

## **Resolution in Support of Changing the Name of T.C. Williams High School and Matthew Maury Elementary School**

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Whereas, the City of Alexandria's only public high school was named after former ACPS superintendent Thomas Chambliss Williams (mid-1930s - mid-1960s), a supporter of perpetuating segregation, and a man who did everything possible to slow down the process of integration in Alexandria; Williams openly advocated for racial segregation within Alexandria schools. After the order on May 17, 1954, for ACPS to be desegregated, Williams resisted for five years. One Washington Post article from the early 1990s about Williams says that in 1958 he fired a black cafeteria worker because her children were seeking admission to one of the remaining all-white city schools. He was a racist. Williams notably fired a black employee who participated in an NAACP lawsuit against the city, though he claimed race had nothing to do with the decision, according to Zebra.

Whereas one of the City of Alexandria's elementary schools was named after, Matthew Fontaine Maury, who may be considered a father of oceanography, but was also a special agent for the Confederacy during the Civil War and tried to found a new Confederate colony in Mexico after the Union defeated the southern rebellion. While Maury was not a proponent of American slavery, he instead [favored relocating slaves](#) (and their owners, if desired) to the Amazon, and sent a crew there to map the river and determine if his plan was feasible. Maury's proposal was part of a broader movement to relocate, rather than integrate, Black Americans formerly held as slaves.

Whereas, the [ACPS Mission](#) is that "Every student succeeds: Educating lifelong learners and inspiring civic responsibility," and the ACPS Vision is that "Our students achieve at high levels, are well-rounded, critical thinkers, and have a passion to learn. ACPS has an engaging and collaborative climate that promotes ethical behavior and values diversity. ACPS is a vital part of the fabric of our community, and Alexandria residents and businesses take pride in our schools."

Whereas "every student" of ACPS includes, as of November 2017, T. C. Williams High School's student body is 42.3% Hispanic, 28.8% Black, 22.0% White, 4.6% Asian, 0.2% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 2.1% Multi-racial. [Demographics at Maury Elementary School](#) as of January 2017 are 28.2% Black, 3.1% Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian, 8% Hispanic, 56.4% white, and 4.3% multiracial.

Whereas, in June 2020 ACPS [passed a Resolution](#) condemning systemic racism and affirming a commitment to educational equity for all students, families, and staff, which resolves that "members of the Alexandria City School Board, stand steadfast in our commitment to foster an inclusive educational environment where every student, teacher, support professional, parent and community member is treated with dignity and respect, and we reaffirm our commitment to continue fighting for racial justice and human rights for all."

Whereas, the story of Alexandria's struggle to desegregate its schools is immortalized in the Disney movie, Remember the Titans (2000), about the high school's football team.

Whereas, in 2007 Alexandria City Council adopted a resolution affirming that Alexandria is a welcoming community that treats everyone with human dignity and respect. In 2016, City Council issued an [additional statement](#) to further declare Alexandria’s commitment to fostering an atmosphere of inclusiveness that respects the dignity and worth of every person. Further, in 2020, Alexandria City Council [adopted a resolution](#) that condemns systemic racism.

Whereas, there have been calls for many years ([here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) to reevaluate the name of T.C. Williams High School. Many feel it is not representative of its diverse student body. There have also been calls ([here](#), and [here](#)) to change the name of Matthew Maury Elementary; the Interim Superintendent Lois F. Berlin committed to [work through this issue](#) for Maury Elementary in 2017. These calls for change are not trying to erase or revise history; they are trying to avoid making heroes out of villains.

Whereas, the city of Richmond [removed a statue](#) of Matthew Maury in July 2020. “It’s about time we removed those monuments. They were statues to bigotry, division, hate, oppression — you name it — and that’s not who we are as a city,” Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney said at a Thursday press conference.

Whereas, in July 2020 Virginia Governor Ralph Northam [urged education leaders](#) to remove Confederate names from schools. "When our public schools are named after individuals who advanced slavery and systemic racism, and we allow those names to remain on school property, we tacitly endorse their values as our own," Northam wrote. "This is no longer acceptable."

Whereas, A spokesperson for Alexandria City Public Schools said the name cannot be changed by a principal or superintendent but would require School Board approval. Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, that—

- 1) T.C. Williams Matthew Maury stood against the ACPS values of diversity, inclusiveness, and equity; they are unacceptable namesakes for ACPS schools; and
- 2) the ADC calls upon the Alexandria City School Board to immediately commit to change the name of T.C. Williams High School and Matthew Maury Elementary School, and institute a community engagement program to select new names for the schools.

*Sources:*

Sept 2017 Theogony OpEd “Time to Re-name T.C. Williams”  
<https://www.acpsk12.org/theogony/2017-2018/2017/09/20/time-to-re-name-t-c-williams/>

March 2018 AlexTimes OpEd “Our View: Should Alexandria’s high school bear the name ‘T.C. Williams?’” <https://alextimes.com/2018/03/ourviewtcwilliams/>

June 2020 AlexTimes “T.C. Williams High School Renaming Question Resurfaces in Alexandria” <https://www.alxnow.com/2020/06/09/t-c-williams-high-school-renaming-question-resurfaces-in-alexandria/>

June 2020 AlexTimes “School Renaming Movement Grows Beyond T.C. Williams”  
<https://www.alxnow.com/2020/06/16/effort-underway-to-rename-matthew-maury-elementary->

[school-as-petition-on-renaming-t-c-williams-high-school-sent-to-school-board/](#)

June 2020 ArlNow “ Art Project Bringing Illuminated Model Slave Ships to Virginia Square”  
<https://www.arlnow.com/2020/06/30/art-project-bringing-illuminated-model-slave-ships-to-virginia-square/>

July 2020 WTOP “Richmond removes statue of Confederate officer Maury”  
<https://wtop.com/virginia/2020/07/more-confederate-monuments-to-come-down-in-richmond/>

July 2020 Richmond Times Dispatch “Northam urges education leaders to remove Confederate names from schools” [https://www.richmond.com/news/local/government-politics/northam-urges-education-leaders-to-remove-confederate-names-from-schools/article\\_0b44540e-d6c8-524f-a766-2070520eaf12.html](https://www.richmond.com/news/local/government-politics/northam-urges-education-leaders-to-remove-confederate-names-from-schools/article_0b44540e-d6c8-524f-a766-2070520eaf12.html)

ACPS 2020 Strategic Plan <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/acps2020>

ACPS June 2020 “Resolution Condemning Systemic Racism and Affirming a Commitment to Educational Equity for All Students, Families and Staff” <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/3120>

Alexandria City Council Condemns Systemic Racism  
[https://www.alexandriava.gov/news\\_display.aspx?id=116000](https://www.alexandriava.gov/news_display.aspx?id=116000)

Alexandria City Council Statements on Inclusiveness  
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/council/info/default.aspx?id=9602>  
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About Matthew Maury Elementary School <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/domain/983>

History of Matthew Maury Elementary School <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/1853>

Brittanica, Matthew Fontaine Maury <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Matthew-Fontaine-Maury>

The History of Alexandria’s High Schools <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/2258>