



# UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

## *Student Government Association*

### **Resolution 30-17**

#### **A Resolution to Memorialize Enslaved Peoples at the University of Georgia**

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WHEREAS, the University of Georgia was founded in 1785 in Athens, Georgia during the period of southern slavery; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Georgia was constructed and maintained by an extensive network of slave labor; and,<sup>4</sup>

WHEREAS, the University of Georgia Board of Trustees official minutes contains, at minimum, thirty-nine mentions of purchasing slave labor, and,<sup>4</sup>

WHEREAS, there is extensive archived documentation on student interactions with enslaved peoples, including using blackface as mockery, as well as several assaults and a maiming of University slaves; and,<sup>1,2,3</sup>

WHEREAS, the University of Georgia benefitted from the labor of slaves, including the few whose names are known: Davy Hull, Old Sam Watkins, Old Tub, and Bishop Lucius Henry Holsey; and,<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

WHEREAS, slave labor on campus was tasked with cleaning student apartments, whitewashing buildings, toting water for the University, maintenance, construction on the buildings, and doing odd jobs for faculty members and students at their discretion; and,<sup>4</sup>

WHEREAS, there lies a monument across from the Arch that honors Athenians who served in the Confederate Army and a plaque at the entrance of North Campus that pays tribute to the Confederacy; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Georgia excavation of Baldwin Hall in 2015 unearthed many human remains of African descent; and,

WHEREAS, the removal and reburial of the African American remains found under Baldwin Hall sparked feelings of pain and discomfort from Athens's and the University's Black and African American communities; and,

WHEREAS, the sole reminder of the bodies of enslaved people resting at Baldwin Hall is communicated through a small plaque in the rear of the building, which students feel as though does not adequately nor appropriately satisfy community needs; and,

WHEREAS, students do not feel as though the University of Georgia adequately, publicly acknowledged its past entanglement with slavery, nor acknowledged the substantial contributions that enslaved peoples made towards the establishment and success of the University; and,

WHEREAS, the mission of the University of Georgia is to “foster the understanding of and respect for cultural differences necessary for an enlightened and educated citizenry”; and,

WHEREAS, renowned universities such as Harvard University, Brown University, Columbia University, Princeton University, Rutgers University, University of Virginia, University of North Carolina, Washington and Lee University, William and Mary University, and Georgetown University have all implemented memorials, dedications, and/or programs that acknowledge their university's history as it pertains to slavery; and,

WHEREAS, fellow southeastern colleges such as the University of Mississippi and the University of South Carolina have publicly recognized their past involvement with slavery through research, plaques, and transparency to the general body; and,

WHEREAS, at the University of Georgia, only 7.7 percent of the student population identify as Black or African American, while the state of Georgia has one of the highest state populations of Black and African American people, totaling 31.4 percent; and,<sup>13</sup>

WHEREAS, faculty from the Institute of African American Studies, the History Department, the Anthropology Department, and the College of Environment and Design have all voiced support of student-lead efforts to acknowledge slavery and honor the University slaves, both those discovered and undiscovered; and,

WHEREAS, leaders of the African Student Union, the UGA Chapter of NAACP, Georgia Daze, and several other leaders of Black student organizations have voiced their personal support and the support of their peers towards a University effort to acknowledge slavery and honor the enslaved peoples held and used by the University; and,

WHEREAS, the Student Government Association has historically underrepresented Black students of the University; and,

WHEREAS, the Student Government Association serves as “the voice of *every* bulldog.”

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the 30th administration of the Student Government Association, will, on behalf of the student body, stand publicly in support of acknowledging the history of enslaved peoples at the University of Georgia; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we encourage the University of Georgia to, in collaboration with the University’s and Athens’ Black and African American community leaders, construct a permanent, physical monument on North Campus dedicated to all enslaved peoples held and employed by the University of Georgia and serving as a permanent reminder of their sacrifices and struggles made on behalf of the University of Georgia; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we encourage the University of Georgia to, in collaboration with the University’s and Athens’ Black and African American community leaders, construct a readily accessible and visible, permanent physical tribute at Baldwin Hall, denoting that, at that site, enslaved peoples were laid for their final rest before being relocated during construction by the University, finally establishing a permanent dedication to these enslaved peoples– both those unearthed and the likely many more undiscovered; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, we encourage University of Georgia to become examples for research and transparency as it pertains to our involvement with slavery, ensuring that, for generations to come, the enslaved peoples of the University of Georgia will not have been held in vain and that their memory shall live on with proper respect, intentionality, and honor through whatever means necessary.

## CITATIONS

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