Bruce Carney  
Thomas H. Cuthbertson  
Morris Fine  
Nicola Gafinowitz  
F. Borden Hanes, Jr.  
Anna Ragland Hayes  
Vance L. Horner

Dana Borden Lacy  
William McLendon  
Mary E. Miller  
Jean H. Neville  
James T. Patrick, Jr.  
Gail Perry  
J. Norfleet Pruden  
Kelly L. Ross  
Meredith Rutter

Nancy Sipp  
Brenton L. Smith  
Moyer G. Smith  
Sarah Snow  
H. Hugh Stevens, Jr.  
Elizabeth W. Tate  
Priscilla Patterson Taylor  
William A. Whitaker III  
Megan W. Ziglar

CC: Members of the UNC Board of Trustees