

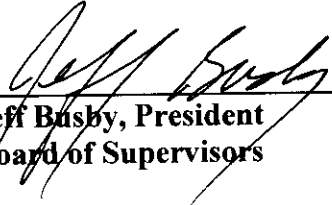
**ORDER: APPOINT MIKE ROBERTS TO ADDITIONAL TERM ON  
THREE RIVERS PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT BOARD AS  
COUNTY REPRESENTATIVE FOR FIVE YEARS**

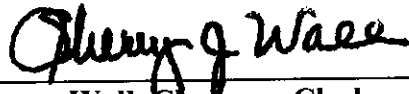
Motion was made by Chad McLarty, duly seconded by Kevin Frye, to appoint Mike Roberts to additional term on Three Rivers Planning and Development District Board as County representative slot for five years.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

Supervisor Kevin Frye, voted yes  
Supervisor Jeff Busby, voted yes  
Supervisor David Rikard, voted yes  
Supervisor Chad McLarty, voted yes  
Supervisor Mike Roberts, voted yes

After the vote, President Busby, declared the motion carried, this the 16<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2019.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Busby, President  
Board of Supervisors

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sherry Wall, Chancery Clerk

Aug. 28, 2019

**To: Members of the Lafayette County Board of Supervisors**

**From: Members of the Lynching Memorialization in Lafayette County Project**

**Re: Placement of marker on the lawn of the Lafayette County Courthouse**

The members of the Lynching Memorialization in Lafayette County Project, a broad-based coalition of Lafayette County community members, request the Lafayette County Board of Supervisors approve the placement of a marker on the lawn of the Lafayette County Courthouse.

The marker will contain the wording approved by our partner organization, the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), which is included as an attachment. Ideally, this marker will be placed on the eastern side of the courthouse near the existing bench or benches, unless county officials determine this location will interfere with existing infrastructure. If the preferred location is determined to be unsuitable, we ask that the marker be placed in the northeastern quadrant of the Lafayette County Courthouse lawn.

Our partner organization, EJI, will fund the cost of the marker fabrication. If required by county officials, the installation costs will be funded by EJI and the Lynching Memorialization in Lafayette County Project. The Lynching Memorialization in Lafayette County Project will work closely with officials of Lafayette County and the City of Oxford to host a marker unveiling and dedication ceremony for the community.

We appreciate the support of the Lafayette County Board of Supervisors through your resolution last October when we erected the first local marker, which memorializes Elwood Higginbottom, recognized as the last member of our community to be lynched.

The work of the Lynching Memorialization in Lafayette County Project is being done as part of the "Community Remembrance Project," which is a national lynching memorialization effort launched by the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama.

The "Community Remembrance Project" is aimed at creating greater awareness and understanding about racial terror lynchings, and to help spark necessary conversations that advance truth and reconciliation. While a few communities in other states are working with EJI, Oxford and Lafayette County are leading this effort in the state of Mississippi. Our community is being viewed as a model for others to follow in this initiative to promote racial reconciliation.

*The purpose of Lynching Memorialization in Lafayette County Project is two-fold: (1) We are seeking to remedy the wrongs committed against seven citizens of our community who were victims of racially motivated murders in Lafayette County between 1877 and 1950. None of these seven people were afforded due process by their government — their murders were never prosecuted, and their names have not been publicly remembered as victims of crimes; and (2), through doing so, we are seeking to engage the community in racial reconciliation and in transforming racial injustice into healing for our community.*

*The overall goal of this community project is to publicly remember the victims of these extra-judicial killings, to recognize the circumstances of their untimely murders, and to acknowledge the longstanding trauma and terror these lynchings caused to their families and the wider community. The marker we request to place on the Lafayette County Courthouse lawn honors the memory of all the local victims.*

Consequently, the work of the Lynching Memorialization in Lafayette County Project is bringing positive attention to our community. EJI also provides scholarships to local students who participate in an essay contest. Last year's contest provided five local students with funding to help pay for college.

We provided more detailed informational packets about our work to the members of the Board of Supervisors earlier this spring, but please let us know if we can provide you with any additional information.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to working with you on this and other efforts aimed at making our community one that is welcoming to all.

Sincerely,

Members of the Lynching Memorialization in Lafayette County Project

**Steering Committee**

Effie Burt  
Donald Cole  
Brian Foster  
April Grayson  
Darren Grem  
Laura Harper  
Randon Hill  
Alonzo Hilliard  
Terry Hilliard  
Wil Howie  
Michael Johansson  
Lydia Koltai  
Fred Laurenzo  
Emma Rice  
Jonathan Scott  
Martha Scott  
Hans Sinha  
Cade Smith  
Gail Stratton

**Arts/Education**

Laura Boughton  
Rebekah Flake  
Nicole Gladden  
April Grayson  
Darren Grem  
Jennifer Mizenko  
Velsie Pate  
Charlesa Peters  
Lynn Wilkins

**Subcommittees**

**Research**

Aileen Ajootian  
Vanessa Gregory  
Darren Grem  
Laura Harper  
Jeff Jackson  
Lydia Koltai  
Fred Laurenzo  
Kathy Laurenzo  
Susan Marchant  
Hans Sinha

**Outreach/Communications**

Aileen Ajootian  
Warren Black  
Alonzo Hilliard  
Sylvia Lenhoff  
Don Mason  
Jonathan Scott  
Martha Scott  
Gail Stratton

## **Lynching in Lafayette County**

For decades, African American men were lynched by white mobs in Lafayette County. Most of these men were lynched because of interactions with white women which were characterized as "inappropriate" or "assaults." These allegations against black people were rarely subject to serious scrutiny. Instead, mobs frequently pulled lynching victims from jails, often facing little to no resistance from law enforcement officers who were legally required to protect them. On July 12, 1885, a white mob kidnapped Harris Tunstal from jail and hanged him behind the Methodist Episcopal Church near the Oxford square. On November 13, 1890, a mob interrupted Will Gregory's trial, dragged him outside the courthouse, and shot him to death before hanging his body near Orwood. After kidnapping Will Jackson from the Oxford jail, a mob hanged him on September 2, 1891. Less than two years later, on July 30, 1893, a mob lynched Will Steen near Paris for reportedly talking about an alleged affair with a white woman. On June 19, 1895, a white mob shot William Chandler and hanged him from a telegraph pole across from the depot in Abbeville. On September 8, 1908, Lawson Patton, a jail trustee accused of the death of a white woman, was fatally shot in his cell and hanged on the grounds of the Lafayette County Courthouse. No one was ever held accountable for these lynchings.

The Equal Justice Initiative 2019

## **Lynching in America**

Thousands of African Americans were victims of racial terror lynching in the United States between 1877 and 1950. During this era, racial terror lynching emerged as a stunning form of violent resistance to emancipation and equal rights for African Americans, intended to intimidate black people and enforce racial hierarchy and segregation. After the collapse of Reconstruction, violent resistance to equal rights for African Americans and an ideology of white supremacy led to fatal violence against black men, women and children accused of violating social customs, engaging in interracial relationships, or committing crimes. Lynchings in Lafayette County continued well into the twentieth century. On September 17, 1935, Elwood Higginbottom was on trial for the alleged murder of a white farmer when he was dragged from jail and hanged by a mob of white men about a mile and a half north of the Oxford square. Although the perpetrators of this violence and other acts of racial terror lynchings were often known to law enforcement, white mobs were usually allowed to act with impunity without fear of any legal repercussions. Many names of those whose lives were claimed by these acts of violence were not recorded and will never be known, but over 650 racial terror lynchings have been documented in Mississippi alone, at least seven having taken place in Lafayette County.

The Equal Justice Initiative 2019