



**March 13, 2023**

## **Hanover NAACP Opposes Hanover School Board Renaming Decision**

During their work session, the Hanover School Board shamefully chose to rename an existing school that is being rebuilt. Policy states *new* schools will be named by the board. A new principal is not being hired. The current school is simply being rebuilt on the same site as the current school.

The Hanover County NAACP is in strict opposition to this decision. Dr. Michael Gill was questioned about the name by the community at the start of the discussion to merge the two schools. The community was assured that Clay would be added to the name Gandy in an effort to bring the communities of the two schools together. The Community agreed to this. Those discussions united the community and provided a solution that was in the best interest of the community. It brought the communities together. Yet, once again the Hanover School Board is creating a divisive issue.

On February 2, 2023, Mr. Redd initiated the discussion about the name of the school. He questioned Dr. Gill as to why he refers to the school as Gandy-Clay? Mr. Redd has been intent on renaming this school with full knowledge the school was named after a Black Man. The school is not located in Mr. Redd's district, why the interest? Could it be retribution for losing the names of his precious Stonewall & Lee Davis? At the same meeting, Mr. Redd stated, Mrs. Hawkins would make the motion to change the name. Mrs. Hawkins is the only person of color on the board.

After a five minute break, the meeting resumed and Mr. Redd stated he had spoken in error and Mrs. Hawkins had not agreed to make the motion. The board has already determined they want the name to be Ashland. Just as they did with the former Stonewall and Lee Davis schools (the names many of the board still use when speaking about these schools), it doesn't matter what the committee brings to them, these 7 people, determine the names of schools, make all decisions for our students, choose what to address and what to ignore, yet none of them have children in our schools.

This Hanover school board continues to follow the pattern of dismantling and erasing the history of many of its citizens of color and continually creates issues that divide our community. With a population of over 111,000 citizens, this board and the board of supervisors seem to appoint the same people over and over to committees and boards. At least two of the 7 listed to be appointed to the naming committee are on other committees or boards. The citizens, **All**

citizens of Hanover, should be heard and allowed to participate in our government. A majority of members on these boards appear to want to bring Florida governing to Hanover.

We call on the school board to maintain the name, Gandy-Clay as promised to the community. We call for a reversal of their decision to remove the name Gandy to be replaced with Ashland. The History of people of color in Hanover is rich, yet we are not recognized. We call on this school board to right a serious wrong.

Pat Jordan, President  
Hanover County NAACP

#### **ABOUT THE HANOVER COUNTY NAACP**

*The Hanover County Branch was established in 1946 at the First Union Baptist Church in Mechanicsville, Virginia with the dream of having an organization dedicated to the realization of the principle of equality and justice for all. Through civil rights advocacy and community involvement we continue the struggle to achieve freedom, justice, and dignity for all. Our strength is derived from the dedication and untiring efforts of our volunteers. Individual membership, fund raising activities and corporate sponsorship allows this organization to continue serving the community.*

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