



Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

We the board of the Robert S. Abbott Race Unity Institute, which is dedicated to fostering racial understanding and harmony, are writing to address the issue regarding the Confederate Memorial at Hanover Square in Brunswick

The Abbott Institute membership is composed of over 200 diverse citizens in Glynn County, from all walks of life, races and religions. But ***we are united*** in our belief that an understanding between races and religions will guide us to a more harmonious and healthy society.

To that end, we ask the City Commission to consider the future well-being, peace and brotherhood of our community. The future of our community will be built from the promise of our children--- which is dependent upon ***the example we set and the unity we embrace.***

It is for that future that we entreat the City to remove the statue to Oak Grove Cemetery, where it can be viewed by those who want to preserve it, but not forced upon the rest of the community who see it as a harmful and traumatic symbol of past oppression and subjugation.

We do not see this issue as a split along the lines of race. More than half of our members are white. And we are not “outsiders.” Our organization’s name pays homage to an outstanding Glynn County citizen who lived here over 100 years ago. Our board is composed of mostly citizens who were born and raised here.

We see this as a commitment to reconciliation, to healing, and to recognizing the pain these symbols cause to so many of our citizens.

Despite the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, which resulted in international attention and condemnation, we gathered as a community to ***peacefully*** protest that racial injustice--black and white, young and old. We came together to speak out, to understand and to heal. ***And we implore you to continue that healing process.***

If we care about unifying all citizens of the community, the statue has no place in a public square. Our country and county have changed immensely since 1905 when it was erected. At that time, African American citizens here were subject to oppressive Jim Crow laws, which denied their rights as citizens and silenced their voices. The statue and its etched message are not representative of the hard-won progress our nation has made since then, the values we now hold dear, or the hopes and dreams for our community’s future.

Removing the statue to a cemetery, a place where all of us honor our deceased family members, is the perfect solution for those who want to remember their Confederate ancestors. ***We may never agree on the symbolism and meaning of this statue.*** But we hope we can agree that healing, understanding and love for our fellow citizens is worth a compromise to insure a harmonious and inclusive future for our children.

Sincerely,

The Robert S. Abbott Race Unity Institute Board of Directors