

REPORT
of the
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES NAMES

April 13, 1988

To: President Vincent O'Leary

INTRODUCTION

The Advisory Committee on Facilities Names has met regularly since early December and has prepared a recommendation for the naming of the new apartment complex as you requested. Members of the committee include:

Edna Acosta-Belen
Latin Amer. & Caribbean Studies

Daniel Peltz
Undergraduate Student

Kelly Bates
Undergraduate Student

George Serrano
Undergraduate Student

William K. Holstein, Chair
Business

Susan Sherman
Social Welfare

Judith Johnson
English and Women's Studies

Ivan Steen
History

James Kiepper
Education

Lewis P. Welch
University Affairs

Carl Martin
Student Services

Dennis Stevens, Physical Plant, was of great assistance to the committee in its early work and was invited to participate in our later meetings.

At the outset, we would note that the naming of physical facilities on the University at Albany campus has not followed a clear, logical method, a fact that was not particularly surprising to us. The downtown dormitory complex, for example, is referred to as "Alumni Quad," but has buildings named for four presidents and one dean, and no clear references to Albany alumni. Other buildings and areas on the downtown campus are named for State officials, faculty members, an early Principal and a President. The theme of periods of New York State history that were used to name the uptown dormitory quadrangles are quite clear and consistently applied, but other buildings are named for an Albany-born scientist, a dean, and two professors. We even discovered an apparently recently re-named facility that no one on the committee realized had been re-named - the Thomas E. Dewey Library in Hawley Hall. Most of us still had former State Education Department official Gideon Hawley associated with the downtown library.

Three facts seem to be clear: (1) all campus buildings that are named for people are named for deceased people, (2) very few, if any, campus facilities have been named for individuals who have given gifts of significant monetary value to the university, and (3) very few minorities and women are represented in the named facilities on the campus. Item (1) is consistent with the Policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees which make quite clear that buildings named after living individuals is quite an exception, and that such exceptions are usually made only when significant gifts to the university are involved. Since no gifts or bequests were involved in the building of the new apartment complex that is the object of our efforts, we did not consider financial benefactors of the university in our deliberations. We were sensitive to Item (3), and spent quite a bit of time talking about ways to incorporate women and minorities into our recommendations.

We noted one additional stipulation in the SUNY Board of Trustees Policies; that facilities named for an individual should be named for individuals who had a clear connection to the local area or to New York State.

THE THEME ISSUE

In our very first meeting the topic of a "theme," or a thematic orientation to the naming of the new apartment complex, was raised. Several members of the committee felt that the various parts of the apartment complex should be named within the confines of a general theme that tied the various parts to a thematic whole, and we spent considerable time talking about different themes. Given that the city of Albany's tricentennial, the U.S. Constitution's bicentennial, and the Statue of Liberty's centennial all occurred within the planning and construction time of the new apartment facilities, we discussed at length the possibility of using one of these events as a possible theme for the naming of the apartment buildings.

Other themes that received the committee's attention included New York State rivers, mountains, cities, counties, buildings, writers, trees, or ecological features. Modern leaders, female leaders, and individuals who had made important contributions to New York State cultural or political life were also considered.

DOCUMENTATION OF NAMED FACILITIES

In considering various themes and individuals, the committee was struck by the generally low level of knowledge of individuals for whom named facilities already exist on campus. Most of us were not aware, for example, that Sayles was a President, Pierce was a Dean, and Richardson was a faculty member.

Our general unawareness of the background of individuals for whom facilities have already been named led us to a strong feeling that more should be done to document the background and contributions of the people for whom the apartment facilities are named. We recommend that a plaque containing a short description of the individual's most significant contributions be placed on each named facility. Future generations of Albany students will thereby be able to identify with the historical figures whose accomplishments grace our facilities.

THE CHOSEN THEME

The committee chose a clear, but general, "theme" - the LIBERTY APARTMENTS, named for individuals who have made a significant contribution to the cause of liberty and freedom. Within this general theme, we tried to give specific emphasis to individuals who had had a clear connection to upstate New York or the Capital Region.

In keeping with our strong feelings that women and minorities should be represented in the naming of campus facilities, we were particularly diligent in seeking out significant historical contributions to the cause of liberty from these groups. We generated enough names to have the entire list consist only of women, or only of blacks, or only of people associated directly with the immediate Albany area. In the end, we decided on a more broadly-based group.

We recommend that each of the four groups of apartments, currently referred to as A, B, C, and D, be given a name, with subdivisions designating entryways, floors, and individual units, labeled numerically or alpha/numerically.

The four names that we recommend are:

SOLOMON NORTHUP	A free man sold into slavery who strongly influenced the abolitionist movement in upstate New York.
ARTURO A. SCHOMBURG	Documenter of the Black experience in New York City.
ELIZABETH CADY STANTON	Leader of the women's movement from its inception for fifty years.
SOJOURNER TRUTH	Effective orator for the causes of women and abolition.

In addition, we recommend that the interior roadway around the apartment complex be named EMMA LAZARUS DRIVE in honor of:

EMMA LAZARUS	Author and poet who wrote the lines inscribed on the Statue of Liberty.
--------------	---

ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DETAIL

SOLOMON NORTHUP

Born in Minerva, New York in 1808. Died in 1863. Northup farmed and worked as a violinist and semi-skilled laborer in and around the small towns of upstate New York. In March, 1841, he was beaten, drugged, placed on a ship, and sold into slavery in New Orleans. Later rescued, he returned to his family in Glens Falls. In July 1853 his book, Twelve Years a Slave, was published and served as an important catalyst in the abolitionist movement in upstate New York.

ARTURO A. SCHOMBURG

Born in Puerto Rico in 1874. Emigrated to the United States at the age of 17. In 1911 he launched the Negro Society for Historical Research in New York City. This institution gathered thousands of books and documents on the black experience and played a significant role in the Negritude Movement of the early twentieth century. Schomburg's efforts also facilitated the establishment of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. The collection of Arturo Schomburg became the foundation of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City.

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON

Born in 1815 in Johnstown, New York. Died in 1902. Probably the best known and most conspicuous advocate of women's rights in the nineteenth century. For almost fifty years, with Susan B. Anthony, she led the first women's movement in America. She set its agenda and was a leader in articulating its ideology. Elizabeth Stanton's interests were not limited to suffrage. She advocated many reforms that continue on the national agenda until the present time: coeducation, young women's sports, job training, equal wages, property rights for wives, child custody rights for mothers, and reform of divorce laws.

SOJOURNER TRUTH

Born a slave in 1797 in Hurley, New York. Died in 1883. Raised by Quakers, she spoke both Dutch and English. Became a celebrated women's rights activist and powerful orator against slavery. Sojourner Truth was received by President Lincoln in the White House and recognized for her efforts to promote freedom and liberty. In her later years accounts of her experiences as a slave and as an abolitionist were published.

EMMA LAZARUS

Nineteenth century Jewish writer and poet from New York City whose lines are inscribed on the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor - "Give me your tired, your poor..."

THE QUAD ISSUE

The committee spent considerable time in lively, and often quite light-hearted, discussion about whether the new apartment complex should be considered as the sixth "quad" on the campus. Although the apartments units do not form an exact quadrangle, the facility is sort-of four-sided, and could be considered a quad without too large a stretch of imagination. Recognizing that the apartment facilities are located across Fuller Road, quite distinct from the uptown campus "quads," the committee decided to recommend the name LIBERTY APARTMENTS, rather than LIBERTY QUAD. If subsequent usage attaches "quad" to the apartment complex, so be it; but our recommendation does not include the explicit use of the word "quad."

DIVERSITY

The committee is pleased with the diversity reflected in our recommendations; two black men, one born in upstate New York, one in Puerto Rico, a black woman, and two white women, one of Colonial American and one of Jewish descent. We believe that such diversity appropriately recognizes and reflects the diversity found today among our student, faculty, and staff population. Further, we are pleased to draw the attention of the university community to this worthy group of champions of liberty.

A, B, C, and D would be functional, and perhaps even more efficient, names for the new apartment clusters, but the names that we recommend give all of us an opportunity to learn and to reflect on the rich heritage that belongs to all of us. We believe that that is a very appropriate role for all of us.

We stand ready to provide further information or background, or even further suggestions, should you or the University Council desire them.