

June 29, 2015

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Note: After hearing and seeing that you lowered the flag from a Confederate Memorial was shocking. I agree the flag doesn't belong on the Capital but the memorial is entirely a different issue. Hence, my letter.

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Even though I now live in Kansas City, I was raised in St. Louis most of my life and consider St. Louis has my home. While visiting last week, I read in a local newspaper of the racial incident that occurred in Forest Park. The occurrence itself didn't shock me as in this day and age you see all kinds of unintelligent and unlawful acts of emotion and evil. (What happened to the phrase, "live and let live?") What shocked me was the response to this unlawful act by the local media. Thank God the perpetrators were arrested, as they should have been.

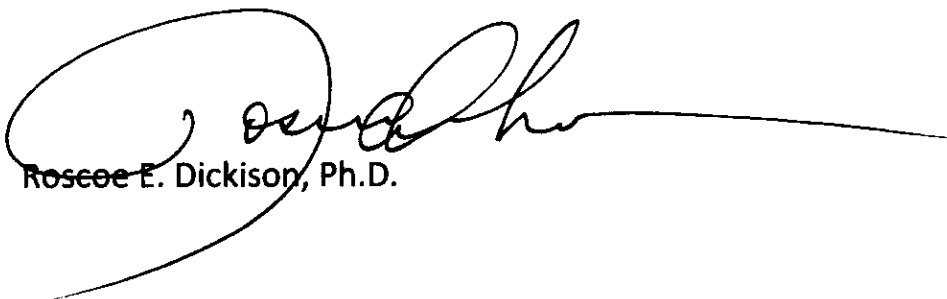
"Black Lives Matter" was sprayed on a Confederate memorial on Wednesday, July 24th in Forest Park. Yes - their lives matter, but what the offenders didn't comprehend, so do Caucasian, Spanish, Asian, Irish, and Native American lives. What happened in South Carolina was tragic but since when do we let emotion and evil dictate our actions (too often, I'm afraid). We should all heed the message from the survivors of the church's congregation, "We forgive you." NOT retaliation. FACT: If a person wants to do evil, he doesn't need an historical object

as an excuse. America is overreacting and some of our political leaders are now on a political bandwagon to get rid of ANYTHING dealing with the Confederacy simply because the killer was holding a Confederate flag. The Confederacy will always be a part of our history and the Confederate Memorial in Forest Park signifies the lives dedicated to that cause. Mayor Francis Slay (St. Louis) wants it removed like the Confederacy never happened. This is the same mentality of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran's president, who stated because of his hatred of Jews, "The Holocaust never happened" or the destruction of the Mosul museum by ISIS which destroyed forever some of the ancient biblical relics. Hey, with this mindset, let's remove Auschwitz, Stone Mountain (relief of top Confederate generals) outside Atlanta, all the statues of Jefferson Davis, in Texas, Kentucky, and Mississippi. While we are in Mississippi let's make sure to destroy Jefferson Davis's summer home at Beauvoir, If we play our politics right we can make sure our future youth will never learn of the Confederacy. And by closing down the Holocaust museum in Washington D.C., future generations will never learn of the horror in the extermination of the Jews. Our future children will grow up to believe our world has always been a land of milk and honey when evil and wrongs by prejudice and hate never happened.

"Black Lives Matter" so now we have February designated as Black History month. Great! I'm still waiting for Spanish month, Irish month, French month, Asian month and Native American month? If you check your history Asians, Spanish and Native Americans also experienced slavery in this country. French and Irish were considered only for hire in lowly jobs or servitude. America is a democracy. What happened to equality? What about large numbers of Spanish in areas of Florida and the Southwest? What about China Town in places such as New York, Boston and California? In the 19th century, if you were an Irish immigrant, you had a very hard time getting a job, if any. It is way over due for Americans to get rid of the guilt of slavery. This is the twenty-first century where anybody of any race, if they have the desire and fortitude, can achieve their dream. My great, great grandfather came over from Ireland with only the clothes on his back and with hard work and guts carved a very good living.

No, I'm not racist. I taught in a 99% all black intercity high school for twenty years. From those years in the classroom, I found the guilt of slavery is still ingrained in most of the black population. As a teacher, if students were not doing well in school, I frequently got the demand, "You owe me!" If I had a \$1.00 for every time a black student told me I owed them, I could have retired in fifteen years. My main response was telling them to be Irish in the 19th century as an immigrant. It's way over due; Let's remove the guilt once and for all and stop letting evil and emotion play a large part in our decisions. Auschwitz doesn't honor the murder of thousands of Jews but it does remind us of the Nazi horror and evil.

Since the creation of the state of Missouri (1821) through the Civil War, Missouri was admitted to the Union as a slave state. That is historical fact. Hence, Missouri has residents who had ancestors who fought on both sides. Even though we who have relatives who fought for the Confederacy do not agree with the cause it is still part of our past and should not be desecrated or forgotten. Leave our relics and memorials honoring our past alone in order for future generations to learn and reflect. Yes, "Black Lives Matter" but so do those of us who want to preserve our history in order for future generations to discover and ponder. Use the energy to learn and reflect our historical wrong doings and evil so it never happens again instead of desecrating memorials, lowering flags, and shouting hatred and obscenities. Use them, not to honor slavery or extermination, but to remind us of its evils, and the terrible price paid by all. Never again!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rosecoe E. Dickison", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rosecoe E. Dickison, Ph.D.