Final Report of the Building Name Consultation Advisory Committee

September 29, 2020

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Committee was asked to determine whether the law school building should continue to be named Sir John A. Macdonald Hall.

Recommendation

After extensive consultations with Queen's stakeholders, the majority of the Committee supports removing Sir John A. Macdonald's name from the law school building for the reasons shared in this report.

The members sharing the position of Queen's Office of Advancement's representative on the Committee abstained from making a recommendation at this time and their separate reasons are included in this report.

Process

The Committee began its work on July 16, 2020. During the first two weeks, the Committee developed the Terms of Reference, survey wording, as well as a robust consultation process and schedule.

The Committee also developed a set of Principles to guide its work. The Committee recognized very quickly that the question of the building name required it to engage with the past, the present and the future. The Committee determined that using an Indigenous lens provided it with a helpful framework for this work, and so the Principles are structured around the sweetgrass braid. The first strand of the braid represents the seven generations who came before; the second strand represents the seven Grandfather teachings of Love, Respect, Courage, Honesty, Humility, Wisdom, and Truth; and the third strand represents the next seven generations. The braid weaves these three strands together, demonstrating how our past, present and future are woven together. The lessons from which this framework are drawn articulate general teachings for everyday life; they contain no intrinsic prescription for the issue at hand, but are values that speak to everyone.

The consultation received over 2,800 survey responses, 158 email responses, one voicemail, and two video statements. Live online submissions took place on August 19, and 2020 September 10, 2020 where the Committee heard from six individuals and one Queen's organization. Additional efforts were made to engage Indigenous and racialized students, faculty and staff, local urban Indigenous people and neighbouring First Nations.

The quantitative results and qualitative analysis of the responses indicate that the Queen's community is divided on this issue. This result tracks across all categories of relationship to the law school, with the exceptions that faculty and staff overwhelmingly favour removing the name, while alumni who graduated before 2000 narrowly favour keeping the name.

Reasons for the Majority of the Committee

In its analysis of the Queen's University Naming Policy, the Principal's Implementation Committee Report on Diversity and Inclusion (PICRDI), and Yakwanastahentéha Aankenjigemi – Extending the Rafters: Truth and Reconciliation Commission Task Force Final Report, the Committee concluded that central to Queen's values and reputation is the creation of a climate of inclusion, of welcome and safety for diverse

The Indigenous teaching for braiding sweetgrass referenced was shared by a committee member who attributes it to

2nd Strand – Applying the 7 teachings to the task at hand:

1. Love –to know love is to know peace, it is based on kindness for all

   x [from McGill Principles]

2. Respect –realizing the value of all people and showing courteous consideration and appreciation

   x 

x

x [from McGill Principles]

x

- How can the University continue its commitment to reconciliation, especially with respect to the way this building is named, as well as provide an accurate and balanced understanding of the legacy of Sir John A. Macdonald?
- How does the building name relate to fulfilling the recommendation in the TRCTF to promote inclusive learning and community spaces on campus, including culturally validating spaces for Indigenous students? [TRCTF Recommendations]

2. The Survey

As noted above, the Committee was asked to work with Dean Walters in approving a survey to be circulated to all students, faculty, staff and alumni and posted to the Building Name Consultation web page. The purpose of the survey was to provide a convenient way for stakeholders to express their views on the building name. We also consulted the Human Rights and Equity Office on the best approach to gathering demographic information on respondents. The HREO advised us against asking respondents specifically about whether they self-identify as Indigenous or racialized. Instead they suggested the open-ended question set out below.

The survey asked two substantive questions. The first was

> Despite the reasons for honouring Macdonald when the Law building at Queen's University was named in 1960, there is now an important social debate as to whether that name is consistent with the

The survey was launched July 30th and closed September 18th. The Committee received 2,850 responses. Of these, 2137 included a written response. The analysis of the written responses is described below.

The quantitative results of the survey indicate that the Queen's community is divided on this issue. Overall, slightly more respondents were in favour of removing the name than those in favour of keeping it, by a margin of just under 3.5 per cent. A very small number of respondents – only 75 or less than 3 per cent – selected "no opinion". This result tracks across all categories of relationship to the law school, with the exceptions that faculty and staff overwhelmingly favour removing the name, and alumni who graduated before 2000 favour keeping the name.

A report of the quantitative survey results is included in Appendix B.

3. Other modes of consultation

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One submission criticized the form of the survey question (Yes/No) and suggested that these results should

everyone who wished to express a view on the building name, and listened to all views with an open mind.

Recommendation #6 recognizes the important symbolic gesture of renaming the Policy Studies Building in honour of Robert Sutherland, who was the first known black graduate from a Canadian university and

We are guided by the Teachings of Love, Respect, and Humility, which tell us that we must include, hear, and respect all views and opinions on the question.

In pursuit of our mandate to listen to both sides, we take the view that we must give our reasons in response to the objections raised to the decision we are recommending. We must articulate our reasons in response to those voices who oppose our decision: we do this out of love, respect, and humility, as well as that of

1. Blameworthiness

i. An Ordinary Man

Many people who said we should keep the name expressed the view that, for various reasons of – which we will articui

power. It is, as many people who argued that we should keep the name of the building, precisely because he was Prime Minister that he was commemorated and celebrated for so long.

This emphasis on leadership helps us to understand that it is Sir John A. Macdonald as Prime Minister that is responsible for the policies enacted by his government. Those policies harmed many generations of Indigenous people. Indigenous voices spoke movingly and eloquently about the ways in which Macdonald's name and its elevation to prominence by Queen's on the building triggers the deep pain associated with their experience of trauma, both past and present.

A useful contrast in this regard might be the reasons that Edinburgh University recently chose to remove the name of David Hume from its tower. Hume was highly influential as a philosopher and was famous as a Scot. But he was not the leader of Scotland. It has become clear that he held racist views. The elevation of his name at the University has therefore been deemed to reflect a condoning of those views. Whatever we think of that decision, it was made on a very different basis from the one we recommend here. Hume's racist character and racist views are themselves the reason that he is no longer to be commemorated.

Similarly, Queen's removed the name of Trustee Everett Collins' from the Richardson Hall board room due to his "strident anti-Semitism (not acknowledged or researched at the time of the room's naming)."[10]

Although Sir John A. Macdonald's racist views may be part of his character, and part of the reason for his government's policies, it is not primarily an evaluation of his character that is at issue here. It is the effect of the policies and his responsibility for them, and for the terrible harms that they engendered, that is still felt and experienced today

ii. A Man of his Time

We come now to one of the most common objections to removing the name from the building: that we cannot judge a man of the nineteenth century by the standards of the twenty first. That he was a man of his time, and thus is not morally blameworthy for holding views that were widely held and viewed as morally acceptable in his time. We were referred to evidence from historians that in fact Macdonald's views and policies were considered extreme even by his peers.[11] That would indeed put an end to this kind of objection. But it was so commonly expressed that we want to address it carefully. If he was a man of his time, and held views about colonialism and race that were commonly held, how can we hold him responsible for holding those views?

This idea has some merit as a philosophical problem. Can we do wrong if we do not know that we are doing wrong? It is an idea that plagues all attempts to rectify historical injustice.

There is parallel objection made against the responsibility of those in the present, now that we do know, for wrongs done in the past. Many people who object, for instance, to reparations for slavery insist that since

[10] Email submission of Dr. Duncan Mcdowall

[11] Timothy J. Stanley, "John A. Macdonald, "the Chinese" and Racist State Formation in Canada", (2016) 3:1 Journal of Critical Race Inquiry at 23-26.

they in particular were not the ones who perpetuated that moral harm, then even if people are still living under its shadow in very real ways, the people of today cannot be morally responsible for wrongs that took place before they are born.

The problem is that if both of these parallel philosophical objections are taken seriously, the implication is that no one can be responsible for historical wrongs, since those in the past are to be judged by a different standard, and those in the present did not actually commit the acts in question. If we stay closely to the philosophical question of moral blameworthiness, we are paralyzed: we cannot act to rectify the wrongs because, on that logic, no one is properly morally responsible for them.

Guided by the teaching of Wisdom, we focus on people's experience rather than philosophical preoccupations. Humility guides us to see the matter differently, by focusing on our own responsibility, our own actions. The wrongful acts taken in pursuit of the policies of Sir John A. Macdonald's government created terrible harms. Those actions constituted cultural genocide.[12] We now have the capacity to take a small but important step to rectify that harm to the extent that we can, by ceasing to elevate and celebrate Macdonald by naming the building housing the law faculty for him.

Because we have that capacity in the present, we are responsible for our action in that capacity. If we leave the name on the building, we, in the present, will be taking an action that celebrates Macdonald.

Chinese people certainly did not share Macdonald's view that "they were biologically different from "Canadians" and that their presence threatened "the Aryan character" of Canadian society" to the point that they be stripped of their right to vote.[14]

Black people certainly did not share Macdonald's sympathies for the US Confederacy and its fight to maintain slavery.[15]

If we give credence to the idea that the moral views of people in the nineteenth century were simply universal in some way that justifies our continued exculpation of the Prime Ministe4.4 (im)3 (e)2.40]e-1.7 (ai2.3

2. ‘No Macdonald, no Canada’

This is the phrase made famous by Richard Gwyn,[16] and we heard its message repeated many times in our consultations. The idea has several dimensions which it’s important to disentangle.

We can see this idea expressed in some representative quotations from respondents in favour of keeping the name:

> I believe it is important to continue celebrating Canada’s found[ing] fathers and their contribution to developing the nation we love today. Without men like J88e6T (s)4.1h.4 (l)2. dantion w88ei tehout4k

> Macdonald's government also used the Indian Act to criminalize powwows and potlatches, and these policies lasted well into the 20th century.
>
> So, Macdonald also played a role as a nation destroyer; he was a father of confederation but he was also an architect of Canada's genocide against Indigenous peoples.

We heard from many Indigenous people who have a very different experience of what Canada is and what it represents. That experience and perspective has been excluded and marginalized, and if Queen's is to create a climate that welcomes Indigenous people it must not repeat the exclusion and marginalization of the Indigenous point of view, including that point of view on Macdonald himself: when respondents talk proudly and fervently about the Canada that Macdonald created, they fail to recognize the extent of the harm that the creation of Canada and its government did to Indigenous peoples. As one Indigenous woman said, "It hurts to know the people writing these words need to be reminded that Indigenous people [are] and were part of the Canadian public."

We heard respondents say that they

pedagogy. History is the full record of events that occurred in the past. It is taught in classrooms and explored in monuments and museums. A name on the law school building is more truthfully interpreted as a commemoration of the person whose name it is. Commemoration, as distinct from history itself, is not the teaching but the selective remembering of certain parts of history that are considered important or valuable.

In the case of a named building, it is hard to avoid the implication that the person whose name it is was a person we should celebrate. While some aspects of Canada are indeed to be celebrated, as discussed above, Sir John A Macdonald is so closely associated with the cultural genocide he perpetuated against Indigenous people that his commemoration on the name of the building can reasonably be understood as an approval of his policies – the means by which he created Canada. And that message is the opposite of the one the University must send in order to create a climate of welcome and inclusion.

What we also heard, though, in listening to voices who had the 'No Macdonald, No Canada' view, was the following kind of attitude toward the racism, wrongful policies, and harms associated with Macdonald's government and indeed with Canadian history. Richard Gwyn said: "While Macdonald did make mistakes, so did Canadians, collectively."[22] And this is surely right: as a society, the ordinary people of Canada have stood by while the government pursued vicious policies against Indigenous and racialized peoples. But Gwyn's message, that this fact means that we are making Macdonald a scapegoat for our own mistakes, confuses individual responsibility with the responsibility of leaders for the policies of their governments.

More important to notice, though, is the seductive idea that the policies Macdonald perpetuated against Indigenous and racialized peoples were simply 'a mistake', much like the mistakes that many of us, as imperfect people, make in the course of our lives.

Many voices we heard expressed thoughts that had this kind of structure:

> Although what Sir John A did was terrible, the views he had were generally expressed around the world. I believe the good he did, in creating Canada, much outweigh the racist actions he took. If anyone else had been prime minister at the time, the same racist policies would definitely have taken place. – ArtSci Student

> The original reasons for choosing to name after Sir John A. are s — Artnyci

We cannot act on this reasoning. This way of thinking fails to recognize the scale and severity of the wrongs at issue here, and risks diminishing them. As noted above, the

Although the Committee's view is that removing the name is not merely performative or trivial,

person's character. Our recommendation is based on the terrible harm John A Macdonald's actions from a position of the highest possible leadership had on generations of people, and thus on the continued harm we do to those people who associate his name with their suffering by seeming to celebrate it with a name on a building in an institution of higher learning. Again, a building name is unlike a museum or monument, which provides much greater scope for discussion of a complicated legacy.

The same principle applies to the objection we heard that there is some kind of logical imperative to remove all names associated with our colonial past if we remove this one, that if we remove the name we create the danger of a slippery slope and we will lose all the symbols that help us identify ourselves. We must consider each decision one by one. Lawyers especially are extremely familiar with the slippery slope style of argument: if we change one norm, then we will have to change all our norms and rules. Sometimes a change does represent a call to rethink our norms. More often, it simply creates one reason to consider when making future decisions. Each decision must be made and evaluated on its own terms, and no single decision creates an imperative to make any future decisions in a particular way.

The culture of this moment, to the extent that it is removing names and symbols from some places, questioning just what symbols we want to define 0 Tw 17.005(t)2.3 ((est)-1.(s.)-2782 Tw 31.6(r)4.2 (sel)-1.6

Documentation of the history of the name appears to be thin. Dean Walters provided to the Committee photocopies of news clippings that he had collected for a previous project. A story in the Kingston Whig Standard in May 1960 about the new law building stated that the name was given "in tribute to the first Prime Minister of Canada, distinguished lawyer, a founder and lifelong friend of the university."[26] Nothing in the material provided suggests that the negative aspects of Macdonald's legacy were considered at the time of the building's opening.

Historian Sean Carleton noted that although "[s]ome statues [of Macdonald] were erected after his death in the early 1890s…the vast majority of statues and honorific names were erected/given in the 1960s and 1970s, in the leadup to Canada's centennial in 1967 and at a time of French-English tensions and movements for Quebec separation. Many people looked to the past for a unifying figure, someone important who brought French and English Canadians together, and Macdonald seemed an easy choice."[27] One e-mail submission made a similar connection, noting that "In the period I was at Queen's the Vietnam war and

D. Conclusion

To remove the existing name of the law building is especially important for the law school at Queen's. A law school has a distinctive place in society because it creates the advocates and judges who will shape the law and indeed the society for generations to come. Many politicians have been to law school, as have many policy-makers and other social leaders. For that reason, Canadian law schools have recognized their special responsibility to take steps to rectify the injustice in our society where Indigenous peoples are concerned. This imperative is specified in the TRC report and is embraced at Queen's in particular in the Extending the Rafters report. Queen's has further made commitments to pay special attention to the climate of our campus for BIPOC students and staff.

Part of fulfilling this imperative for the law school means outreach and recruitment of Indigenous students. We reiterate here that Indigenous students were of one voice where the question of the impact of the law building's name is concerned. This question is therefore not an abstract one, or one about freedom of speech or the merits of 'cancel culture'. This is a question about the shape of the law school and the University's demographic, and about the identity and reputation of the University, because it is about how people feel about coming to and staying at Queen's. It is

aboutSir

Principles to Govern the Advisory Committee's Work

1. The advisory committee will develop a framework of principles to guide its work. In doing so, it may wish to consult principles developed by other universities which have addressed questions about names of buildings or other physical spaces. It should be sensitive, however, to the need for institutions to craft their responses to such questions in a manner that respects their individual and distinctive contexts.
2. In the case of Queen's University, the context that should inform the work of the Committee includes the commitment by the University to equity, diversity and inclusion, as expressed in the Principal's Implementation Committee on Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (PICRDI), Final Report (10 April 2017), and the commitment by the University to reconciliation, as expressed in Yakwanastahentéha Aankenjigemi -- Extending the Rafters: Truth and Reconciliation Commission Task Force Final Repor t.
3. In carrying out its work, the advisory committee will seek to abide by principles of procedural fairness. It will take reasonable steps to ensure that3 (e)5.2 (m)-1.1 2.6 (d)4.7 (e)1.2 7.16.7 (w)-4c9 (on)-3.7

Appendix B

Survey Results as of September 19 , 2020

Do you believe that the law school building should continue to be named John A. Macdonald Hall?

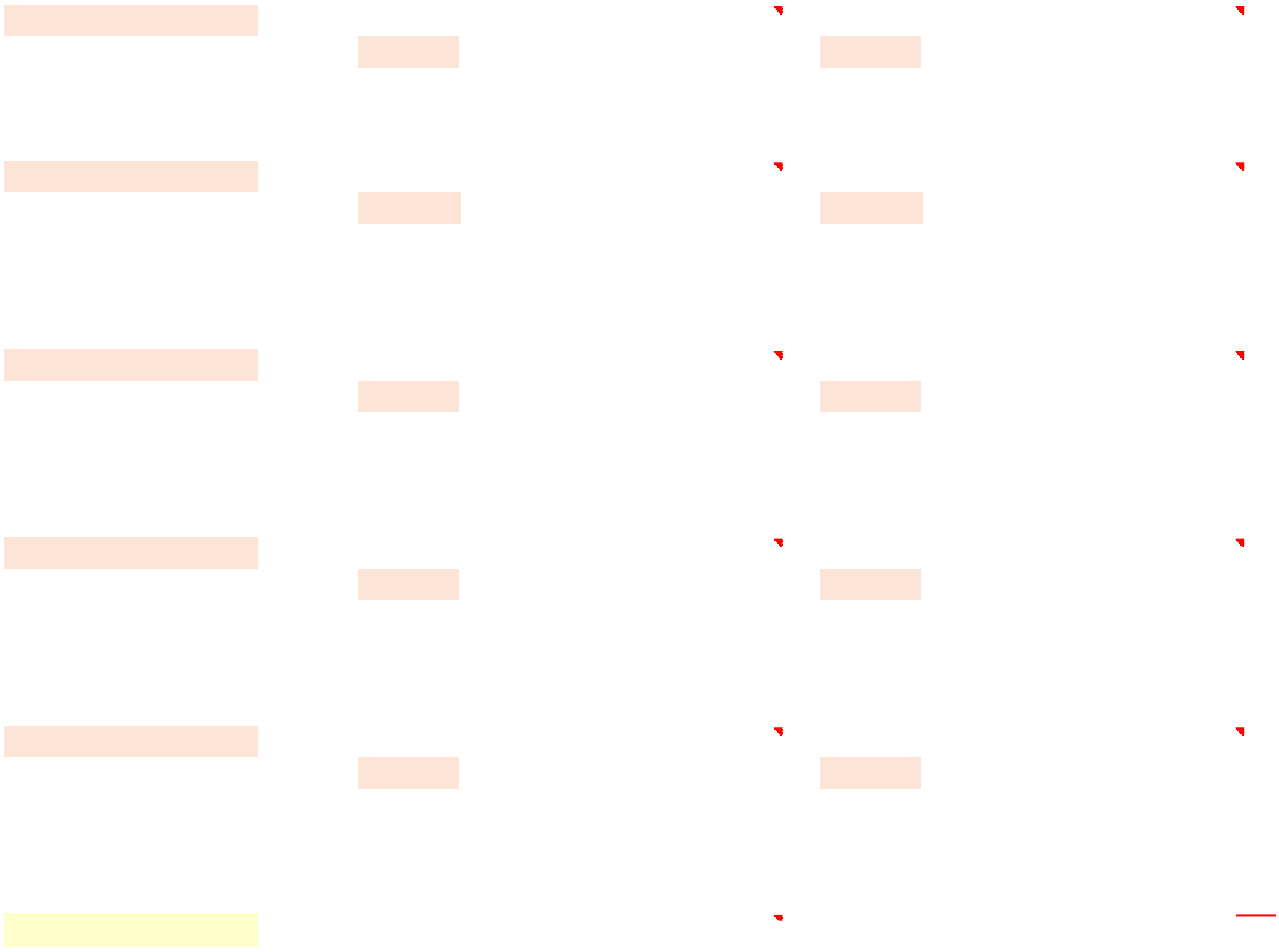
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	46.95%	1338
2	No	50.42%	1437
3	No Opinion	2.63%	75
	Total	100%	2850

Relationship to Law School

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Law student or alumnus/alumna? -ns(d)-1.8 (u)-3.7 a(t)-3.2 i set10e7 a(n)-3.7 (d)-1.8 ut		

Relationship to Law School broken out by category

Broken out - Law Students by decade



With your permission, we may wish to make all or part of your submission public.

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes, I consent to having my submission or parts of it made	0%	0

Introduction

This appendix summarizes the findings of the qualitative analysis of survey responses and emails collected as part of the consultation.

1. Methodology

- The qualitative analysis covers survey responses (n= 2137) in which respondents answered the question, “What would you like to tell us about this issue and its importance to you (e.g. personally, in your role/position, etc.)?” and emails provided by the Faculty of Law (n= 158) for a total of 2,295 cases.
- Between September 11th and 23rd, 2020, three researchers coded the data using NVivo qualitative analysis software.
- The researchers held approximately 10 hours of virtual meetings to develop strategies for the work, to create and revise nodes, and to ensure consistency in coding. Nodes were developed iteratively via multiple rounds of initial coding.
- The codes discussed below cover the reasons why respondents want to keep the name or de-name.

2. Summary of Findings

- Of 2,295 cases analyzed, respondents were evenly split on whether to keep the name (n=1128; 49%) or de-name (n=1110; 48%). A small group of respondents had no opinion (n=57; 2%).
- The number of cases tends to understate the number of respondents who participated in the consultation. Several individuals submitted both surveys and emails. Four emails were submitted jointly by groups (PSAC Local 901; the Political Studies Graduate Student Association; the Queen’s Law Student Society [Core]; and the Senate Educational Equity Committee). All were in favour of changing the name.
- There was little common ground between respondents who want to keep the name and those who want to de-name.
- While many of those who would like to keep the name suggest that a plaque could be placed on or in the building to recognize the controversy around some of Macdonald’s actions, there is no indication from the responses that this would be an acceptable compromise to those who want the name changed.

Below are the top three reasons respondents provided for keeping the name and de-naming. The percentages reflect how many cases mentioned each reason.

Table I. Top Reasons to Keep the Name vs. De-name

Keep the Name		De-name
Macdonald is an important historical figure and had many contributions which deserve commemoration	52%*	

1. TableIII. Main Reasons to D[redacted]name

Reason	References	
	Number	Percentage*
Macdonald was racist, genocidal, and a white supremacist and it's [redacted] commemorate that, regardless of perceived historical norms	519	47%
Queen's, including the name of the law building, harms and disresp[redacted]	401	

> MacDonald, Canada may not be the secure, developed, and prosperous nation it is today. (ArtsSci student, 2023)
>
> I believe the building name should remain named after Sir John A. Macdonald full stop. Without him, there would be no Canada full-stop, and for the same reasons it “seemed appropriate” back in 1960 to name the building after him it remains appropriate today. (ArtsSci alum, 1993)

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b. Macdonald’s positive contributions outweigh the negatives (no one is perfect; he was not solely responsible) [46%]

Description: Respondents acknowledged that although Macdonald made some mistakes, his positive contributions outweigh the harm he inflicted on Indigenous peoples. A common refrain

Quotations:

It is always tempting to judge historical figures by today's standards. However, in

changing the name of something ALREADY NAMED is no less than an attempt to ‘undo’ history. If it causes offence, do not name NEW buildings or locations after Macdonald. (Classics alum, 2020)

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e. Keeping the name facilitates learning about and from the past (helps us to create a more inclusive future) [30%]

   Description: Respondents suggested that keeping the name is an opportunity for Canadians to learn about history and thus grow from it. Keeping “Macdonald Hall” will help educate Canadians about Macdonald’s mistakes so that we can learn from them to create a better, more inclusive Canada.

   Quotations:

g. De-naming threatens Canadian ("our") identity (where will this end?) [28%]

Description: Respondents suggested that if Queen's decides to de-name the building, this will set a dangerous precedent that could lead to many more buildings being de-named and more history being erased. This threatens Canadian identity because history will be destroyed.

Quotations:

> […] If Queens agrees to rename the law building, why would we not remove Sir John's oil portrait from the Centre Block or Parliament Hill where it is displayed with all of Canada's Prime Ministers? And all of the statues and oil portraits of Sir John across Canada? Sir John was imperfect and his errors need to be recognized but he was no despot. Sir John was practicing law and walking the streets of Kingston when Queens received its Royal Charter. I suspect, as a lawyer and a young politician, he had a hand in getting Queens established. As I see it the renaming proposal is an effort to shame Canada by shaming its principal founder. Apologies and reparations are apparently not enough. How far should we be expected to go? How much humiliation must we endure to expiate the errors of past generations? I say there is a line which we can rightly and justly refuse respectfully to cross. This renaming effort is such a (Law alum, 1972)

> Don't go jumping on the latest bandwagon to come by. What will be next? Some left winger will find it politically expedient to find problems with ALL the building names at Queens. When will it ever stop?? You will end up giving all the buildings numbers instead of names—and then the left wing will say that the numbers cause problems. Just stop the nonsense! (ArtsSci alum, 1982)

> He did more good than harm. Are we going to investigate the history of every person that has a building with their name on it? (Science alum, 1975)

i. De-naming would be a trivial and not meaningful gesture [7%]

Description: Respondents suggested there are better ways to address racism and other issues affecting Indigenous people than changing the name of the building. Some characterized the community consultation and de-naming process as a waste of time and money.

Quotations:

> […] There are far more positive things that can be done and are being done to meet the needs of Indigenous students at Queen's. The most recent example of that is the Faculty of Health Sciences setting aside a number of places in the medical school specifically for Indigenous students. That is beneficial. Renaming Macdonald Hall is not. (Queen's alum, 1967)

> Doesn't Queen's have more important things to do? (Science alum, 1964)

[…] AT the time, in 1867, and for a considerable amount of time thereafter, and I

Quotations:

I dont believe in changing building names. Add a plaque that gives a brief history of the good and bad of these figures. (Queen's alum, 2020)

I think it is wrong to change the names of things or we will do it forever. I think we leave the name BUT take the opportunity to provide education for why the individual was not perfect. History is always critical to interpret in the context of the time. In MacDonald's time his views, while now held to be wrong, were perfectly acceptable to most. So install a plaque by the building explaining the positive things he accomplished but also pointing out that by today's standards, his views on issues re indigenous peoples etc. are viewed to be highly inappropriate. The University is after all a place for education and blustering over history is not educating. (ArtsSci alum, 1983)

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m. Proposed ways forward: There are better ways forward besides changing the name (e.g. increasing financial help) [4%]

Description:

Description: Respondents pointed out the harm that Macdonald's policies caused Indigenous peoples and argued that this harm is intergenerational and still exists. He contributed to the deaths of Indigenous people, exterminated their culture, and forced them to be removed from their homes. By keeping the name, the law school would be celebrating these acts, which is wrong.

Quotations:

> Given that the name glorifies a figure who is now known to have been a white supremacist, who is the grandfather of residential schools, and who was a major player in the (cultural) genocide of Indigenous people, it is atrocious that we would continue to commemorate him by holding buildings in his legacy. How are Indigenous students, staff and faculty supposed to take the university seriously when it says it's working toward reconciliation if we don't hear them when they say that this is the very least that we can do? (BEd & MEd alum, 2018 & 2009)

> I think the building should be renamed because Macdonald was extremely racist and violent towards people of colour, even for his time. Keeping his name as part of the Queens campus only continues his legacy while putting down staff and students who are not white and would not have been welcomed by him at all. I understand that while some believe this is like trying to erase a part of history, we should not have the name of a bigot up proudly on a campus that is trying to be inclusive to everybody. (ArtsSci student, 2024)

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b. Queen's, including the name of the law building, harms and disrespects BIPOC students, faculty, and staff (it is shameful, embarrassing) [36%]

Description: Respondents, drawing from personal experience and recent news stories, pointed out that Queen's still has a problem with racism and discrimination. Recent racist acts on campus, including the vandalism of the Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre building, show that racism is not a thing of the past. Macdonald Hall is part of this broader problem at Queen's, as it indicates that the university does not truly want to make students, faculty, and staff who are Indigenous, Black, or people of colour, feel welcome.

Quotations:

> John A. Macdonald was instrumental in the building of systems of oppression that continue to seriously harm my Indigenous brothers and sisters today. He was a founder of genocide against Indigenous people. It is shameful that Queens still has ties to him through building names in 2020. I already do not feel safe on campus due to many racist incidents against Indigenous people and this is another way in which my safety and comfort at my own school is being affected. Having to know that my school supports and celebrates the violent colonial actions by naming buildings after him is a true show that my fear is justified. John A.

Macdonald is the reason many of my ancestors, including my grandmother attended residential school. It is absolutely and wildly inappropriate to continue to celebrate this vile man on campus and then tell students you support reconciliation. Actions speak far louder than words. (ArtsSci student, 2021)

Racists should not be commemorated in a place that educates the young lawyers of tomorrow. My peers, who come from communities that were decimated by people like John A. Macdonald, do not deserve to feel uncomfortable every time they walk in those doors to learn. In our law school classes, we learn about values like equality, justice, and protecting human dignity. Those who hold onto this vestige of a shameful colonial history should be ashamed. It is just a building, just cement and wood and metal. It is not a living, breathing human being that pays an inordinate amount of money and devotes their mental resources to learning about the law. I too am from a radicalized minority, and I know the pain I feel when I see Islamophobic things happen against those in my community. I will steadfastly stand arm in arm with my peers, empathize with their pain, and help to make this name change a reality. Stop weighing the name of an inanimate object with the daily struggle of your students. As we say, Soit Droit Fait – let right be done. (Law student, 2021)

Sir John A. Macdonald was instrumental in buildi

[…] Instead of thinking of this kind of change as “revisionist history”, I encourage folks to consider that renaming the building might instead be an

> The law school has demonstrated a commitment to diversity and inclusion. For inclusion to be possible, a space must be created wherein individuals who have historically been excluded are not only invited in, but also provided with an environment which is supportive of them and of who they are. If the law school is truly committed to not just diversity, but also inclusion of indigenous peoples, they must create a space where indigenous law students can flourish. Honouring a man who (despite being an important figure for certain groups in Canadian society) implemented policies which tore apart and traumatized the families and cultures of students is far from a supportive environment for indigenous students, and honouring such a man hinders rather than advances the goals of diversity and inclusion within Queen's Law, and the legal field. Inclusion requires that those with strong voices be humbled in order to make difficult and uncomfortable decisions for the betterment of legal profession in the future. Changing the Law School building name seems like a small gesture, but it would demonstrate to incoming students that not only are indigenous students welcome at Queen's, but that Queen's values them and is committed to ensuring that Indigenous students are given the space to prosper and succeed within the legal profession, rather than simply exist. (Law student, 2021)

> I spent the majority of my time during the 2019/2020 school year in the "Sir John A Macdonald Hall," in class, meetings or spending late nights at the library. Each time I passed by the sign displaying its name I felt somewhat embarrassed. To me, it seems hypocritical to have Indigenous artwork displayed on the ceiling yet to have this sign proudly displayed below. I myself feel like a hypocrite as a white settler, attending law school with the goal of advancing human rights, going to Indigenous Law Students Alliance (ILSA) meetings, working on my Pro Bono Students Canada project with the Akwesasne Community Justice Program, in this building which proudly displays this name. […] (Law student, 2022)

> As a leading University Queen's should be involved in making history at this pivotal time in recognizing human rights and equality for which other institutions have and are already taking initiative. Please do not allow an individual whose focus was to erase First Nations Inuit and Métis peoples and their culture from existence to be honoured especially in relation to law, which has systemically been used as an aid in this process. (Education, 2004)

i. We do not need to commemorate or celebrate in order to learn history (i.e. renaming would not erase history) [10%]

   Description: Respondents argued there are other ways we can and will learn our history. A building name is not an appropriate way to do this. Some said removing Macdonald's name from the law building would not cause people to forget Macdonald.

   Quotations:

> […] I understand that many individuals who oppose the renaming of Sir John A. MacDonald Hall argue that by doing so we are somehow 'erasing our history' However, you must remember that buildings and statues are not history—they serve only to honour those who have come before us. It is clear today that a man such as Mr. MacDonald should no longer be honoured, and even without his name and face everywhere we will never forget his history and the atrocities he is responsible for in this country. […] (Kingston resident)

> […] Naming a building after Sir John A. Macdonald is a poor way to represent this history. Unlike a statue in a museum, or a display in a gallery, or a chapter in a history book, there is no way to signal the complexities of that history, the horrific legacy that comes attached to his name despite what others may consider 'positives' of his time as PM. The name stands without context, without comment; it is incapable of addressing Macdonald's crimes in addition to his successes (and the overlap between those two categories is, itself, incredibly troubling). What I want to suggest is that any responsible interaction or engagement with Macdonald's legacy is impossible when his presence exists only as a name on a building, a signal of veneration and respect with no method of tempering that respect with knowledge of his legacy. It cannot maintain or represent our history accurately if it cannot incorporate the negative elements as well. […] (Queen's faculty)

> […] Having a building named after John A. MacDonald doesn't teach about him; our history classes do. For people who do not know his significance, they are not impacted by the name of this building. However, to the students that are aware of MacDonald's racism and oppression, this has and will continue to negatively impact students. John A. MacDonald is a trigger for numerous families and continues to perpetuate intergenerational trauma. […] (MA, 20-29)

j. Queen's should be a leader of change and not make [4%]

Description:

> conversation about the name change of the school has made me ashamed to go here. There has been so much discourse for so long over the name of the building and other issues that demonstrate systemic racism here in Canada and this is such a small, small part of doing our very best to demonstrate to the community at large that we are committed not just to reconciliation but to being actively anti racist in our policies and behaviours. Of course, it should not be stopping there. We should be doing a lot more, but this is an extremely small first step of critical importance to shift the conversation. Historical meaning is no excuse […] (Law student, 2021)

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l. Proposed ways forward: We need to prioritize Indigenous voices [4%]

Description: Respondents suggested that if the University de-names the building, it should prioritize Indigenous voices in choosing a new name. This provides an opportunity for the University to centre Indigenous voices.

Quotations:

> Naming the building was symbolic, so de-naming will have a similar symbolic meaning. This re-naming cannot have a positive impact without the guidance of the Elders and Indigenous people in the community who have expressed harm at living surrounded by monuments of, and dedications to people like Macdonald, who clearly enacted policies to result in the genocide of their people and culture. Whether that community is within Queen's, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, or all of Turtle Island should be up to them […] (ArtsSci staff member)

> […] I think that members of the Four Directions Centre Indigenous Student Centre should choose the name of the Law building, which would be a way of operationalizing Queen's Indigenous land acknowledgment statement. (ArtsSci student)

> The building's renaming would provide an opportunity to honour an Indigenous community (or multiple) through choosing a name that those groups selected or helped to select (such as a name that describes the faculty, the land, the university, etc) (ArtsSci alum, 2018)
