



**FRIENDS OF
EGERTON
RYERSON**

Members of the Board of Governors
Ryerson University
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Dear Board Members

We call on you to exercise your responsibilities as members of the Board of Governors, particularly those of you who were appointed by the Province of Ontario (we are mainly citizens and taxpayers, plus a few international friends).

You acted precipitately in endorsing the recommendation of the Task Force “Standing Strong” to rename the University. That task force did a shoddy job, ignored briefs given it that were pro-Ryerson, and its two co-chairs were demonstrably in favour of the toppling of the statue. Not one member of the task force was an expert on Ryerson. A highly positive take on his life was placed in Appendix D, but which was ignored when recommendations had to be made.

The Task Force made the specious argument that the renaming was not about Ryerson himself, but to look to the future—equity, diversity, etc. The decision, however, was made soon after the toppling of the statue, its desecration and head removal—shameful acts that the Ryerson administration could have and should have prevented. Instead, it fomented anti-Ryerson views, by installing a plaque next to the statue that implicated Ryerson, falsely, in the tragic, federal, residential school system. We believe that truth is required for reconciliation.

The president, Dr Lachemi, should be held to account for his failures on false facts and his failure to assuage the wounds of Indigenous students who thought, thanks to the plethora of misinformation, that Ryerson was responsible for their people’s deaths.

The Ryerson University Act of 1977 gives as the objects of the university:

1. The advancement of learning, and the intellectual, social, moral, cultural, spiritual, and physical development of the University's students and employees, and the betterment of society.
2. The advancement of applied knowledge and research in response to existing and emerging societal needs and in support of the cultural, economic, social, and technological development of Ontario.
3. The provision of programs of study that provide a balance between theory and application and that prepare students for careers in professional and quasi-professional fields.

Yet, in fact, false accusations reign at RU, and are not challenged. How is society bettered by the vilification of an honourable person who made such a significant contribution to Canadian society, and was, indeed, a “brother” to the Ojibwe?

Board members can be forgiven for not having the historical expertise to know how bad the task force report was, but it should have had it reviewed by experts. We call on you now to hold hearings that will.

We also wonder if you have taken into account the cost of the renaming, and the losses to thousands of past students who were proud of their RU degrees, and faculty whose work has led to international standing for their programmes, which will be lost with the name change.

Yours sincerely,

70 Friends of Egerton Ryerson