

**ROSCOE B. STEPHENSON**  
ATTORNEY AT LAW  
P. O. BOX 487  
COVINGTON, VIRGINIA

August 20, 1964

The Honorable Homer A. Holt  
1601 Kanawha Valley Building  
P. O. Box 553  
Charleston, West Virginia

Dear Homer:

I have recently heard that the admission department at Washington & Lee University was seeking to find a high grade negro for admission to the University.

This is indeed shocking news, and it appears to be true. I have reliable information that the faculty are strongly in favor of integration and that a majority of the board of trustees favor it. I cannot believe that men like yourself, Judge Whittle and others who are on the board would be a party to this action. I know that Dr. Hutcheson and Jim Caskie are opposed to it and I trust that you will use your influence to defeat it. I know that the President, Dr. Cole, is in favor or a good deal of this integration line and I suppose that he has worked on the members of the board to affect this result. Washington & Lee being an independent non-sectarian university is not dependent of course upon the government in any way as I see it. The only reason that I can think of would be to secure funds from the Ford Foundation and similar institutions. If this action is taken by the board of trustees, of course, it is going to have a very serious affect on the interest of the alumni. I am confident that a great majority of the alumni will be bitterly opposed to this action, and if it goes through, I believe that the rank and file of the alumni will have very little interest whatever in the university in the future. So far as the faculty is concerned, I don't think they have any authority in the matter and I am surprised that the board of trustees would listen to them. I hope that you will take an active interest in defeating this action to ruin Washington & Lee.

With my warm personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

*Roscoe B. Stephenson*  
R. B. Stephenson

August 25, 1964

Roscoe B. Stephenson, Esquire  
P. O. Box 487  
Covington, Virginia

Dear Roscoe:

Though I may not be able to reply to it just as you would like and, under other circumstances, just as I would like, I do appreciate your letter of August 20, 1964.

First, let me comment on the first brief paragraph of your letter which reads as follows:

"I have recently heard that the admission department at Washington & Lee University was seeking to find a high grade negro for admission to the University."

I have been assured repeatedly that no effort would be made by our admission authorities to promote integration by seeking an application for admission by one whose admission would but break the line of segregation and result in integration, even though slight. I am frank to say that, notwithstanding such assurances, I have been and continue to be of the opinion that there are a number of our faculty and administration who, in order to promote integration, would subsidize an applicant if necessary, assuming, probably without justification, that there are not other persons or organizations who or which would supply the room and board and the tuition charges which otherwise might discourage application by prospective integrators.

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Now, to turn to the second and full paragraph of your letter, it is not quite as easy for me to give a comprehensive answer or explanation by letter. So far as my own views be concerned, there are many aspects to discuss which with you personally would give me much satisfaction, and I think a full discussion may more appropriately be had by personal conference rather than by letter.

In 1955, along with Jim Caskie, I appeared before a special committee for the Association of American Law Schools, following which, on September 8, 1955, I wrote a letter to Mr. David F. Cavers, Associate Dean and Professor of Law of Harvard Law School and Chairman of the special committee. I enclose you a copy of that letter which is self-explanatory.

At that time we were dealing with the Association of American Law Schools. Since that time the general situation has worsened, so to speak, very much. We are now confronted not by policies of the Association of American Law Schools, but by policies of the Federal Government which cannot but give us pause.

I do not believe that the recently enacted Civil Rights Act affects Washington and Lee directly. Yet, the Civil Rights Act does beyond question relate to some matters which by indirection could seriously affect Washington and Lee. By way of illustration, we have at Washington and Lee a very excellent ROTC. In the light of present conditions relating to National Defense, this is a very important matter to Washington and Lee and to students and pros-

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pective students. I have no doubt that in the light of the present Federal attitude the Washington and Lee ROTC would be withdrawn if it be made known that Washington and Lee had an ironclad policy against the admission of any Negro. The ROTC is but an important illustration. There are other Federal policies which, if invoked, as they most certainly would be, could do great harm to Washington and Lee.

I would be opposed to surrendering any of our traditional independence for the purpose of obtaining foundation grants. As has been aptly said, Washington and Lee has not been for sale and is not now for sale.

On the other hand, Washington and Lee is in the United States of America, to the service of which Washington and Lee is dedicated. While I strongly disagree with many of the National policies as more recently expounded, I reached the conclusion that the interests of Washington and Lee and of America would not be promoted by a declaration by the Board of Trustees that under no circumstances would a Negro applicant be admitted to Washington and Lee. Unfortunately, the independence formerly enjoyed by individuals and organizations and which has blessed America, no longer exists. We cannot live in isolation.

The absence of a firm policy of segregation does not necessarily mean a policy of integration, though I would be happily surprised if some rather limited integration does not follow the ab-

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sence of a firm policy of segregation. That there has been no integration to date is not attributable to the fact that any policy of segregation has been officially declared, but is attributable to the fact that, so far as I am advised, no application for admission has been made by a Negro.

There are a number of other aspects of this situation which pose serious threats to the welfare of Washington and Lee, but I think consideration of these matters should be deferred for a personal conference.

I may add, that to have become involved in this matter has been most unpleasant for me. As a matter of fact, I gave serious consideration to avoiding such involvement by resigning as a member of the Board of Trustees. In fact, at one time I did submit my resignation -- not just for this reason but for others as well --, but it was not acted upon. Upon further consideration, I reached the conclusion that I could not at this time shirk the responsibilities which have devolved upon me as a member of the Board by insisting that my resignation be acted upon and accepted. Though I have reached some conclusions most reluctantly, I have endeavored to do that which I believe to be to the best interests of Washington and Lee in the light of existing conditions.

With best wishes, I remain

Yours sincerely,

h/d

Homer A. Holt

bcc: ✓ Dr. Fred C. Cole

August 25, 1964

Dr. J. Morrison Hutcheson, M. D.  
808 Professional Building  
5th and Franklin Streets  
Richmond 19, Virginia

Dear Dr. Hutcheson:

I am appreciative of your letter of August 19, 1964, and on the general subject I enclose you a copy of a letter which I have received from our very good friend Roscoe B. Stephenson and a copy of my reply.

I am especially appreciative of the observations in your letter of August 19, 1964, that, while you did not agree entirely with my participation, you do accept my motives as good, and that the results of the alternative to my position might have been worse.

As I discussed with you when we conferred prior to the latest meeting of the Board, I had reluctantly reached the conclusion that if we adopted a declared policy of segregation, which we have not heretofore officially done, we would project Washington and Lee into a situation more or less intolerable. As you know, it is my firm conviction that most of these matters are entirely unreasonable and improper. Yet, there comes a time at which honorable surrender may properly precede ignoble defeat.

I appreciate your very tolerant approach to my partial surrender.

I am glad to note from the copy of your letter to Dr. Cole that your son's condition seems to have improved. I hope that improvement will continue. So far as your own general health be concerned, I only hope that I may be as strong as you are many years before I approach your age, even though your age is not a great deal beyond my own.

Dr. J. Morrison Hutcheson, M. D.  
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With best wishes, I am

Yours sincerely,

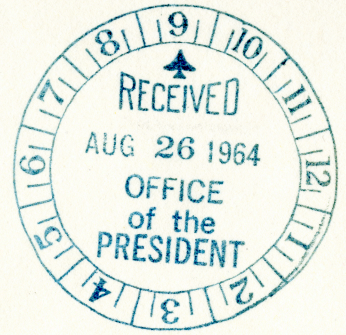
h/d

Homer A. Holt

2 enclosures

026d

HOMER A. HOLT  
P. O. BOX 553  
CHARLESTON 22, WEST VIRGINIA



August 25, 1964

Dr. Fred C. Cole  
President  
Washington and Lee University  
Lexington, Virginia

*Handwritten note:*  
Handwritten in blue ink, possibly a signature or initials, with some illegible text.

Dear Dr. Cole:

I enclose herewith a copy of a letter to me and a copy of my reply, and also a copy of a letter by me to Dr. Hutcheson, all of which are self-explanatory and may be of interest to you.

Yours sincerely,

Homer A. Holt

h/d

Enclosures 3



026L

August 27, 1964

The Honorable Homer A. Holt  
P. O. Box 553  
Charleston 22, West Virginia

Dear Governor Holt:

Thank you for sending me copies of exchange of letters between you and Mr. Stephenson, as well as a copy of your August 25 letter to Dr. Hutcheson. It was good of you to let me read them. I enclose a copy of a letter I sent to Mr. Stephenson a few days ago. As you will note, I included the suggestions you made for improving the letter.

Your sense of high obligation to this University is known and respected by all Washington and Lee men, and I am personally deeply grateful for your counsel. I hope you know that I, too, want to do only what is best for Washington and Lee.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Fred C. Cole

P. S. I have not heard that any member of the faculty or administration plans to subsidize an applicant to the University in order to promote integration.

enclosure

HOMER A. HOLT  
P. O. BOX 553  
CHARLESTON 22, WEST VIRGINIA

August 28, 1964

Personal

Dr. Fred C. Cole  
President  
Washington and Lee University  
Lexington  
Virginia

Dear Dr. Cole:

I appreciate your letter of August 27, 1964, and I think the letter which you wrote our mutual friend Roscoe Stephenson is just as appropriate as the circumstances permit. It is sound, clear, and straightforward.

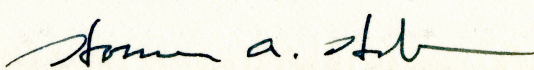
Incidentally, in reviewing our correspondence, I note that by my letter of August 17 I had suggested that the fourth paragraph of your draft of letter to Mr. Rouse be omitted, and that in your letter to Roscoe Stephenson that paragraph was omitted.

While in my letter to you of the 17th I did not suggest the omission of the fifth paragraph of the draft of your letter to Mr. Rouse, I do note that the fifth paragraph is not embodied in your letter to Roscoe Stephenson. I think this omission is quite proper and materially improves the letter.

Be assured that I know that your interest is in doing only that which is best for Washington and Lee. Had I the slightest feeling otherwise, I would not now be serving as a member of the Board.

I look forward to seeing you at the time of the October 23 meeting if I do not have that pleasure sometime in the meantime.

Yours sincerely,



h/d