

## **Historic Review Committee on Naming at the University of Miami**

Consistent with its governing creed of “*Magna est veritas*” (*Great is the Truth*), the University of Miami benefits from examining even its own long-established values and traditions. With this in mind, the University of Miami will consider renaming features of the University, such as buildings and streets, when there is strong evidence that retaining the name is inconsistent with the University’s mission and values.

The Historic Review Committee on Naming (the “Committee”) is advisory to the President of the University. The Committee is charged with developing a procedure for consideration of un-naming or renaming buildings and other features at the University of Miami. The Committee will: (1) consider each naming case submitted in writing; (2) review all pertinent documentation; (3) request any additional material or fact-finding it deems necessary; (4) deliberate; (5) consult appropriately; (6) provide a brief written report of its findings and recommendations to the President; and (7) stand ready to answer any questions, as needed. The final decision on the naming, renaming, or un-naming of any entity at the University of Miami rests with the Board of Trustees.

### **Guiding Principles**

The procedural principles guiding the Committee’s deliberations shall be as follows: (a) persuasiveness of argument; (b) factual evidence presented; (c) inclusion and fairness; and (d) historical context. Facts will drive the Committee’s review and deliberation of each case.

The substantive principles (the “Renaming Principles”) guiding the Committee’s deliberations shall be as follows:

- (a) Does the continuation of the naming in question materially and adversely impact the mission of the University of Miami to transform lives through education, research, innovation, and service as informed by a diverse and pluralistic student body, faculty, administration, staff, alumni, and trustees;
- (b) Is the continuation of the naming in question intellectually and morally inconsistent with this mission;

- (c) Did the namesake acknowledge the negative aspects of their legacy and attempt to pursue redemptive efforts during the time in which they lived;
- (d) What is the net balancing of any harm resulting from retaining the name against any harm resulting from discarding the name;
- (e) How central was the namesake's offensive behavior to his or her life as a whole;
- (f) What is the relation of the namesake to the history of the University of Miami;
- (g) How harmful was the namesake's offensive behavior to a given community;
- (h) How strong does the University community or any subset thereof identify with the named structure in question;
- (i) How strong and unambiguous is the historical record;
- (j) Has there been prior consideration of the namesake's offensive behavior and legacy by the University;
- (k) Why was the building named after the namesake? Was the name honorific or in recognition of a philanthropic gift;
- (l) What is the history of contesting the legacy of the namesake, if any? From the time the building was named up until the present, have individuals or groups objected to using this name in other contexts?

The general default principle is a strong presumption against renaming a building or other memorial, particularly when the building or other memorial has been named for an individual who made significant contributions to the University. Accordingly, such a renaming should be considered only in exceptional circumstances.

In addition to the foregoing, the Committee will also consider whether the harm in retaining the name can be mitigated by addressing the namesake's offensive behavior.

When a feature is renamed or when the name is retained but the committee considers it a close question or believes the University could potentially be subject to significant legal liability because of a renaming or un-naming, the University should consider describing the full history of the namesake in a prominent way—at the building or other structure in question, where practicable, or in some other suitable location. The goal of addressing the matter in such a

manner would be to ensure the full legacy of the namesake in question, both good and bad, will be on display for observers to review and judge accordingly.

### *Conflict of Interest*

If a committee member is involved in a petition, external initiative, or organization which might create the appearance of conflict with regard to a matter that is before the Committee these cases must be disclosed by the member to the Committee chair(s). In such circumstances, the member may be advised to recuse themselves from deliberations on a case before the Committee. Adherence to this policy will preserve the integrity of the review process and ensure that Committee recommendations are unassailable when presented to the President and Board.

### **Submission Process**

All petitions to the Committee must include the following:

- (a) the name of the person, group, or organization filing the request;
- (b) based on thoroughly researched and well-documented evidence, how and why the said named entity should be subject to un-naming or renaming based upon the Renaming Principles;
- (c) why petitioners believe that the legacy's pernicious effects outweigh the individual's contributions;
- (d) what is the likely impact on members of the University community if the name is retained or removed.

Petitions should be emailed to [president@miami.edu](mailto:president@miami.edu) with the subject line Historic Review Committee on Naming.

Prior to a case being presented to the Committee, the University General Counsel and Senior Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations will be consulted to determine whether the petition meets the requirements noted above as well as the conduct a legal analysis regarding the University's liability in the event un-naming or renaming is desired (i.e., whether the terms of a gift to the University will be violated, etc.).

A review of the questions above along with the Committee's guiding Renaming Principles will guide the deliberation, including a due diligence review of non-confidential, relevant University records to identify additional evidence may be sought by the Committee. The requests will be formal and addressed to the appropriate institutional record holder (e.g., University Archives, President's Office, Development, Facilities, etc.). In particularly complex cases, the Committee may consult with experts.

Upon completion of this review, the Committee will submit to the President a brief written report and recommendation, which the President will submit to the University's Board of Trustees which will review the matter and make a final decision.

The Committee will endeavor to deliver this recommendation within six weeks of receiving the petition. The petitioner(s) will be notified of the Committee's recommendation. The Committee's deliberation process and the written recommendations to the President are confidential.

The President and/or the Board of Trustees retains the right to determine without an application having been submitted that the historical name of a building or other campus structure or space warrants review under this process.

After a name has been considered under this process, it will not be considered again absent a material change in known facts and circumstances.