



# Presidential Ad Hoc Committee to Examine Building Names

Report of Observations  
and Recommendations

February 2019



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**TO:** Jerome A. Gilbert, President  
**FROM:** Presidential Ad Hoc Committee to Examine Building Names  
**RE:** Committee's Report of Observations and Recommendations

## **Introduction**

We, the members of the Presidential Ad Hoc Committee to Examine Building Names at Marshall University (the Committee), representing students, faculty, staff and the board of governors, herein report our observations and recommendations related to Jenkins Hall, a campus building that pays tribute to a Confederate Civil War general.

Guiding our deliberations was the Marshall University Creed recalling that “[a]s Marshall University, we form a community that promotes educational goals and that allows individuals maximum opportunity to pursue those goals.” The Creed describes elements of community and we were particularly drawn to the aspects of a civil community and a pluralistic community. The Creed’s guidance led us to develop objectives for our undertaking.

### **Guiding our deliberations was the Marshall University Creed...**

We asked ourselves, “What recommendation would be least objectionable to the most people? What recommendation would do the most good for the most people? Who would be most hurt if the name is changed? Who would be most hurt if the name is not changed?”

Bearing these questions in mind, we offer the following recommendations, along with a discussion of the process, a collection of our observations in relation to our recommendations and our concluding thoughts.

## Recommendations

We consider the following three options worthiest of consideration by the Marshall University Board of Governors (MUBOG):

- 1. Keep the name Jenkins Hall;**
- 2. Change the name to Marshall Lab School Building; or**
- 3. Change the name to some combined name reflecting both the building's historic name (Jenkins) and its historic function (Lab School).**

We did not arrive at a singular recommendation on the matter. There were issues that arose that we believe are best debated and addressed by the MUBOG with your further advice. These issues are discussed in the Observations section of this report, which begins on page 6.

## Process

You formed the Presidential Ad Hoc Committee to Examine Building Names at Marshall University in April 2018 in response to an inquiry from a student about the naming of Jenkins Hall and its association with a Confederate Civil War general.

**You charged us with rewriting the online material about Jenkins Hall, examining all building names on the Huntington campus to determine if contextualization or additional action is warranted, and further instructed us to submit a report to you during the 2018-19 academic year.**

Our work was furthered in October 2018 with your assignment of a public humanities consultant to assist us in researching the subject, engaging the public, considering alternatives and preparing this report. We were further aided by the addition of a university data analyst in November 2018 to design and process our online survey and to deliberate as a Committee member.

With these two additional members to the Committee, **we planned and conducted a public information session in late November 2018.** Since the matter arose from a student's e-mail to you on behalf of a recognized student organization, we first wanted to know the opinions on the matter of other recognized student organizations. The student's e-mail and your charge to the Committee were shared with all recognized student organizations and they were each asked if they wished to respond in a public information session and present their organization's views. Eleven recognized

student organizations participated in the public information session and their statements were made available to the public for review and comment.

The Committee relied upon the Marshall University Department of History to provide background on Albert Gallatin Jenkins, the man, and on Jenkins Hall, the building. The presenter's background statement was also made available to the public for comment.

Additionally, the Committee invited members of the community with particular ties to the man and the building to present their opinions for public consideration. A local public historian was invited to speak about Jenkins, the man. After first confirming, she later elected not to participate at the public information session. That person and others later submitted a letter and petition to the Committee and the MUBOG along with accompanying articles and historical documents. The Committee fully considered these materials; however, we were not able to include them in the public survey due to the late date of their arrival. The presentation of the Marshall Lab School Alumni Association, addressing the initial and historic use of the building, was included in the public survey.

**The online survey was open for comment the first two weeks of December 2018 in two versions—one for Marshall University students, faculty and staff and one for the general public.** Respondents to the general public version could identify themselves as either alumnus, donor, friend/supporter or community member. There were a total of 1,358 Marshall University survey visits and 355 general public visits.

The open-ended survey allowed respondents the opportunity to share their responses to background and the student organization and public statements presented at the public information session, as well as any comments they wished the Committee to consider.

The two (Marshall University and general public) summary responses represented by word clouds follow. A word cloud is a graphic representation of words in which the words are arranged artistically in close proximity and the size of each word's type is proportional to the word's use within the document from which words are gathered. Certain terms not germane to the opinions expressed (i.e. Jenkins, Hall, Building) do not show up in the word clouds.



## The general public response displays a focus on the terms “history,” “monument” and “change.”

**We received additional input outside of the online survey.** Beginning with the formation of the Committee, we began to receive letters, e-mails, telephone calls and texts. We had many one-on-one conversations with campus and community members. These were also shared and discussed among the Committee members and their collective input factors into our observations.

The Herald-Dispatch and other media also fostered discussion of the Jenkins Hall issue. Efforts include the Herald-Dispatch’s online poll and Facebook page comments. We considered these as well, along with the editorials, guest columns and letters to the editor published in the paper.

Broadcast media (television, radio and online) also participated in debate of the issue and we appreciate their fostering of dialogue via their respective channels.

We will transfer the materials we relied upon in our deliberations to the Marshall University Archives at the conclusion of this process.

**As this process now moves to the stage of recommendations, we note that we completed our rewrite of the online material** and affirmed, with your review and input, Marshall’s position by the posting of the following phrase to the university’s online virtual tour: “[e]ven though the position of Marshall University is to stand strongly against slavery, injustice and discrimination, the building name has historical value, not in the glorification of activities that supported slavery or rebellion, but in the acknowledgment of what transpired in the past.”

**Additionally, we completed our review of all building names on the Huntington campus and find that no others warrant change.** We therefore only offer recommendations regarding Jenkins Hall. In the following section we share with you our observations in regard to each of the three options we present.



## Observations

### Jenkins Hall

The image at right is of the sign located on the lawn at the western entrance to Jenkins Hall. There are no other external or internal references to the building's name at the Jenkins Hall location. Dedicated in 1937 as the Albert Gallatin Jenkins Training School, the building has been referenced in Marshall publications and online materials over the years in a number of variations, and settling on the current shorthand, Jenkins Hall.



One aspect that the Jenkins Hall issue did make abundantly clear was the fact that there was little awareness on campus or among the general public of who Jenkins was, why the building was named or what function it had served throughout its history. We hope the process has increased knowledge of Jenkins and Jenkins Hall, and perhaps laid the groundwork for ongoing learning and discussion.

The greatest impact on our decision to narrow but not finalize our recommendations was the indication by major donors to Marshall University who made very clear to the Committee and others that any change to the Jenkins Hall name would result in a cessation of their support. Given the reliance of students on the support of donors and particularly in the area of student scholarships, we felt this is a matter best debated and addressed by the MUBOG.



In addition to the major donors referenced above, a significant portion of the community survey respondents through the Herald-Dispatch survey expressed a strong desire to keep the current name.

### Marshall Lab School Building

The image at left is a close-up of a 1967 Marshall University campus

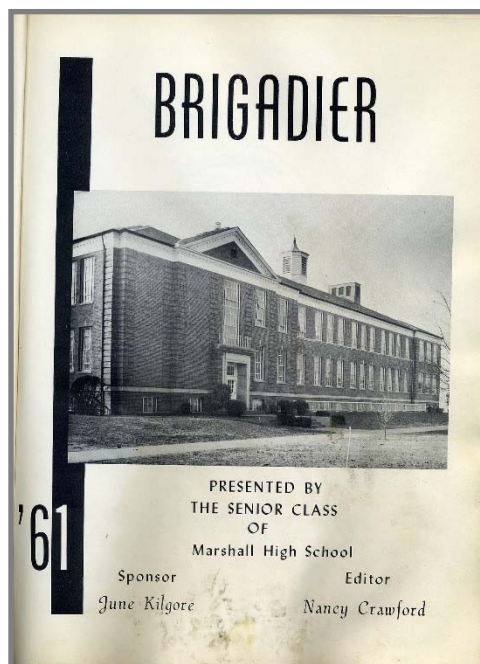
model constructed by students in the Geography Department. The model is labeled with the commonly used name Laboratory School. The names Lab School and Marshall Lab School also were used until the end of the lab school program in 1970.

The Marshall Laboratory School was established at Marshall College in 1896 and continued to offer clinical experience as a central component of teacher education through its close in 1970. In the 32 years of its occupancy of Jenkins Hall, the Marshall Lab School produced hundreds of graduates, many who went on to attend college at Marshall and many who continue to live in Huntington.

The Lab School era represents a more recent era in the development of Marshall University. The Lab School era, like the Marshall Academy era during which Jenkins attended, represents Marshall's history of pre-collegiate instruction. The Lab School era also represents the ongoing development of a pluralistic community at Marshall.

Jenkins Hall is undergoing renovation to better serve its current function as home to the Marshall University College of Education and Professional Development. The second floor of the renovated space will feature a clay tile mural paying homage to the Marshall Lab School and its students and teachers. The mural is a work by retired Marshall professor and local artist Robert Hutton. It is a gift of Marshall Lab School alumni and friends.

The Marshall Lab School Building is a name worthy of consideration.



*Some Combination of the Two*

The image at left is of the cover of the 1961 Marshall High School (the secondary school component of the lab school) yearbook. The cover demonstrates the blending of the building's name and occupant. The title "Brigadier" is a nod to Jenkins's rank at the time of his death in 1864. The school's sports teams were known as the Generals.

Two possible combined names to consider are Jenkins Hall: Home of the Marshall Lab School or the Marshall Lab School Building at Jenkins. Such a bridge would represent a compromise between a resistance to change and support of change.

## **Conclusion**

In closing, we want you to know how appreciative we are of the opportunity to undertake this assignment. We are also appreciative of the community's impassioned, sincere and thoughtful input. There is no easy answer here, but perhaps the willingness to have such an impassioned and civil discourse on this issues reflects Marshall's strongest values.

We did our best to gather, reflect upon and make recommendations based upon the input we received, and hope we have been helpful to you and the MUBOG in coming to a final decision.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christie". The script is cursive and elegant, with a large initial 'C'.

Christie A. Kinsey

Chair, Presidential Ad Hoc Committee to Examine Building Names  
*on behalf of the Committee*



[marshall.edu](http://marshall.edu)