

## CHAPTER EIGHT: McCORKLE PLACE

McCorkle Place is said to be the most densely memorialized piece of real estate in North Carolina.<sup>501</sup> On the University's symbolic front lawn, there are almost a dozen monuments and memorials fundamental to the University's lore and traditions, but only two monuments within the space have determined the role of McCorkle Place as a space for racial justice movements.<sup>502</sup> The Unsung Founders Memorial and the University's Confederate Monument were erected on the oldest quad of the campus almost a century apart for dramatically different memorial purposes. The former honors the enslaved and freed Black persons who "helped build" the University, while the latter commemorated, until its toppling in August 2018, "the sons of the University who entered the war of 1861-65."<sup>503</sup>

Separated by only a few dozen yards, the physical distinctions between the two monuments were, before the Confederate Monument was toppled, quite striking. The Unsung

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<sup>501</sup> Johnathan Michels, "Who Gets to be Remembered In Chapel Hill?," *Scalawag Magazine*, 8 October 2016, <<https://www.scalawagmagazine.org/2016/10/whats-in-a-name/>>.

<sup>502</sup> Timothy J. McMillan, "Remembering Forgetting: A Monument to Erasure at the University of North Carolina," in *Silence, Screen and Spectacle: Rethinking Social Memory in the Age of Information*, ed. Lindsay A. Freeman, Benjamin Nienass, and Rachel Daniell, 137-162, (Berghahn Book: New York, New York, 2004): 139-142; Other memorials and sites of memory within McCorkle Place include the Old Well, the Davie Poplar, Old East, the Caldwell Monument, a Memorial to Founding Trustees, and the Speaker Ban Monument.

<sup>503</sup> Unsung Founders Memorial, UNC (Chapel Hill), Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina, Documenting the American South, Accessed 8 March 2018, <<http://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/45/>>; Confederate Monument, UNC (Chapel Hill), Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina, Documenting the American South, Accessed 8 March 2018, <[http://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/41](http://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/41/)>.

Founders Memorial, a Black granite table five feet in diameter, rises only two feet from the ground, its surface supported by miniature bronze figures representing the University's "unsung founders." The University's Confederate Monument, which has been called "Silent Sam" by students since the 1950s, featured an eight foot tall bronze Confederate soldier, facing north and standing atop a nearly fifteen foot tall granite plinth, which included a bronze panel depicting a male student dropping books to answer "the call of their country."<sup>504</sup> The physical and memorial differences between the two monuments were stark, and yet both illustrate how the racialized campus landscape exposes the white supremacy of the institution's culture. Both monuments have been sites of protest and resistance, and spaces from which organizers have demanded a widespread transformation of the campus and the institution.

Together, the two monuments and the history of racial justice movements around them provide a striking polarity from which to examine the varied ways in which campus organizers have used the University's history as a tool of activation and demonstration towards the expulsion of white supremacy from the campus and institution. This chapter argues that, as with Saunders Hall, early movements against the Confederate Monument contested it as a symbol of institutional white supremacy, but following the installation of the Unsung Founders Memorial within McCorkle Place, organizers began to develop a broader understanding of the ways in which the history of the institution manifests across the campus landscape. With a deepened knowledge of histories of resistance to the University's anti-Blackness, contemporary movements that have operated within McCorkle Place organized to challenge the University's "diversity without justice" cultural paradigm, moving Black students and workers towards a

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<sup>504</sup> Confederate Monument, UNC (Chapel Hill), Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina, Documenting the American South, Accessed 15 August 2018, <<http://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/41>>.

reclamation of the University as place directed by the legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill.<sup>505</sup>

### **“Soldiers’ Monument” or “Silent Sam”**

On June 2, 1913, members of the University’s Alumni Association and North Carolina’s United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) unveiled a “Soldiers’ Monument” to the University’s Confederate veterans on McCorkle Place. The program for the dedication of the Confederate Monument included a number of prominent white citizens from across the state, including the University’s President, Francis P. Venable; a prominent state leader of the Democratic 1898 white supremacist campaigns, Governor Locke Craig; the president of the state’s UDC chapter, Mrs. Marshall Williams; and commander of the state’s Confederate Veterans, secretary of the Alumni Association, and University trustee, “General” Julian Carr.<sup>506</sup> The erection of the Soldiers Monument was an opportunity for University and state leaders not just to commemorate the University’s Confederate veterans, but to affirm the institution’s shared culture with the values of North Carolina Jim Crow society.<sup>507</sup>

Following speeches from Venable, Craige, and Williams, Carr rose to give his “thanks of the student veterans.”<sup>508</sup> The present generation, he complained, had no memory or appreciation of the dedication of student veterans to the Confederate cause, which had preserved “the purest

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<sup>505</sup> John K. Chapman, *Black Freedom and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1793-1960*. (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006), 191.

<sup>506</sup> Julian Shakespeare Carr did not serve as a general in the Confederate States Army, but rather was given the title, “General Carr,” from members of the state’s Confederate veterans’ association for his service in veterans affairs.

<sup>507</sup> John K. Chapman, *Black Freedom and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1793-1960*. (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006), 112-114.

<sup>508</sup> Program for the dedication of the Confederate Monument, 1913 in the University Ephemera Collection #40446, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

strain of the Anglo Saxon to be found in the 13 Southern States.” Digressing somewhat from giving thanks, Carr continued: “One hundred yards from where we stand, less than ninety days perhaps after my return from Appomattox, I horse-whipped a negro wench until her skirts hung in shreds, because upon the streets of this quiet village she had publicly insulted and maligned a Southern lady, and then rushed for protection to these University buildings where was stationed a garrison of 100 Federal soldiers.”<sup>509</sup> Carr’s speech, along with those of the other members of the June 2nd program, provide clear documentation that there were multiple purposes behind the erection of a Confederate Monument on the University’s campus: to honor the lives of the University’s student Confederate veterans, to honor the Confederate cause of white supremacy that student veterans had fought for, and to dedicate the campus of North Carolina’s public university to the celebration of anti-Black violence.

Following the 1913 dedication of the Confederate Monument, there were numerous occasions in which white students used the monument as a space for gathering, decoration, and tagging (with paint, underwear, pumpkins, leis, among other materials). The earliest written record of protest against the monument was not until 1965, when student Al Ribak wrote a letter to *The Daily Tar Heel* in which he urged “the Carolina student body to take up the case of removing from the campus that shameful commemoration of a disgraceful episode.”<sup>510</sup>

Following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968, the Confederate Monument

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<sup>509</sup> Unveiling of Confederate Monument at University Speech in the Julian Shakespeare Carr Paper, #141, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>510</sup> Al Ribak, “‘Silent Sam’ Should Leave,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 17 March 1965, 2.

was splashed with paint and tagged with graffiti.<sup>511</sup> But the first documented student gathering at the monument for the purpose of protesting against white supremacy occurred on November 19, 1971.<sup>512</sup> Members of the Black Student Movement (BSM) and the Afro-American Society of Chapel Hill High School gathered at the monument to honor the one year anniversary of the murder of James Lewis Cates, a young Black Chapel Hill citizen who had been stabbed by members of a white motorcycle gang, the Storm Troopers, in the Pit after a party on the campus as the Chapel Hill police watched without intervening.<sup>513</sup> Following the 1971 rally in memory of Cates, students began using the Confederate Monument as a gathering space of resistance.

Historian Brian Ladd explains that “monuments are nothing if not selective aids to memory: they encourage us to remember some things but to forget others.”<sup>514</sup> By using the Confederate Monument for a purpose other than that which its creators intended, Black students engaged in another remembering process, transforming the monument into a space in which they could continue to remember and reject the legacy of anti-Black violence. In 1973, the BSM gathered again to commemorate three years since Cates’s murder.<sup>515</sup> In May 1992, following the Rodney King verdict and the eruption of riots in Los Angeles against anti-Black violence and police impunity, students converged on the monument, led by BSM president Michelle Thomas,

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<sup>511</sup> White students later volunteered to clean the paint off the monument, and decorated the ground with small Confederate flags, which they were then asked to remove by administrators. See: Mike Jennings, “Dastardly Deed to Sam,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 10 April 1968, 2.

<sup>512</sup> James Moore, “I’m ashamed of my passivity,” *Black Ink*, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, December 1, 1971.

<sup>513</sup> “Slaying Arouses Chapel Hill, NC,” *The New York Times*, 31 January 1971, 34; The three men who were charged with first degree murder of Cates were not convicted of any crime.

<sup>514</sup> Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 11.

<sup>515</sup> “73 Yack Lacks Black Viewpoint,” Letter to the Editor, *The Daily Tar Heel*, 24 September 1973, 6.

voicing their anger over the King verdict.<sup>516</sup> In 1995, members of the Housekeepers Association rallied at the monument, speaking out about the discrimination they experienced as low-wage Black workers at the University. In 1997, the Chapel Hill Martin Luther King Day march ended with a demonstration at the monument, with a focus again on the housekeepers movement.<sup>517</sup> Although none of these demonstrations called directly for removal or historical contextualization of the monument, these early protests transformed the Confederate Monument into a space in which Black Chapel Hill citizens could rally against the racial injustice and inequity embedded in the University's multiple landscapes of experience.

By the turn of the twenty-first century, some of the University's students and faculty began discussing publicly the ways in which the Confederate Monument represented more than a memorial to the University's student Confederate veterans. On February 2, 2000, Professor Gerald Horne, the director of the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center, contributed a "Villages Voices" column to the *Chapel Hill News* in which he argued that "though Chapel Hill allegedly prides itself on its opposition to the kind of retrograde conservatism that the Confederate flag represents, the fact remains that the most prominent statue on the university campus is a heroic rendition of a soldier from the Confederate military." Condemning the University's liberalism directly, Horne argued that the monument should be removed from the campus because it honored "racial separatism" and "slavery denial." "The season has arrived to

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<sup>516</sup> Anna Griffin, "Community Reacts to King Case, L.A. riots," *The Daily Tar Heel*, 18 May 1992, 3.

<sup>517</sup> Photographs of 1995 HKA Protest and 1997 MLK Day March in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

consign statues honoring the Confederacy to the appropriate museum or historical society,” he wrote, “and plant in its place a tree symbolizing racial tolerance.”<sup>518</sup>

Horne’s column inspired dozens of letters to the editor both rebuffing and supporting his statements. Yonni Chapman submitted his own statement to the *Chapel Hill News*, in which he echoed Horne’s visions for the future of the monument: “I agree, Silent Sam must be removed.”<sup>519</sup> Chapman, who in 2000 was already organizing around issues of historical truth and racial justice at the University, turned the work of his Freedom Legacy Project (FLP) towards the Confederate Monument. In the following school year, FLP sponsored a handful of panels and lectures on institutional racism at the University, discussions which covered the symbolic nature of the Confederate Monument in contributing to institutional racism.<sup>520</sup> Although the 2001 On the Wake of Emancipation Campaign (OWEC) targeted Saunders Hall more than the Confederate Monument as a space which demanded transformation, together the organizing work of OWEC and FLP, as well as the controversy surrounding Horne’s column, produced a conversation about how memorialization, enslavement, and the campus landscape operated to preserve white supremacy within the University’s culture.

### **The Unsung Founders Memorial and Public Reactions**

The Unsung Founders Memorial, which was chosen as the Class of 2002’s senior class gift, entered onto the campus landscape within the context of this conversation about the future

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<sup>518</sup> Gerald Horne, “Hoisting Integrity Up the Flagpole,” *Chapel Hill News*, 2 February 2000.

<sup>519</sup> “Fess Up Silent Sam,” Letter to the Editor submitted to the *Chapel Hill News*, February 2000 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>520</sup> Freedom Legacy Project lecture flyers and minute meeting notes, 2001-2002 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

of the Confederate Monument. The memorial, the senior class gift committee wrote in October 2001, would honor of the “men and women of color who helped raise the first buildings on campus.”<sup>521</sup> The senior class president, Ben Singer, argued that the choice of the monument to the enslaved persons who built the University (rather than a monument to the September 11th World Trade Center attacks, another option considered by the senior gift committee) would not be “about improving the university aesthetically, but rather embracing our roots and telling a story.”<sup>522</sup> The senior gift committee selected South Korean-born artist Do-Ho Suh to the create the memorial. Suh submitted a proposal for the memorial that would “incorporate his signature miniature figures,” which he had used previously to emphasize the creation of a collective in sustaining or challenging power.<sup>523</sup>

For the *Unsung Founders Memorial*, which Renée Ater details in her article about the monument’s creation and reception, Suh built three hundred miniature bronze figures, which hold up a rounded Black granite table with their upraised arms. The figures, Ater described, have “distinctive Negroid features,” with the female figures wearing handkerchiefs and long skirts, and the male figures clothed in three different ways to designate between freeman, laborers, and the enslaved. Surrounding the table, which rises only two feet from the ground, Suh sculpted five seats, which resemble the “rough-hewn stone grave markers of slaves and free persons of color found in the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery.” The memorial that Suh created for the Class of 2002 offers no atonement or honorific for the “the people of color, bound and free, who helped build

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<sup>521</sup> Meredith Nicholson, “Students Respond to Class Gifts,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 2 October 2001.

<sup>522</sup> Elliot Dube, “Suh Chosen as Gift Artist; Design, Funding in Works,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 23 May 2002.

<sup>523</sup> Renée Ater, “The Challenge of Memorializing Slavery in North Carolina: The *Unsung Founders Memorial* and the North Carolina Freedom Monument Project,” in *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*, ed. Ana Lucia Araujo, 141-156, (New York and London: Routledge, 2012): 146.

the Carolina that we treasure today.”<sup>524</sup> Instead, the representational figures do the labor their real counterparts did in life. “If you look at the figures’ facial expressions they don’t look oppressed, so it has a kind of positive gesture, but what they are doing actually is just bearing weight,” Suh explained.<sup>525</sup>

In attendance at the dedication of the memorial on November 5, 2005 were descendants of the University’s “unsung founders,” several local residents and leaders in Chapel Hill’s Black neighborhoods, including restaurateur Mildred Council, civil rights activist Fred Battle, and union leader Rebecca Clark (whose name is also on the Cheek-Clark Building). At the dedication, Chancellor James Moeser, who had developed a reputation as a liberal chancellor, notably used the phrase “servants and slaves” in his address which prominently praised the University’s changing approach towards the examination of its past, rather than focusing on the commemoration of the contributions of the Black persons who were crucial to its building and maintenance. “This memorial, I believe,” Moeser said, “attests to our commitment to shed light on the darker corners of our history.”<sup>526</sup> The Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Bernadette Gray-Little, a Black woman, offered personal remarks at the dedication. “One of the troublesome legacies of slavery is the pall that it casts over the family histories of those who were bought and sold,” Gray-Little said. “My obscured family history is a reflection of the

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<sup>524</sup> Unsung Founders Memorial, UNC (Chapel Hill), Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina, Documenting the American South, Accessed 8 March 2018, <<http://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/45/>>.

<sup>525</sup> “Sotires: Art21,” online video at PBS, <<http://www.pbs.org/art21/series/sea-sontwo/stories.html>> cited in Ater, Renée, “The Challenge of Memorializing Slavery in North Carolina: The Unsung Founders Memorial and the North Carolina Freedom Monument Project,” in *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*, ed. Ana Lucia Araujo, 141-156, (New York and London: Routledge, 2012): 147.

<sup>526</sup> “Celebrating the Unsung Founders: Memorial Dedicated on McCorkle Place,” *University Gazette*, 16 November 2005, <<http://gazette.unc.edu/archives/05nov16/file.4.html>>.

obscurity of enslaved persons...This monument finally recognizes the many unnamed whose toil and talent made the nation's first public university possible."<sup>527</sup> Gray-Little reflected in a later interview that the descendants of "some of the very people we were talking about as unsung contributors" received her speech well.<sup>528</sup>

Although the memorial received initial praise at its unveiling and dedication, it almost immediately drew criticism for its biased memorialization of the University's use of the labor of the enslaved. Tim McMillan, the founder of the Black and Blue Tour, in his article on the memorial, divides the various critiques leveraged against the monument into four distinct issues: "1) its non-imposing nature while being surrounded by more 'monumental' monuments to the white founders of the campus, 2) its non-specificity, 3) its evasive and self-congratulatory rhetoric, and 4) its creator."<sup>529</sup> The first of these critiques highlights the evident dichotomy set up between the Confederate Monument and the Unsung Founders Memorial, which Suh purposefully established when choosing a space for his creation.<sup>530</sup>

Reginald Hildebrand, an emeritus professor of the Department of African, African-American, and Diaspora Studies, explained the structural racism inherent in the memorial, stating "there are very few monuments that make you smaller as a monument than you were in

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<sup>527</sup> Speech from Bernadette Gray-Little at Unsung Founders Memorial Unveiling, 5 November 2005 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>528</sup> "Gray-Little Reflects on Six Months as Provost," *University Gazette*, 6 December 2006, <<https://gazette.unc.edu/archives/06dec13/file.4.html>>.

<sup>529</sup> Timothy J. McMillan, "Remembering Forgetting: A Monument to Erasure at the University of North Carolina," in *Silence, Screen and Spectacle: Rethinking Social Memory in the Age of Information*, ed. Lindsay A. Freeman, Benjamin Nienass, and Rachel Daniell, 137-162, (Berghahn Book: New York, New York, 2004): 147.

<sup>530</sup> Renée Ater, "The Challenge of Memorializing Slavery in North Carolina: The Unsung Founders Memorial and the North Carolina Freedom Monument Project," in *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*, ed. Ana Lucia Araujo, 141-156, (New York and London: Routledge, 2012): 149.

life, and put you down on the ground. You literally have to look down on those people to know that they are there. Unfortunately, they are well-positioned to be footrests. When it rains, they get splattered with mud. How can that be honoring them?”<sup>531</sup> Although the Unsung Founders Memorial was not likely designed by Suh to be a public display of Black suffering for the consumption of a white audience, this was the result. As Dancy et al. explain, “Black suffering merely decorates the landscape of White humanity.”<sup>532</sup> The figurines in the Unsung Founders Memorial became, on the white campus landscape, an artistic portrayal of Black pain, rendered as an aesthetic commodity.<sup>533</sup>

Hildebrand, referencing the invitation of the “unsung founders” descendants to the 2005 memorial dedication explained their reticence to accept the “honor” bestowed on their ancestors: “There were some people who belonged to the church that I belong to, been here forever, and had had family members who worked on the campus, and the University made a gracious effort to have them present for the unveiling. They were aware of the difficulty. But they also were appreciative of being recognized. So you are in the position of, in order to accept this honor, you also have to accept being demeaned.”<sup>534</sup> The inscription on the face of the table, which reads

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<sup>531</sup> Interview with Reginald Hildebrand by Charlotte Fryar, 27 March 2017, L-0460.

<sup>532</sup> T. Elon Dancy, Kirsten T. Edwards, and James Earl Davis, “Historically White Universities and Plantation Politics: Anti-Blackness and Higher Education in the Black Lives Matter Era,” *Urban Education* 53, No. 2 (2018): 188.

<sup>533</sup> The selection committee’s choice of Do-Ho Suh, a South Korean-born artist living in the United States, as the artist for the memorial inspired its own conversation regarding race and racism. Many critics of the monument felt that a South Korean-born artist could not correctly render a memorial to the suffering of African-Americans in the United States, and some attributed the inadequacies and even pejorative nature of the memorial to Suh’s ethnicity and race, rather than his abilities as an artist. For more see: Timothy J. McMillan, “Remembering Forgetting: A Monument to Erasure at the University of North Carolina,” in *Silence, Screen and Spectacle: Rethinking Social Memory in the Age of Information*, ed. Lindsay A. Freeman, Benjamin Nienass, and Rachel Daniell, 137-162, (Berghahn Book: New York, New York, 2004): 154-156.

<sup>534</sup> Interview with Reginald Hildebrand by Charlotte Fryar, 27 March 2017, L-0460.

“The Class of 2002 honors the university’s unsung founders, the people of color, bound and free, who helped build the Carolina that we cherish today,” has also been disputed. The word “we” suggests to some that there is an us/them dichotomy between the University and its “unsung founders,” a divide exacerbated by the forced diminishment of the representations of the “bound and free.” The absence of the words “slave,” “slavery,” or “enslaved,” are also contentious, largely because the memorial was planned to be a form of honoring enslaved persons.<sup>535</sup>

For some students who entered the University after 2005, viewing the Unsung Founders Memorial for the first time was shocking. Taylor Webber-Fields, who organized with the Real Silent Sam Coalition through 2015, remembered experiencing the memorial on her first tour of the campus: “She [the tour guide] took us to Silent Sam and was telling us about the monument...And then she took us to Unsung Founders, which is two hundred feet from the monument. And I just remember imploding. I just remember feeling...almost like, cheated again, or lied to again...So to know that this place not only capitalized on this whole system [enslavement], but was perpetuating the whole system all over again, and then, seeing it in statue form was just maddening.”<sup>536</sup> Donelle Boose, who was an undergraduate at the time of the memorial’s unveiling and dedication, described the offensive nature of the memorial in relationship to the Confederate Monument: “when you contrast those two things, this monument to Silent Sam and the Confederacy, to this monument to the unsung people who helped build the university...it’s like ‘how can we do something to shut these people up and not piss off other

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<sup>535</sup> Timothy J. McMillan, “Remembering Forgetting: A Monument to Erasure at the University of North Carolina,” in *Silence, Screen and Spectacle: Rethinking Social Memory in the Age of Information*, ed. Lindsay A. Freeman, Benjamin Nienass, and Rachel Daniell, 137-162, (Berghahn Book: New York, New York, 2004): 151-154.

<sup>536</sup> Interview with Taylor Webber-Fields by Charlotte Fryar, 29 November 2017, L-0468.

people? How can we just do this as low key as possible? How can we acknowledge our roots in the most subtle way possible, our slavery roots?”<sup>537</sup>

### **Movements to Contextualize and Remove the Confederate Monument**

The dedication of the Unsung Founders Memorial and subsequent critiques leveraged against it arrived among a spate of other events that were also attempts to address the University’s history as a site of enslavement. In April 2003, Gerald Horne published another opinion piece, this time in *The Daily Tar Heel*, comparing the Confederate Monument to statues of Saddam Hussein being toppled in Iraq.<sup>538</sup> In 2002, Yonni Chapman began a campaign to rename the Cornelia Phillips Spencer Bell Award, which since 1993 annually honored a woman who had made significant contributions to the University. Citing Spencer’s role in the post-Emancipation movement against Black enfranchisement, Chapman argued that her name should be removed from such an award. The discussion around Spencer and her legacy eventually developed into a two-day long conference in October 2004, “Remembering Reconstruction,” which was a response to the conversations about white supremacy embedded in the campus and institutional landscapes of Chapel Hill, conversations that Chapman had supported beginning with Kristi Booker’s creation of Students Seeking Historical Truth in 1999. Following the conference, Chancellor Moeser “retired” the Spencer Bell Award.<sup>539</sup>

In October 2005, University Archives unveiled an exhibit in Wilson Library entitled *Slavery and the Making of the University*, which coincided with the dedication of the Unsung

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<sup>537</sup> Interview with Donelle Boose by Charlotte Fryar, 17 November 2017, L-0451.

<sup>538</sup> Gerald Horne, “Silent Sam! should topple exactly like Hussein statues,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 11 April 2003.

<sup>539</sup> Timothy J. McMillan, “Remembering Forgetting: A Monument to Erasure at the University of North Carolina,” in *Silence, Screen and Spectacle: Rethinking Social Memory in the Age of Information*, ed. Lindsay A. Freeman, Benjamin Nienass, and Rachel Daniell, 137-162, (Berghahn Book: New York, New York, 2004): 143.

Founders Memorial and highlighted archival materials that aimed to “recognize and document the contributions of slaves, college servants, and free persons of color, primarily during the university’s antebellum period.”<sup>540</sup> In 2007, the University officially rededicated Hinton James North, one of the new South Campus dorms constructed in 2002, as George Moses Horton Hall, marking it as what Chancellor Moeser described as “the first university building in this country named for a slave,” and allowing the University to claim Horton, a formerly enslaved poet from Orange County, as part of its institutional history.<sup>541</sup> Although not all of these events directly corresponded to the space of McCorkle Place itself, they were all aimed at understanding the legacy of the University’s past within the eras of enslavement and Reconstruction. McCorkle Place, as the oldest space within the University’s built landscape, was an historic site of enslavement, and therefore, each of these events, campaigns, and conversations spoke to the history and legacy of the space as it existed in the first century of the University.<sup>542</sup> However, few if any, of these initiatives directly involved the leadership or counsel of Black students or workers.

Present in the background of these conversations about how the University might rectify the legacy of its racist past within the historical eras of enslavement and Reconstruction was the Confederate Monument. Students picked back up the issue of the Confederate Monument in

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<sup>540</sup> Renée Ater, “The Challenge of Memorializing Slavery in North Carolina: The Unsung Founders Memorial and the North Carolina Freedom Monument Project,” in *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*, ed. Ana Lucia Araujo, 141-156, (New York and London: Routledge, 2012): 149.

<sup>541</sup> Dedication Speech at Georges Moses Horton Residence Hall, 12 February 2007 in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: James Moeser Records #40228, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>542</sup> Timothy J. McMillan, “Remembering Forgetting: A Monument to Erasure at the University of North Carolina,” in *Silence, Screen and Spectacle: Rethinking Social Memory in the Age of Information*, ed. Lindsay A. Freeman, Benjamin Nienass, and Rachel Daniell, 137-162, (Berghahn Book: New York, New York, 2004): 142-144.

September 2011, when the Real Silent Sam Coalition first formed. In their first list of demands to the University, delivered in February 2012, RSSC stated clearly that they had no wish to “remove the statue or revise history,” but rather that they sought “to challenge the university to provide a more complete historical narrative.” Only through historical accuracy, they wrote, can “we hope to invigorate a culture at the university that celebrates difference and cultivates a diverse, egalitarian, and truth-seeking student body.”<sup>543</sup> At their first meeting, members of RSSC read aloud Julian Carr’s speech at the dedication of the Confederate Monument to demonstrate how the institution remained committed to anti-Black violence.<sup>544</sup>

The first of RSSC’s four demands called for the addition of a plaque on or near “Silent Sam,” which “thoroughly explains the context in which the monument was erected.” The remainder of their demands dealt with memorial review, educational efforts, and significantly, the creation of a new monument, “of equal size and prominence to the Confederate Monument, to demonstrate the commitment to inclusivity at the modern university.” Rather than honoring a “mass of unnamed persons” they wrote, “it is critical that this monument honor a specific individual...Abraham Galloway, Zora Neale Hurston, or the Rev. Dr. Anna Pauline (Pauli) Murray should be considered for this honor.” This identification of a key issue with the Unsung Founders Memorial, along with the demand for historical contextualization for the Confederate Monument, established a written dichotomy between the two monuments.<sup>545</sup>

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<sup>543</sup> “Real Silent Sam Proposal, Delivered to Chancellor Thorp, Feb 15, 2012,” The Real Silent Sam Tumblr, 15 February 2012, Accessed 5 March 2018, <<http://realsilentsam-blog.tumblr.com/post/31088763648/introduction-to-real-silent-sam-1>>.

<sup>544</sup> Interview with Omololu Babatunde by Charlotte Fryar, 2 December 2017, L-0449.

<sup>545</sup> “Real Silent Sam Proposal, Delivered to Chancellor Thorp, Feb 15, 2012,” The Real Silent Sam Tumblr, 15 February 2012, Accessed 5 March 2018, <<http://realsilentsam-blog.tumblr.com/post/31088763648/introduction-to-real-silent-sam-1>>.

The 2012 demands from RSSC also addressed the need to not just remove or contextualize names or monuments within the campus landscape, but to add those monuments and names that reflect the values of individuals or movements deserving of commemoration.<sup>546</sup> Although RSSC was still focused on McCorkle Place in particular, their rhetoric suggests that members were developing a new sense of place for Chapel Hill by understanding themselves as emplaced actors within the history of the institution and the campus. Describing how a focus on one space could augment conversation about the entire campus, Zaina Alsous, one of the founders of RSSC, explained in 2012 that the Confederate Monument was “just a metaphor, a symbol for something much deeper and more unsettling about this place than a static image....I want us to be able to talk about racism and all its manifestations right here at this University.”<sup>547</sup> The new sense of place for Chapel Hill that RSSC had begun to articulate as a powerful place of Black resistance set the foundation for future acts of reclamation through which Black students could assert their ownership of the University. In 2014, RSSC redirected their efforts away from the Confederate Monument and towards the removal of William Saunders’s name from Saunders Hall and the addition of Zora Neale Hurston’s name to the building, once again expanding their framework towards the reclamation of the University.

In June 2015, the national conversation about the future of Confederate monument removal shifted in the wake of a massacre at the Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, South Carolina perpetrated by Dylann Roof, an avowed white nationalist. Before entering the historic

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<sup>546</sup> “Real Silent Sam Proposal, Delivered to Chancellor Thorp, Feb 15, 2012,” The Real Silent Sam Tumblr, 15 February 2012, Accessed 5 March 2018, <<http://realsilentsam-blog.tumblr.com/post/31088763648/introduction-to-real-silent-sam-1>>.

<sup>547</sup> Introduction to the Real Silent Sam #3, The Real Silent Sam Tumblr, April 2012, Accessed 5 March 2018, <<http://realsilentsam-blog.tumblr.com/post/31273713178/introduction-to-the-real-silent-sam-3-april>>.

Black church to murder nine Black citizens, Roof had taken photographs with the Confederate flag and visited several historic sites in North and South Carolina related to the Confederacy.<sup>548</sup> The media coverage of the anti-Black massacre soon transferred towards questions about the meaning of monuments, flags, and other symbols of the Confederacy. In early July, South Carolina's legislature voted to remove the Confederate flag from its statehouse grounds, and other cities and towns began to move towards removal of Confederate monuments from civic spaces across the United States.<sup>549</sup>

In response to the numerous national campaigns to remove Confederate monuments, North Carolina's Republican-majority General Assembly passed a law that prohibits towns, universities, and other public agencies from moving or removing any and all "objects of remembrance" without permission from the North Carolina Historical Commission, a board of historians and interested citizens appointed by the Governor.<sup>550</sup> In the months following the Charleston massacre, the Confederate Monument was tagged several times with the phrases "Black Lives Matter," "KKK," "Murderer," and "Who Is Sandra Bland?," referencing the name of a Black woman who was found dead in a jail cell in Texas in July 2015 after being stopped for a traffic violation. The continued tagging of the Confederate Monument helped to sustain a

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<sup>548</sup> Frances Robles, "Dylann Roof Photos and a Manifesto Are Posted on Website," *The New York Times*, 20 June 2015.

<sup>549</sup> "Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy," Report from the Southern Poverty Law Center, 4 June 2018, Accessed 4 January 2019, <<https://www.splcenter.org/20180604/whose-heritage-public-symbols-confederacy#top>>.

<sup>550</sup> S.B. 22, 2015 Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess., 2015 N.C. Sess. Laws 436, <<https://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2015/Bills/Senate/PDF/S22v5.pdf>>.

conversation on the campus about the persistence of anti-Black violence in Chapel Hill during the summer months.<sup>551</sup>

The University continued to clean the monument after each tagging and installed video cameras in McCorkle Place to surveil the monument and protestors who might enter the space.<sup>552</sup> Scholar Simone Browne explains that in public spaces that are “shaped for and by whiteness, some acts in public are abnormalized by way of racializing surveillance and then coded for disciplinary measures that are punitive in their effects.”<sup>553</sup> By installing cameras in McCorkle Place to watch over the Confederate Monument, the University’s administration could surveil organizers (the majority of whom were Black students) in the space around the monument and potentially punish them for any actions they might take as they engaged with either the Confederate Monument or the Unsung Founders Memorial.

In the fall, RSSC organized once more against the Confederate Monument, this time calling formally for its removal from the campus. On October 11th, members of RSSC, led largely by queer Black women, gathered in front of the Confederate Monument under a blue tailgate tent and microphone. For twenty-four hours, they held a continuous reading of narratives from enslaved people. “It’s done as a space of healing for those involved and not necessarily for those to observe or watch,” Kescia Hall, the organizer of the readings told *The Daily Tar Heel*. “It’s lifting up the voices of those that Silent Sam would have chose to kill.” Telling the stories of enslaved people who resisted white supremacy, members of RSSC reclaimed the space of the

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<sup>551</sup> Tammy Grubb, “Vandals strike Chapel Hill courthouse, UNC’s Silent Sam again,” *Raleigh News & Observer*, 18 August 2018.

<sup>552</sup> Acy Jackson, “Cameras Have Watched Silent Sam Since July,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 14 September 2015.

<sup>553</sup> Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 17.

Confederate Monument by contributing to the reshaping of the ways in which the monument inscribed anti-Black violence into the campus landscape.<sup>554</sup>

The following day, October 12, 2015, students held a “Silence Sam” rally at the monument, then marched to Memorial Hall where they interrupted the proceedings of University Day, chanting “Tear It Down or We Shut You Down.”<sup>555</sup> Two weeks later, on October 25th, an organization called “Alamance County Taking Back Alamance County” held a rally on the campus in support of the Confederate Monument, arriving in a caravan of trucks down Franklin Street and waving dozens of Confederate flags.<sup>556</sup> Citing the organization’s right to freedom of assembly, the University did not attempt to keep the pro-Confederate group off the campus and provided a police escort for the organization towards the monument, infuriating students who were threatened by the University’s apparent welcoming of a pro-Confederate group to the campus.

Referencing an email Chancellor Carol Folt sent to the University community in the days before the rally, Michelle Brown explained that “she said everybody’s out here to express their opinion and we respect freedom of speech, which is only used in defense of white supremacy.”<sup>557</sup> University administrators arranged for a police force to encircle the Confederate Monument and keep student counter-protestors on one side of a barricade, while the pro-Confederate group held Confederate battle flags in front of the monument. The conspicuous use of police force to protect the Confederate Monument and pro-Confederate supporters showed the

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<sup>554</sup> Sofia Edelman, “Slaves’ stories told for 24 hours,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 11 October 2015.

<sup>555</sup> Mona Bazza and Cole del Charo, “Pomp and protests at University Day,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 13 October 2015.

<sup>556</sup> Isabella Lupoli, “No Silence at Silent Sam Protest,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 25 October 2015.

<sup>557</sup> Interview with Michelle Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0455.

University's indifference to the lives of its Black students and exhibited one of the crucial methods the institution uses to repudiate the humanity of Black people.<sup>558</sup>

Many students were enraged that a pro-Confederate group had been allowed to gather on the campus, carrying symbols of a cause that had consecrated the right to the enslavement of Black people.<sup>559</sup> In November, a coalition of anti-racist student organizations, including members of RSSC, delivered "A Collective Response to Anti-Blackness" to the University's administration, the UNC System, and the North Carolina General Assembly. Separating demands into eleven sections across fourteen pages, the students' fifty demands included several relating to the "racialized geography of campus." Citing the pro-Confederate rally of the previous month, the students wrote "We DEMAND public condemnation of the anti-Black Confederate rally that occurred on this campus and their terroristic intimidation of Black students at UNC. We DEMAND the removal of the racist Confederate monument Silent Sam and ALL confederate monuments on campuses in the UNC-system."<sup>560</sup>

Other demands relating to the campus landscape included the renaming of Carolina Hall to honor Zora Neale Hurston, the creation of a space to honor the contributions by members of Black Greek organizations to the University, and reclamation of control of Upendo Lounge by the BSM. The creation of "A Collective Response," had been in part a response to concurrent Black student-led protests at the University of Missouri and the University of Cape Town, both

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<sup>558</sup> Steve Martinot and Jared Sexton, "The Avant-Garde of White Supremacy," *Social Identities* 9, No. 2 (June 2003): 169-181.

<sup>559</sup> Interview with Michelle Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0455; Interview with Mars Earle by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0457.

<sup>560</sup> "A collective response to anti-Blackness," University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 19 November 2015, Accessed via WRAL.com on 8 March 2018, <[http://wwwcache.wral.com/asset/news/education/2015/11/20/15123955/List\\_of\\_UNC\\_student\\_demands.pdf](http://wwwcache.wral.com/asset/news/education/2015/11/20/15123955/List_of_UNC_student_demands.pdf)>.

of which targeted symbols of white supremacy on their campuses that enacted anti-Black violence. At a Town Hall, organized by administrators to discuss issues of “race and inclusion,” members of RSSC entered the building to read their demands.<sup>561</sup> Zakyree Wallace, a member of RSSC, explained after the Town Hall that, “We really, ultimately, wanted th[ese] demand[s] to really illustrate the impact that this environment, currently in this community, that doesn’t acknowledge racism, that doesn’t acknowledge anti-blackness on campus and how it affects black students.”<sup>562</sup> The demand of removal of the Confederate Monument has remained a constant since the delivering of the document, and “A Collective Response to Anti-Blackness” remains the most comprehensive document of student demands to the University’s administration towards social, economic, and racial justice in Chapel Hill.<sup>563</sup>

During the 2015-2016 school year, RSSC, still led primarily by queer Black women, set a crucial precedent in their demand that the Confederate Monument be removed from the campus entirely. Through the next school year, as the national movement to remove Confederate monuments continued, RSSC disbanded, but the coalition of students organized against the monument grew, with a majority of supporters now white students, many awakened to the realities of white supremacy following the election of Donald Trump.<sup>564</sup> In September 2016, the Town of Chapel Hill added a new monument onto the campus landscape with the dedication of a

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<sup>561</sup> Jane Wester, “Students ask administrators to act on systemic racism,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 20 November 2015.

<sup>562</sup> Felicia Bailey, “Town hall protestors prioritize demands, will meet with Chancellor Carol Folt today,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 1 December 2015.

<sup>563</sup> “A collective response to anti-Blackness,” University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 19 November 2015, Accessed via WRAL.com on 8 March 2018, <[http://wwwcache.wral.com/asset/news/education/2015/11/20/15123955/List\\_of\\_UNC\\_student\\_demands.pdf](http://wwwcache.wral.com/asset/news/education/2015/11/20/15123955/List_of_UNC_student_demands.pdf)>.

<sup>564</sup> Interview with Michelle Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0455.

marker to the enslaved persons and freed people of color buried largely in unmarked graves in the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery (which is Town-owned, but part of the campus).<sup>565</sup> The monument, though a tremendous addition to the commemorative landscape and legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill, was received by the University community with little to no celebration. The fact of its existence on the campus refuses to allow for a social death—that is, the condition of people not accepted as fully human—for the enslaved, even in their actual death, a powerful act of resistance to anti-Blackness on the campus landscape.<sup>566</sup>

Although the conversation about contestations of white supremacy remained active through the 2016 to 2017 school year, the campaign to remove the Confederate Monument stalled as organizers rebuilt the movement last led by RSSC. After a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in August 2017, in which pro-Confederate protestors rallied around a monument of Robert E. Lee and a counter-protestor was murdered by a member of a white supremacist organization, the movement to finally remove the most conspicuous symbol to white supremacy on the campus was revived. In Chapel Hill, on the night of August 22nd, hundreds of students and Orange and Durham County residents converged on the Confederate Monument following the forced removal of Durham’s Confederate monument by a group of citizens of that city. “It was a reaction to Durham, realizing that we can take this into our own hands if our administration isn’t ready to fight for us,” said Michelle Brown, a graduate of 2018. “But you get to campus on the first day and they have not one barricade up but two. And the staff, the cops are

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<sup>565</sup> Tammy Grubb, “Chapel Hill cemetery marker ‘is making something right that has been wrong’,” *Raleigh News & Observer*, 16 September 2016.

<sup>566</sup> Orlando Patterson, *Social Death and Slavery: A Comparative Study*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

within those barricades, ready to protect the statue before their students.”<sup>567</sup> Once again, the University utilized its police force to uphold the “maintenance of the labor contract, which requires differential sets of social and material realities between Blacks and Whites.” Under the logic of this contract, Black students provide diversity labor for the institution without question, and certainly without protest. When Black students and their allies do protest, they are met with police intervention and violence.<sup>568</sup>

That fall, students placed flowers on top of the Unsung Founders Memorial, reasserting the established relationship between the Confederate Monument and the Unsung Founders Memorial and calling on community members “to Honor those whose lives were stolen to build this campus,” “to Remember their humanity,” and to “Celebrate the Brilliance and lives of those who bring excellence Even in the face of injustice.”<sup>569</sup> Later that school year, organizers placed placards around the Confederate Monument which listed the names of leaders of past racial justice movements in Chapel Hill, including Mary Smith, Elizabeth Brooks, Gene Alston, and Preston Dobbins, and historical markers, which oriented viewers to sites of anti-Black violence and intimidation across the campus.<sup>570</sup> These placards and markers were another powerful example of campus organizers engaging in counter-storytelling to challenge the public narrative of the institution as free from violence and discrimination.<sup>571</sup>

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<sup>567</sup> Interview with Michelle Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0455.

<sup>568</sup> T. Elon Dancy, Kirsten T. Edwards, and James Earl Davis, “Historically White Universities and Plantation Politics: Anti-Blackness and Higher Education in the Black Lives Matter Era,” *Urban Education* 53, No. 2 (2018): 186.

<sup>569</sup> Placard placed on Unsung Founders Memorial, 25 August 2017.

<sup>570</sup> Historical Markers Placed Around the Confederate Monument, 30 March 2018.

<sup>571</sup> Daniel Solórzano and Tara Yosso, “Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 8, No. 1 (2002): 32.

As the year continued, a multiracial coalition of students, faculty, and Orange County citizens continued to protest, sit-in, and speak out for removal of the Confederate Monument, while university administrators continued to argue that they were unable to remove the monument because of N.C. Gen. Stat. §100-2.1. Although its supporters maintained that the Confederate Monument was only a testament to the University's Confederate veterans, in reality its continued existence on the campus allowed the University to continue to enact the processes which permits the institution to consider Black students and workers property to be policed and controlled.<sup>572</sup>

For some organizers, the Confederate Monument itself was not as hostile as administrators' insistence that they could do nothing to remove the monument. Citing two decades of student organizing to remove or historically contextualize the monument, Brown stated that what really "offends me is how willing this university is to keep it, how far they're willing to go to deny what it stands for."<sup>573</sup> As security for the monument increased through the 2017 to 2018 school year, University Police Chief Jeff McCracken estimated that the department spent roughly \$1,700 a day to maintain a police presence in McCorkle Place, in addition to maintaining the video cameras watching over the Confederate Monument.<sup>574</sup> In November, organizers discovered that a man attending their meetings, who had introduced himself as an auto mechanic in sympathy with their movement, was in fact a member of the campus police

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<sup>572</sup> Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity In Institutional Life*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 29.

<sup>573</sup> Interview with Michelle Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0455.

<sup>574</sup> Jane Stancill, "How much does it cost UNC to protect Silent Sam?," *Raleigh News & Observer*, 8 June 2018.

force.<sup>575</sup> This heightened level of surveillance through police infiltration is, as scholar Simone Browne explains, “the fact of anti-Blackness.”<sup>576</sup> Throughout that school year, campus and town police continued to surveil and intimidate student protestors who gathered at the Confederate Monument.<sup>577</sup>

### **Continued Contextualization of McCorkle Place**

On April 30, 2018, Maya Little, a graduate student in the History Department and organizer in the Silent Sam Sit-In since August 2017, escalated the activities of the movement, smearing a mixture of red ink and her own blood on the statue. Little explained that the University’s Confederate Monument, like all monuments to the Confederacy, “were built on Black blood...without that blood on the statue, it’s incomplete, in my opinion. It’s not properly contextualized.”<sup>578</sup> In her act of “contextualization,” Little followed in the footsteps of both Students Seeking Historical Truth and their decoration of Saunders Hall as “their own memorial to show what Saunders was,” and the Real Silent Sam Coalition, which used performance art as an alternative form of commemoration to activate students to their cause.<sup>579</sup> “People are going to keep contextualizing it,” Little explained of the future of the Confederate Monument. “We’re going to continue contextualizing and talking about the real history of Silent Sam, the real

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<sup>575</sup> Ray Gronberg, “That ‘auto mechanic’ at the Silent Sam protests wasn’t a mechanic, activists discover,” *Raleigh News & Observer*, 7 November 2017.

<sup>576</sup> Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 17.

<sup>577</sup> Suzanne Blake, “We Talked to Maya Little About protesting Silent Sam and her arrest Monday,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 1 May 2018.

<sup>578</sup> Suzanne Blake, “We Talked to Maya Little About protesting Silent Sam and her arrest Monday,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 1 May 2018.

<sup>579</sup> Elizabeth Breyer, “Students Hang Nooses, Posters to Protest Names On Buildings,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 7 October 1999, 1.

history of white supremacy at UNC and in Chapel Hill.” Chapel Hill police arrested Little for her act of historical contextualization, and Little faced charges for vandalism from the state and the University’s Student Honor Court and possible expulsion from the University.<sup>580</sup> In October, a district court judge issued Little a guilty verdict but did not leverage a sentence; the Student Honor Court sanctioned Little with eighteen hours of community service.<sup>581</sup>

Around two hundred and fifty students and community members gathered on August 20, 2018 at the Peace and Justice Plaza on Franklin Street for a demonstration in support of Little and the charges she faced for her act of contextualization. Gathered in the Plaza (where both Yonni Chapman and Rebecca Clark are commemorated for their contributions to racial justice), across the street from McCorkle Place, Little stood in front of four gray banners, each approximately twenty feet tall, which she explained were “an alternative monument” to “a world without white supremacy.” The crowd moved across the street after a series of speeches, gathering around the Confederate Monument while several police officers watched. Students and community members held the banners around the four sides of the monument, obscuring the entire Confederate Monument behind their counter-monument, one side of which listed names of victims of anti-Black violence, beginning with “unnamed Black woman beaten by Julian Carr.”<sup>582</sup>

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<sup>580</sup> Suzanne Blake, “We Talked to Maya Little About protesting Silent Sam and her arrest Monday,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 1 May 2018.

<sup>581</sup> Preston Lennon, “Maya Little has headed the charge against Silent Sam, but not without consequences,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 4 December 2018.

<sup>582</sup> Jane Stancill, “Protestors topple Silent Sam Confederate statue at UNC,” *Raleigh News & Observer*, 20 August 2018.

After approximately an hour, protestors, working behind the screen of the banners, tied a rope around the Confederate Monument and others on the ground pulled the rope. The Confederate soldier atop the monument fell to the ground, “sending people screaming and jumping in disbelief.”<sup>583</sup> Later that night as a storm rolled into Chapel Hill, the monument was lifted out of the mud and taken to a “safe and secure location,” until Chancellor Folt and the Board of Trustees could develop a plan for its future.<sup>584</sup> The University’s leadership responded to the toppling of the Confederate Monument by promising to “use the full breadth of state and University processes to hold those responsible accountable for their actions,” and police charged at least twenty-five people in connection to the rallies and protests that followed over the next week.<sup>585</sup> Police violence against protestors at rallies through August and September was intense, with dozens of videos emerging of police officers shown throwing protestors to the ground, using pepper-spray to keep student protestors away from pro-Confederate supporters, and deploying smoke bombs to disperse a small crowd of students in front of an academic building on McCorkle Place.<sup>586</sup>

The toppling of the Confederate Monument confirms that campus organizers are actively reclaiming the University as a place “without white supremacy,” their actions directed by the

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<sup>583</sup> Jane Stancill, “Protestors topple Silent Sam Confederate statue at UNC,” *Raleigh News & Observer*, 20 August 2018.

<sup>584</sup> Jane Stancill, “Silent Sam Statue at UNC, where it is being stored,” *Raleigh News & Observer*, 21 August 2018.

<sup>585</sup> Carol Folt, Harry Smith, Margaret Spellings, Haywood Cochrane, “Update from Carolina and UNC System Leaders,” 21 August 2018, Email; Grubb, Tammy, “Former UNC chancellor’s granddaughter among 14 now charged in Silent Sam protests,” *The Durham Herald Sun*, 30 August 2018.

<sup>586</sup> Charlie McGee, “UNC Police defend officer actions at Silent Sam protests amid criticism,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 16 October 2018.

legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill.<sup>587</sup> Little, describing the removal of the Confederate Monument for *CrimethInc.*, explained that the group of “students, workers, neighbors, and comrades reclaimed Chapel Hill” and “memorialized and reawakened histories of resistance against the white supremacist institution and its followers and honored the martyred Black and Brown people in our area.” Little continued, explaining that at every point in the movement to remove the Confederate Monument “the university opposed activists, confiscated materials, and used surveillance and harassment to stop the recovery and rejoicing in reclamation.”<sup>588</sup>

Rallies following the removal of the Confederate Monument in August and October of 2018 have highlighted these “histories of resistance,” in particular the story of James Lewis Cates, the young Black man stabbed in the Pit in 1970 by members of a white supremacist gang as Chapel Hill police watched without intervening. “At UNC, you find no monuments to James Lewis Cates,” Little explained to *The Daily Tar Heel*. “There are no monuments to the countless acts of resistance against UNC’s racism and against Silent Sam.”<sup>589</sup> The recovery of Cates’s story is another act of reclamation, referencing not just the story of his murder at the hands of a white supremacist organization and police bystanders, but the first gatherings of Black students at the Confederate Monument to protest the institution’s indifference to his murder.

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<sup>587</sup> Jane Stancill, “Protestors topple Silent Sam Confederate statue at UNC,” *Raleigh News & Observer*, 20 August 2018.

<sup>588</sup> Maya Little, “Whose Streets? A Statement from Maya Little,” Accounts from the Fall of Silent Sam, *CrimethInc*, 23 August 2018, Accessed 19 September 2018, <<https://crimethinc.com/2018/08/23/accounts-from-the-fall-of-silent-sam-featuring-maya-little>>.

<sup>589</sup> Charlie McGee, “Here’s the story of James Lewis Cates, a rallying point for today’s UNC demonstrators,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 21 August 2018; Ellie Heffernan and Elizabeth Moore, “Before Maya Little’s Honor Court trial, activists gathered to support her,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 25 October 2018.

In an effort to take an enlightened step forward for the University, which faced national condemnation for its refusal to take a decisive stand against the Confederate Monument, on University Day, October 12, 2018, Chancellor Folt belatedly offered “our university’s deepest apology for the profound injustices of slavery, our full acknowledgment of the strength of enslaved peoples in the face of their suffering, and our respect and indebtedness to them.” Folt explained that “our apology must lead to purposeful action,” and continued her address by celebrating the institution’s shared values, including “the diversity that is our national heritage.” Following Folt’s remarks, Jim Leloudis, a member of the Chancellor’s Task Force on UNC-Chapel Hill History announced the Task Force’s plans for “purposeful action.” Over the next year, workers will install “signs and thresholds [sic] markers” which acknowledge the indigenous people who “were the first stewards of the land, and whose descendants work, study, and teach here today,” and commemorate the University as “the birthplace of American public higher education.”<sup>590</sup> Workers will also refurbish the Unsung Founders Memorial, reinstalling the monument onto a hard surface “surrounded by circular walls and a walkway that connects to the sidewalk” and adding an “interpretative sign.”<sup>591</sup>

Folt’s apology placed the “profound injustices of slavery” firmly within the University’s past, with no acknowledgement of how the history of enslavement on the campus had created the conditions for current anti-Black violence to be enacted by campus police against Black student organizers. The plans proposed by the Task Force include an important acknowledgement of the indigenous people who lived and live in what became the campus landscape, but their plans do

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<sup>590</sup> Susan Hudson, “At University Day, Folt issues apology, calls for purposeful action moving forward,” *University Gazette*, 12 October 2018.

<sup>591</sup> Jane Stancill, “UNC leaders hope new signs will put Silent Sam's history in context,” *Raleigh News & Observer*, 28 March 2018.

little to mitigate the critiques leveraged against the inadequacies of the Unsung Founders Memorial as commemorative art. Nor do their plans break through the ways in which the campus landscape is racially bounded in order to enforce the exclusion of Black people. Although Folt's address and the plans announced by the Task Force were intended to assert the institution's commitment to "working to right the wrongs of history so they are never again inflicted," they instead affirmed the institution's commitment to the "diversity without justice" cultural paradigm, which Yonni Chapman explains "ensures the power of the past to continue shaping the future."<sup>592</sup>

After four months of uncertainty about the future of the Confederate Monument, Chancellor Folt presented a "Recommendation for the Disposition and Preservation of the Confederate Monument" to the Board of Trustees on December 3rd. The proposal suggested the construction of a new free-standing "University History and Education Center" to house the Confederate Monument, constructed at an approximate cost of \$5.3 million dollars. With the construction of this building, Folt and the trustees explained, the University would not face punitive action from the state legislature for violating N.C. Gen. Stat. §100-2.1, which required the return of the monument to "a site of similar prominence, honor, visibility, availability and access that are within the boundaries of the jurisdiction from which it was relocated."<sup>593</sup> In the new building, which they proposed should be located in Odum Village, part of the South Campus housing complex, there would also be "appropriate buffers and state-of-the-art security measures, as well as the development of excellent exhibits and teaching materials," totaling

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<sup>592</sup> Jane Stancill, "UNC leader apologizes for slavery and says school will 'right the wrongs of history'," *Raleigh News & Observer*, 12 October 2018; John K. Chapman, *Black Freedom and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1793-1960*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006), 191.

<sup>593</sup> S.B. 22, 2015 Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess., 2015 N.C. Sess. Laws 436, <<https://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2015/Bills/Senate/PDF/S22v5.pdf>>.

approximately \$800,000 a year in annual operating costs. In addition to the construction of a free-standing center, the proposal also suggested the creation of “a mobile force [to] be developed at the UNC System level...to provide enhanced capability to address issues that arise with large crowds and protests.” The Board of Trustees voted to approve and submit the proposal to the Board of Governors, who would decide whether the plan would move forward on December 14th.<sup>594</sup>

The proposal was immediately met with outrage by students, workers, and faculty for its plan to spend millions of dollars in state funds to re-erect and protect the Confederate Monument and spend millions more dollars annually to increase the policing and surveillance of student protestors. Of more obscure significance, but still crucial for understanding the proposal within the context of former racial justice movements, was the plan to construct the center on South Campus, which was and remains the site for the majority of Black student on-campus housing. The use of the word “free-standing” to describe the “University History and Education Center,” which would house the University’s most prominent monument to white supremacy, evoked the movement thirty years earlier to construct a free-standing Black Cultural Center, which operated in direct opposition to the anti-Blackness fundamental to the Confederate Monument. The Stone Center, unlike the proposed History Center, had been constructed using funds solely from private donations, rather than state funds. The plans to further militarize the campus police also recalled the police violence enacted against Black student protestors in 1969 during the Foodworkers’ Strikes.

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<sup>594</sup> “Recommendation for the Disposition and Preservation of the Confederate Monument: A Four-Part Plan presented by UNC-Chapel Hill to the UNC Board of Governors,” Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes, Board of Trustees Archives, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 3 December 2018.

At a rally organized for the night of December 3rd, Maya Little called on graduate student teaching assistants to strike, withholding final grades until the University withdrew its proposal.<sup>595</sup> Following Little's call, dozens of teaching assistants pledged to withhold final grades during the exam period, and thousands of students, alumni, faculty, and staff signed onto petitions, letters, and statements that urged the Board of Governors to reject the proposal. In a widely publicized statement written by alumni-student athletes, many of them former members of the men's basketball team, alumni wrote "Black students and faculty are often used by the university as 'accessories.' We were a part of that sacrifice and branding. We helped to tell the story that Carolina is the 'University of the People.' We love UNC but now also feel a disconnect from an institution that was unwilling to listen to students and faculty who asked for Silent Sam to be permanently removed from campus."<sup>596</sup> After just two weeks of organizing, the newly formed #StrikeDownSam Anti-Racist Coalition had galvanized the University community into action against the proposal, and at their meeting later that December, the Board of Governors rejected the proposal, though stated its prohibitive costs, rather than its anti-Black objectives, as the determining issue in their vote.

On January 14, 2019, Chancellor Carol Folt announced in a letter to the University community that she planned to resign effective in May 2019 and would remove the remaining portion of the Confederate Monument immediately, explaining that its continued presence on the campus posed a "continuing threat both to the personal safety and well-being of our

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<sup>595</sup> Jane Stancill, "Protesters march, call for strike of UNC professors and teaching assistants," *Raleigh News & Observer*, 3 December 2018.

<sup>596</sup> "Former UNC Black Athletes Make Statement on Silent Sam Situation," *Spectacular Magazine*, 13 December 2018, Accessed 5 January 2019, <<https://spectacularmag.com/2018/12/13/former-unc-black-athletes-make-statement-on-silent-sam-situation/>>.

community.”<sup>597</sup> That evening, workers dismantled the plinth and began removing the brick foundation that the monument had stood on for over a century. By the afternoon of January 17th, the ground where the Confederate Monument had once been located was covered with straw and grass seed. The Board of Governors rejected Folt’s timeline for resignation, forcing Folt to leave by January 31st, a punitive decision meant to penalize Folt for her “draconian action” regarding the removal of the monument.<sup>598</sup> At the time of this writing, a new proposal for the future of the Confederate Monument is still due to the Board of Governors by May 20, 2019, created by the new interim chancellor, Kevin Guskiewicz.<sup>599</sup>

### **Legacy of the Unsung Founders Memorial and the Confederate Monument**

Although the uncertain future of the Confederate Monument continues to be the flashpoint for continued protests, it is important to recognize that the Confederate Monument *and* the Unsung Founders Memorial both provide physical texts for understanding the structural racism built into the campus landscape. Though distinct, together they are illustrations of the cultural denial of oppression at the University, which transcends the distant eras of enslavement, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow to reach forward into the present. By positioning the cultural contexts of these monuments in the present, organizers have confronted the University’s “diversity without justice” cultural paradigm, through which the white supremacy of the institution produces and is produced by the racial binding of space in ways that continue to

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<sup>597</sup> Kate Karstens, “Chancellor Carol Folt will step down in May 2019,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 14 January 2019.

<sup>598</sup> Myah Ward, “With 15 days left as UNC's chancellor, Folt looks back at her controversial tenure,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 15 January 2019.

<sup>599</sup> “Statement by StrikeDownSam Anti-Racist Coalition on Withheld Grades and BOG Resolution,” Silence Sam, 17 December 2018, Accessed 4 January 2019, <<http://silencesam.com/uncategorized/statement-by-strikedownsam-anti-racist-coalition-on-withheld-grades-and-bog-resolution/>>.

subjugate Black people.<sup>600</sup> By challenging both monuments as spaces which reflected and enacted racist processes, organizers demonstrated the power of constructing an counter-narrative of resistance within McCorkle Place to oppose a narrative which celebrates the University's erroneous claims to social justice.

The memorial dichotomy between the former Confederate Monument and the Unsung Founders Memorial expands to include the entire campus landscape as a place which represents the unbalanced legacies of Black student and worker power and white institutional power. The history of the campus movements that organized to transform McCorkle Place illustrates how Black students and workers both contested the University's anti-Blackness within its institutional and campus landscapes and began to reclaim the University. The recent successes of the McCorkle Place movement demonstrate the need to conceptualize the University as a dynamic place of resistance to white supremacy, by utilizing the full counter-history of these movements that Black students and workers have produced. Reclamation as a spatially-based organizing approach orients campus actors to their potential identities as emplaced organizers who can use the legacy of the past to direct a future for Chapel Hill towards racial justice. The toppling and final removal of the Confederate Monument confirms the powerful potential of self-possession and place-possession against the dominant white supremacy of the cultural landscape.

When the University is understood as a place that is co-owned by all campus actors, the power of students and workers to take action against its dominant white supremacy becomes the central spatial context within which all campus actors experience Chapel Hill.<sup>601</sup> This concept of

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<sup>600</sup> John K. Chapman, *Black Freedom and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1793-1960*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006), 191.

<sup>601</sup> Doreen Massey, "A Global Sense of Place," *Marxism Today* 38, (1991): 24-29.

the reclamation of the University, developed by contemporary students and workers, offers the most compelling framework for future organizers to utilize in their own construction of past counter-histories and their future movements' places within those histories. Fusing together the histories of these spaces within the process of asserting ownership, the act of reclamation directs the institution towards a future led by a new cultural paradigm of reparative justice.