

We Give You
Peace of Mind



**Exclusively serving the
extended Caltech community
and their families for 70 years.**



800/592-3328 • www.cefcu.org

*Must qualify for CEFCU membership to join. Minimum \$5 deposit and one-time \$5 membership fee due upon opening any CEFCU share account.
Federally insured by NCUA.*

In the Community

Millikan and Other Eugenecists' Names to be Removed from Campus Buildings, Assets, and Honors

In January, Caltech president Thomas F. Rosenbaum, acting on the authorization of the Institute's Board of Trustees, set in motion the process to remove the name of Caltech's founding president, Robert A. Millikan, from campus buildings, assets, and honors. Rosenbaum and the Board also approved the removal of the names of Harry Chandler, Ezra S. Gosney, William B. Munro, Henry M. Robinson, and Albert B. Ruddock.

The decision was made in response to the named individuals' participation in the eugenics movement through affiliation with the Human Betterment Foundation (HBF), a California-based organization that promoted eugenic sterilization in the early 20th century. During the summer of 2020, two petitions that called for Caltech to remove the names of Institute leaders who had been associated with eugenics from all campus assets and honors—one by the Black Scientists of Engineers of Caltech and the second by a Caltech alumnus—garnered more than 1,000 signatures each.

"Renaming buildings is a symbolic act, but one that has real consequences in creating a diverse and inclusive environment," Rosenbaum said in announcing the decision. "It is an act that helps define who we are and who we strive to be."

The Committee on Naming and Recognition (CNR), which was charged with considering current and future naming and recommending

specific actions, released its final report in December 2020. By recommending the removal of these names, the committee stated, it was not proposing that Caltech break its ties with Millikan or other problematic figures in its history, but rather advising the Institute to delve even more deeply into its history through initiatives designed to inform and educate its community and the public.

In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Nicolás Wey Gómez, a Caltech history professor and a member of the CNR, said the committee was unequivocal in its condemnation of eugenics. "It is dehumanizing, it is wrong," he said. "Central to moving forward as an institution, we on the committee felt a deep sense of obligation to renounce any part of our past that is inconsistent with the Caltech of today."

Below are answers to some frequently asked questions around the renaming decision.

How did Caltech reach this decision?

The committee considered Caltech's existing naming policy, spoke with two members of the Caltech community about the submitted petitions, met with experts on the history of eugenics and the Human Betterment Foundation, consulted extensive documentation on these topics and on the individuals of concern, and surveyed similar efforts by peer institutions. The committee also solicited feedback from members of the Caltech community via an online form, which garnered 1,517 comments from staff, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, trustees, parents, and alumni.

How quickly will the names be removed?

The Institute is working expeditiously, and in accordance with all legal gift agreements and contractual obligations with the named individuals or their descendants, to implement the committee's recommendations.

How will the community be informed moving forward?

Updates and new developments will be shared with the community through the website and the *Ion* Caltech newsletter. Questions and comments about the decision may be directed to naming@caltech.edu.

Answers to more frequently asked questions, the committee's full report, and other resources can be found on Caltech's newly launched *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* website at inclusive.caltech.edu.