

Stolen Pride

A message to the current and recent leadership at Washington & Lee University

18 July 2022

***Pride:** A feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements, the achievements of those with whom one is closely associated, or from qualities or possessions that are widely admired. — Google's English dictionary, provided by Oxford Languages*

I have lost pride in my earned diploma from my college.

I have lost pride in the recognition by my college as a “Distinguished Alumni”.

I have lost pride as one of the founding members of the *Institute for Honor*.

I have lost pride in my Class of 1960 and the body of alumni in general.

General Robert E. Lee, President of my college, remains a source of pride and accomplishment to me and scores of others, from kings, queens, and presidents to those of no rank. You have thrust a sword in Robert E. Lee's heart, where he lies beneath a marble carving in Lee Chapel, named in his honor. The sword has punctured his soul...and mine. There are few people in world history who have earned the adulation of so many. He led a full life of honor, respect, dignity, and selflessness. He was (is) loved by peoples and cultures from throughout the world. And broadly recognized for his achievements.

In their last breaths of life, both, Robert E. Lee and Abraham Lincoln could be equally assigned the early success in the acceptance of all people into:

“We the people of the United States of America”...

I beg you, in the interest of history and morality to remove the sword you have so carelessly placed into the heart and soul of our college. Thus, returning my stolen pride.

Billy Schaefer, Class of 1960