

Reasons to Support Replacing “Lee” with “Loving”: Washington-Loving High School Renaming Committee Recommendation

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Representative to the Washington-Lee Renaming Committee

Lee was a general for the South which fought for slavery as we all know. The Loving v. Virginia case provides a very clear representation of how progress has been made in our society. This name to me represents inclusion, acceptance, and the pursuit of happiness. Speaking for myself alone, I am the daughter of an interracial couple - my mother is brown and my father is white, like many students at Washington-Lee High School, arguably one of the top most diverse schools in the Arlington Public Schools system. The IB program gives insight to the global diversity of this school. I really enjoy and like how we can turn a name with such a negative connotation into something positive while continuing to honor someone connected to our area. Lee impacted Virginia to a large extent; however, so did the Loving case, but in all the right ways.



**James E. Rosen, Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Association
Representative to the Washington-Lee Renaming Committee**

In my view, a school name should be emblematic of our community, and inspire. With that in mind, I propose that the new name of the high school be Washington-Loving High.

In the late 1950s, Mildred and Richard Loving, residents of Central Point, Virginia, challenged and eventually helped to overturn the laws against inter-racial marriage that were then on the books in Virginia and many other States. The Supreme Court decision upholding their right to marry was “a watershed moment in the dismantling of “Jim Crow” race laws.”

Richard died in 1975 and Mildred died in 2008

Their principal legacy aligns with or reflects the mission and vision of Arlington Public Schools in many ways.

MISSION

By evoking their struggle for equality, the name will remind students and the community of the APS mission “*to ensure all students learn and thrive ...*”

VISION

Their successful fight to overcome racial barriers will spur us to achieve the APS Vision, “*To be an inclusive community ...*”

CORE VALUES

Moreover, the example they set aligns with all the core values our schools try to impart:

- **Excellence:** In the same way we want our students to receive an “*excellent education ... that meets their social and emotional needs,*” Mildred and Richard were just trying to meet the most basic need: to sustain a loving relationship.
- **Equity:** Just like we want to “*eliminate opportunity gaps ...,*” the Lovings wanted all people – regardless of race – to have the same chance to form a family.
- **Inclusivity:** Like Mildred and Richard, we want to “*value people for who they are ...*”
- **Integrity:** Their struggle and eventual triumph in the courts reinforces the *integrity* of our institutions – however imperfect.
- **Collaboration:** The focus of their struggle was marriage – the ultimate in *collaboration*, one of the key factors in the success of our schools.
- **Innovation:** To challenge the racial laws of Virginia in the 1950s took courage and *forward thinking* of the kind that our schools aim to foster.
- **Stewardship:** Just as APS aims to be careful stewards of our great schools, the example of Mildred and Richard remind us that we must be ever vigilant to ensure that we maintain and expand on their legacy.

The Lovings were not generals or statesmen, nor did they start out to be leaders. They were two people who “didn’t want to be heroes, but just to be happy.” Nonetheless, their successful fight against unjust laws made Virginia and the nation a truly better place. Naming the school Washington-Loving High would fully reflect the values we are trying to teach our children.

Sources:

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