

LATE DISTRIBUTION

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Karen Pardieck
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To edc.cob@edcgov.us

cc

bcc

Subject Please forward to Supervisor John Knight

History:

📧 This message has been forwarded.

Re: Cemetery Racist Slur-Sacramento Bee May 21, 2011

Dear Supervisor Knight:

I live in Folsom and Sacramento Bee reporter Walt Yost, who had done a series of articles on the cemetery headstones, took me to the cemetery two years ago. When I saw the condition of that area of the cemetery and that the racist slur was engraved on the headstones and allowed to remain so for decades, I decided to facilitate its removal.

I reached out to an African American woman at AT&T and asked if she would be interested in the project, talk with county officials and attempt to remove the offensive language from the headstones. She took on the responsibility of the project and AT&T agreed to donate a rather large sum of funds for renovation of the headstones and also engage the Boy Scouts in cleaning up the area. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Harris threatened to sue AT&T should they proceed with organizing the project and AT&T backed out, not wanting to become embroiled in a controversy.

Recently, I read in the Folsom Telegraph that a prayer meeting was being held by Mr. Harris at the cemetery. There were few people in attendance and when I asked Mr. Harris why he curtailed the previous attempt to remove the racist slur he said that he wanted to do "DNA testing on the graves and remain historically accurate." I provided my email address and asked to be kept informed of his progress but did not hear from him again.

Why Mr. Harris has been allowed to derail the progress of removing the racist slur is beyond my comprehension. The offensive racist slur is one that affects people of all races, and should not be at the mercy of a self serving individual seeking media coverage such as Michael Harris. Had Michael Harris been sincerely interested in eradicating this offensive language, he could have worked in partnership with the generous offer from AT&T.

Supervisor Knight, I applaud and encourage you to move forward to resolve this issue, with or without Mr. Harris. (I would appreciate confirmation that you received this message.)

Sincerely,
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