

Confederate Memorial Plaques Removed From Supreme Court Building

On June 9, 2000, two plaques that graced the Texas Supreme Court Building for more than 40 years, were unlawfully removed despite the protest of many Heritage Groups. The Texas Supreme Court Building was built with money from the Confederate Pension Fund and as provided by Section 51-b, Article III of the Constitution of Texas and Section 10 and 11 of House Bill 134 was properly designated by the State Building Commission as a memorial to the Texans who served in the Armed Services of the Confederate States of America. These small plaques properly represented that designation.



Though no one has taken full credit for authorizing the act, it occurred following a demand from Gary Bledsoe of the NAACP to then Governor George Bush to remove the plaques. According to the Dallas Morning News, January 30, 2000, Mr. Bledsoe was quoted as saying "It represents hate, slavery and division. I think it's clear that the plaques don't have any place on a public building, especially one that houses our highest courts. It's like a sign that says instead of 'Buyers beware, Minorities beware. We know what it means," he said. "It would have a chilling effect on anyone who walked through those doors."

George Bush has never spoken publicly about the act or his feelings about the plaques when they were in place on the Supreme Court Building but while campaigning for President, he was asked about a proposal to place a Confederate soldier statue on the lawn of the historic Grimes County Courthouse. He replied, "I don't think they ought to have the Confederate, the statue, on the courthouse grounds."

A suit filed on behalf of the Texas Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans has resulted in years of litigation with no proper response or resolution. Given the recent trend, it is likely that six Chief Justices of the Texas Supreme Court that served in the Confederate Army will be next to lose their place of honor. In light of the fact that among many items that were placed in the cornerstone of the building in 1957 were a roster of Officers of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, a Confederate Flag, a Confederate Stone Mountain Coin and a Confederate \$10 & \$5 bill it appears that we might have to demolish the entire building and start over in order to pacify some of the protestors.

When we place markers or emblems of the Confederacy as a memorial, it is done strictly out of love and honor to that very special group of people that made such incredible sacrifices for a just cause that we still embrace. There are those who would have all of the emblems removed and the true history of this country from 1861 to 1865 rewritten. Their motivation can be no less than pure hatred and revenge. As they continue in their quest to erase all memory of our gallant heroes we must be true to the charge that was passed on to us and accept the responsibility of preserving our heritage.

- Frank M. Johnson -