



NAACP Culpeper Branch #7058
P.O. Box 687
Culpeper, Virginia 22701

Also Representing Madison and Rappahannock Counties

The Rev. Dr. Uzziah A. Harris
President

The Rev. Frank D. Lewis
Vice President

Cindy Taylor
Secretary

Peggy Campbell
Treasurer

NAACP Culpeper/NAACP Orange County Statement in Support of Montpelier Staff and the Montpelier Descendants Committee

May 11, 2022 – The Culpeper Branch of the NAACP, also representing Madison and Rappahannock counties, and the Orange County Branch of the NAACP call upon The Montpelier Foundation to reinstate the organization’s recently fired staff members and commit to full implementation of the original parity agreement dating to June 2021.

We find the retaliatory firing of senior staff members, including Dr. Elizabeth Chew, Dr. Matthew Reeves, Christy Moriarty, and Alex Walsh, to be inexplicable in light of the deep commitment they have demonstrated to create meaningful, accurate, and enlightening programs, tours, exhibits, and events. Their work has helped shape a truthful and contemplative narrative based on ideals championed by James Madison himself, and has positioned Montpelier as a preeminent model for inclusive interpretive programs at cultural sites. Dr. Chew and Dr. Reeves are globally renowned in their fields, deservedly so. We believe that the loss of their expertise and long-time dedication to Montpelier’s vital preservation and education work is incalculable.

We further call for The Montpelier Foundation to restore its commitment to the landmark agreement with the Montpelier Descendants Committee and to finally create structural parity in the ongoing oversight of this historic property. It is imperative that the foundation fully empower the Montpelier Descendants Committee, as the democratically chosen representative of the more than 300 descendants of the enslaved, to serve as an equal steward of this site. This includes achieving the equitable board representation originally agreed upon and enabling the committee to select for themselves those who will represent them on the board.

Members of the NAACP Culpeper Branch and the NAACP Orange County Branch have been encouraged by the work of the Montpelier staff and the Montpelier Descendants Committee, and have appreciated their contributions to our local communities, including the partnership in the co-hosting of the annual Juneteenth celebration. While we find the actions of The Montpelier Foundation in retracting its commitment to the parity agreement and firing senior staff to be damaging and disturbing, we take heart in knowing that these actions can be reversed and that The Montpelier Foundation still has an opportunity to fully recognize its important role in the equitable and sustainable stewardship of the Montpelier site.

For more information, please email secretary@naacpculpeper.org

#FreeMontpelier

OUR FUTURE ■ OUR RESPONSIBILITY ■ OUR LEGACY