

C. C. Little Building Name Change Request

Introduction: Why we think this request is important and should be considered

Clarence C. Little was an active eugenicist and eugenics promoter, and later in his life a spokesperson for the tobacco industry who tried to cast doubt on the claims that smoking caused cancer. Memorializing his name on a science building is problematic for two key reasons. First, Little helped contribute to and popularize a now discredited approach to population management—eugenics—that sanctioned identification and sterilization of “unfit” individuals as well as the identification of superior and inferior races (although Little himself rejected the notion of a racial hierarchy). And second, Little contributed to the development of political strategies designed to delay any serious response to the scientific findings that smoking was associated with lung cancer. Specifically, he maintained steadfast commitment to the genetic basis for most cancers and so continually highlighted potential doubts and uncertainties in research linking smoking with lung cancer, a strategy that was adopted again and again by industry when faced with evidence about the deleterious effects of their products. Indeed this kind of “manufacturing of doubt” is currently being employed against climate change science. As an apologist for the tobacco industry, Little helped to put at risk the lives of millions, and contributed to the deaths of thousands, including undoubtedly many U-M graduates. For both of these reasons, it seems counter to the goals and values of Michigan as a higher education institution to continue to memorialize Little, particularly in such a public way as is done with the C.C. Little Building.

Background on Clarence C. Little

General Biography

Clarence Cook Little was University of Michigan president from 1925 to 1929. He was born in Brookline, Massachusetts in 1888, and attended Harvard University, where he earned a D. Sci. in Zoology in 1914.

Little was commissioned a captain in World War I and became a major in the adjutant general's department. He returned to Harvard after the war and focused his research on genetics and cancer, also serving as assistant dean. In 1919, Little accepted a position as research associate and assistant director of the Station for Experimental Evolution, Carnegie Institution, Cold Spring Harbor, N. Y. The station at Cold Spring Harbor was the brainchild of Charles Davenport, a foundational member of the early American Eugenics movement. In 1922 he put aside most of his research to become president of the University of Maine (1922-1925). In 1925 Michigan's regents appointed Little president of the University of Michigan (1925-1929). One year of Little's U-M presidency overlapped with his role as president of the American Eugenics Society (AES) in 1929. He was a director of the AES both during and after

his tenure at Michigan, from 1923 to 1939.

After leaving Michigan in 1929, Little moved to Bar Harbor for research. While there he was named the managing director of the American Society for the Control of Cancer (later renamed the American Cancer Society) from 1929-1945. In 1954, Little became the Scientific Director of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Council for Tobacco Research, where he remained until his death. His two major scientific contributions were illuminating the genetic basis for transplant rejection and founding the Jackson Laboratory.¹

Little took an active leadership role in important organizations, in five inter-related areas: eugenics, genetics, birth control, cancer, and tobacco. He was a Director and President of the American Eugenics Society; President of the 1928 Race Betterment Conference; and a Vice President of the Immigration Restriction League. He also was the Founding Director of the Jackson Memorial Laboratory at Bar Harbor ME; and General Secretary of the 1932 6th International Congress on Genetics. He was a founding member of the Board of Directors of Margaret Sanger's American Birth Control League and of the Detroit Birth Control League.² He was also the long-term Managing Director of what became the American Cancer Society, after which he became the long-term Director of the Tobacco Industry Research Committee.

Time at UM

Little's time at UM was relatively short and characterized both by few accomplishments and administrative acrimony. For example, Little's signature project was his proposal to create a University College that would teach a unified curriculum to all undergraduates for their first two years. Little felt that all graduates should acquire a common body of knowledge. Therefore he advocated that the first two years of college should provide students with required general courses in several fields of learning, before they specialized or majored in one field. At the end of that period, some of them might be discouraged from going on, either because of unsatisfactory grades or (and this was new) some defect in character that made them not worth educating. Ultimately, although there was support among some faculty and regents, the proposal never got off the ground.³

Philosophically, Little argued that university training was not for every high school graduate and thus that those admitted should be carefully screened. But once in Ann Arbor, each student's special capabilities, he believed, should be the concern of the faculty as the student progressed — although not necessarily limited to fostering the student's particular interests. For women students, Little faulted the existing curriculum because it was inadequate to

¹ Auchincloss, H. and Winn, H. J., "Clarence Cook Little (1888–1971): The Genetic Basis of Transplant Immunology." *American Journal of Transplantation*, 4: 155–159. 2004. doi:10.1046/j.1600-6143.2003.00324.x

² Linda Gordon *Woman's Body* 283-84.

³ Peckham

prepare them to fulfill their responsibilities in the home and family.

Little oversaw the development of a number of new schools and departments, and instituted Freshmen Week, an orientation period for entering freshmen before other students gathered and classes began.⁴ He argued strenuously for the erection of new dormitories for the undergraduates, and also worked with the Alumni Association to create an Alumni University. He was committed to the belief that the educational responsibility of a university does not cease with the graduation of a student; rather he believed that, insofar as possible, some sort of constructive relationship should be preserved through all the years of the life of a college man or woman.⁵

Under pressure from the Regents, Little presented his resignation to the board on January 21, 1929, effective at the end of the school year. In resigning, Little stated that his primary reason was "that my methods of handling situations dealing with interests of private donors, political interests, 'local' interests, and alumnae interests, are not consistent with policies which the Board of Regents deems wise." The *Michigan Alumnus* suggested that Little was upset about the Regents handing too much power over education content to donors, about Ann Arbor rooming house keepers and business leaders having too much say in opposing Little's push for dormitories, and over a battle with alumnae over who would control the new Michigan League. A group of forty-two student leaders met unofficially at the Union on January 22, 1929 and passed a resolution lauding the personal educative attainments of Dr. Little.⁶

Little's scientific work

Little made significant contributions to science in the areas of mouse genetics, cancer genetics, and organ transplantation. He was prescient insofar as he hypothesized about the role of genetic predisposition to certain types of cancer. He also made very significant advances in uses of the mouse as a model organism for cancer research. Perhaps his most lasting contribution was the establishment of the first inbred strains of mice, something for which the Jackson Laboratory is known to this day. According to George Snell, Little made four important contributions to science: the development of inbred strains of mice and the demonstration of their value in medical and biological research; the formulation of the genetic theory of susceptibility and resistance to tissue transplants; the discovery of the milk-transmitted murine mammary tumor incitor; and the establishment, with Rockefeller Foundation initiative and support, of a study of the genetics of behavior.⁷

⁴ Peckham

⁵ *Michigan Alumnus*

⁶ "Dr. Little Resigns as President of the University," *The Michigan Alumnus*, Vol. 35 no. 16: 1/26/1929

⁷ Snell, C.C. Little Memoir

Little began his work in the field of cancer and genetics at Harvard, where he accomplished what some call his most brilliant research: “A Mendelian explanation for the inheritance of a trait that has apparently non-Mendelian characteristics.” His observations on transplant rejection became codified into the “five laws of transplant immunology” by George Snell. While at Harvard Little also developed the “DBA (Dilute, Brown and non-Agouti)” strain of mice. For his research, he received the 1978 Cancer Research Institute William B. Coley Award.⁸

In addition to his scientific research, Little was the Founding Director of the Jackson Memorial Laboratory at Bar Harbor, Maine, established in 1929. It was and is a premier laboratory for genetic research into cancer. While Director, Little helped set up summer training programs for high school and college students and some consider him an educational innovator in this regard. He was twice President of the American Association for Cancer Research (1931 and 1940), General Secretary of the 1932 6th International Congress on Genetics, and the long-term Managing Director of what became the American Cancer Society. A proponent of the establishment of the National Cancer Institute, Little was awarded the American Cancer Society's Medal in 1950.

Little’s Positive Scientific Contributions

1. Little pioneered the development of strains of mice that were genetically very susceptible to cancer, and others that were genetically cancer-resistant, and that have proven invaluable to scientific research.⁹
2. In a day when birth control was scarcely mentioned in polite society, Little spoke out favorably and repeatedly for it — even from a pulpit.¹⁰
3. In 1922 Harvard President A. Lawrence Lowell began a bitter and ultimately successful battle for quotas to limit the number of Jewish students admitted to Harvard. Little led a group of alumni who backed former Pres. Charles W Eliot in publicly fighting against what he called Harvard’s “racial discrimination” against Jews.¹¹
4. In a 1932 speech, Little attacked the idea that biology supported permanently fixed categories of “racial superiority” and inferiority. Instead he provided a graphic metaphor to illustrate his adaptationist, environmentally-contingent definition of eugenic fitness. “An individual 6 foot tall may be superior over the 5 foot 6 inch

⁸ *Wikipedia*

⁹ Proctor 267

¹⁰ Peckham

¹¹ *Boston Globe* June 27, 1922 p.1

individual when it comes to picking a hat off a high shelf. But place the same two individuals in a [battlefield] trench and the taller one wouldn't need the hat..."¹²

5. As managing director of what became the American Cancer Society Little created the unprecedented 1936 Women's Field Army which by 1939 mobilized 200,000 lay women members to fight "the conspiracy of silence" and fear that was keeping women from seeking early detection of breast and ovarian cancers. Even if cancer was genetically caused, the WFA insisted it could be treated by life-saving surgery and radiation. The Women's Field Army indirectly influenced the creation of two other late 1930s institutions: the anti-polio Mothers March of Dimes, and the National Cancer Institute, the first National Institute of Health.¹³
6. In 1936 Little was one of 30 American geneticists who signed a letter demanding that the upcoming 7th International Congress for Genetics should "question" whether [Nazi] "theories of racial superiority had any scientific basis."¹⁴

Little's Questionable Scientific Work

A. Eugenics

1. C. C. Little was an early supporter of the American Eugenics movement and was one of the founders of the American Eugenics Society. Directly following the Second International Congress on Eugenics, of which he was the Executive Secretary, the American Ad Interim Committee was created and later evolved into the American Eugenics Society.¹⁵ C. C. Little served on the Committee's Board of Directors along with Henry Fairfield Osborn and Charles Davenport, whom many consider to be the godfather of American Eugenics, steering the Society throughout its formative – and most radically eugenic – years.
2. Many of Little's views on eugenics were widely shared by other scientists and adopted as public policy in the US and internationally. But Little was particularly visible in two ways: he led a large number of influential organizations, and he had a flair for publicizing his views in attention-grabbing language.
3. Little served as a Director of the American Eugenics Society (AES) or its precursor

¹² *New York Times* 8/25/1932. If your head stuck out over the edge of the trench it would get shot off.

¹³ James Patterson, *Dread Disease* 121-25. Choose to Live, ACS film 1940. National Archives, on YouTube.

¹⁴ Quoting historian Stefan Kuhl, *Nazi Connection* p. 78

¹⁵ "Eugenics Committee of the United States," Eugenics Committee of the United States, 1921, American Eugenics Society Records, American Philosophical Society.

organizations for 18 years, resigning due to his inability to attend meetings regularly caused in part by his geographical distance from the Society's headquarters and pressure from his other work.¹⁶ He never cited disapproval for the Society's eugenic mission as his reason for resigning.¹⁷

4. While Little was President of the AES for just part of one year (1929), he managed to have a lasting impact on the Society. The major accomplishment of Little's presidency was the expansion of AES State Committees, for which he appointed State Directors and enhanced the Society's ability to lobby state and local institutions.¹⁸
5. Little was a Vice President of the Immigration Restriction League.
6. Little supported the 1924 Johnson Act setting eugenically inspired strict ethnic quotas on immigrants, and viewed that law as heralding a New World Order where individual rights would be subordinated to eugenic progress.
7. Little promoted anti-miscegenation laws to prohibit inter-racial marriage. In a 1925 speech to a Birth Control conference "warning against reckless inter-racial marriage," Little "compared the United States to a soda fountain. He represented the different races here as the different flavors of soda" that should not be allowed "to mix at random."¹⁹
8. Little played a leadership role in the development of eugenics education, serving on the Formal Education Committee of the American Eugenics Society for many years, and promoting the introduction of eugenics into university courses. By the late 1920s, there were close to 400 eugenics courses offered in colleges and universities in the United States.²⁰
9. With regards to the impact of C. C. Little's Presidency on eugenic education at the University of Michigan, there was a slight increase in coursework offered during his tenure, though it was not explicitly linked to presidential initiatives. For the most part, no courses entitled "Eugenics" were offered, though eugenics and eugenic principles were discussed in the course description of numerous classes. During Little's

¹⁶ "Minutes of the Board of Directors," American Eugenics Society – Minutes, 1939, 11/2/1939, American Eugenics Society Records, American Philosophical Society.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ C. C. Little to Leon F. Whitney, 3/1/1929, Clarence Cook Little, American Eugenics Society Records, American Philosophical Society.

¹⁹ *New York Times* Mar 29, 1925

²⁰ "Report of the Committee on Formal Education of the American Eugenics Society, Inc," *The American Eugenics Society*, 1928, Box 1, Leon Fradley Whitney Miscellaneous Reprints [not his own], American Philosophical Society.

Presidency, which lasted from 1925-1929, six courses were offered that were either overtly eugenic in name or referred to eugenics or eugenic principles in their course descriptions.²¹ One of the courses was added in 1926 and no longer offered in 1929 and another was a course that was revised to include substantial eugenics materials in 1926.²² Four of the classes were offered in the Sociology Department and two in the Zoology department. In 1924, the year prior to Little's arrival, four courses featuring eugenics were offered.²³ However, this cannot be a complete picture of the extent to which eugenics was taught at the University of Michigan. It is difficult to determine because professors who taught explicitly eugenic courses also taught other courses where eugenics may well have featured. For example, Professor Shull taught the only course that was overtly eugenic in name, the Zoology 251 and 252 Discussion Group "Eugenics, or a History of Zoology." However, he also taught "Genetics," "Heredity," "Investigations in Genetics," and "Investigations in Genetics of Invertebrates" throughout his career,²⁴ and it is very possible that professors such as Shull may have given eugenic tinges to their presentations of other material. This would be in line with the findings of a survey of genetic and eugenic education conducted by the American Eugenics Society's Committee on Formal Education, of which President Little was a member. The survey found that there was "frequent overlap" between genetics and eugenics in the teaching of either subject.²⁵

10. In a 1926 speech to the Michigan State Medical Society, Little called for "educating the citizenry... to conform with the new order... of restricted liberty [such as] the immigration quota law."
11. In 1927 Little accepted the presidency of the third and final Race Betterment Conference, held at Dr. John Harvey Kellogg's sanatorium in Battle Creek, MI in 1928. This was the final meeting of Kellogg's Race Betterment Foundation and brought

²¹ "Annual Announcement 1926-1927," *University Bulletin - News Series*, vol. 28 no. 4: 7/24/1926, Box 2, "1924/25-1963/64," College of LSA Publications 1871 – Ongoing, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²² "Annual Announcement 1928-1929," *University Bulletin - News Series*, vol. 28 no. 4: 7/24/1926, Box 2, "1924/25-1963/64," College of LSA Publications 1871 – Ongoing, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²³ "Annual Announcement 1924-1925," *University Bulletin - News Series*, vol. 28 no. 4: 7/24/1926, Box 2, "1924/25-1963/64," College of LSA Publications 1871 – Ongoing, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²⁴ "Annual Announcement 1927-1928," *University Bulletin - News Series*, vol. 28 no. 4: 7/24/1926, Box 2, "1924/25-1963/64," College of LSA Publications 1871 – Ongoing, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²⁵ "Report of the Committee on Formal Education of the American Eugenics Society, Inc," *The American Eugenics Society*, 1928, Box 1, Leon Fradley Whitney Miscellaneous Reprints [not his own], American Philosophical Society.

together a combination of hard-line eugenicists, politicians, public health reformers, and body culture promoters. President Little convinced many East Coast eugenicists to travel to the Midwest for the conference.²⁶

12. In a public speech accompanying the 1932 6th International Congress of Genetics in NY, Little declared, "We favor legislation to restrict the reproduction of the misfit....[by] compulsory sterilization. ... When a sink is stopped up we shut off the faucet."²⁷
13. As late as December 1934 Little was still reportedly listed as a Vice President of the Immigration Restriction League, along with prominent racist eugenic financier Wycliffe Draper, in a League publication that advocated further tightening the Johnson Act quotas, and that explicitly blamed Jews for opposing such restrictions.²⁸ Hitler had seized power over a year earlier, and these quotas soon meant that boatloads of Jewish refugees would be sent back to their extermination.

B. Tobacco

1. A good if polemical account of C.C. Little's tobacco industry work can be found in Robert Proctor, *Golden Holocaust* (UC Berkeley 2011), chap 16, esp. p. 267ff. Little was a former head of what became the American Cancer Society. Proctor explains the links: Little believed that cancer was a genetic disease and that only those with a genetic susceptibility got cancer from "carcinogens." This was a not-implausible scientific view, but Proctor makes a good case that Little was culpably blind to how the industry intended to use him for its own public relations purposes.
2. Little became the long-term Director of the Tobacco Industry Research Committee (TIRC) in 1954, and kept the position until his death. Robert Proctor characterizes the TIRC as "an organization whose purpose was to create public doubt about the role of tobacco in cancer." The Tobacco Industry Research Committee diverted attention from the campaign against deaths from smoking, and became a direct model for other science skeptics, from creationism to anti-vaccination to climate change deniers. Little focused on genetics and rarely mentioned smoking, but when he did, he seemed to revise his views to fit the tobacco industry views. In a 1944 American Cancer Society booklet Little called breathing "fine particles of tobacco...smoke... unwise" but in 1960 as head of the

²⁶ Emily Robbins to Clarence Cook Little, 10/22/1927, Box 13-12, Clarence Cook Little Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²⁷ "Sees a Super-Race Evolved by Science," *New York Times*, 8/25/1932

²⁸ *Jewish Daily Bulletin* 12/9/34 pp. 1, 12. Standard histories say the IRL disbanded in the early 1920s, but the *Jewish Daily Bulletin* quoted from a 1934 pamphlet authored by the Immigration Restriction League, titled "The Immigration Problem Today." Copies of that 1934 pamphlet are held at the University of Minnesota and at Duke University according to World Cat.

TIRC he replied “no” when asked if he still believed that 1944 statement.”²⁹

3. In 1954, U.S. tobacco manufacturers published “A Frank Statement to Cigarette Smokers” in 448 newspapers in which they “questioned research findings implicating smoking as a cause of cancer, promised consumers that their cigarettes were safe, and pledged to support impartial research to investigate allegations that smoking was harmful to human health.”³⁰ “However, many TIRC and CTR funded research projects were only remotely related to smoking and health, as acknowledged in a 1960 court case (the Lartique trial) by the first scientific advisory board (SAB) chairman of TIRC, Clarence Cook Little.”³¹ Little “testified that ‘TIRC had conducted no studies of tobacco smoke because it had never been proven to be carcinogenic. He viewed such a study a waste of time. Similarly, Little refused to conduct animal experimentation because he believed that it was only relevant to animals, not human beings. Finally, TIRC did not sponsor epidemiological studies.”³²
4. In 1954, Little’s TIRC committee “prepared a booklet, *A Scientific Perspective on the Cigarette Controversy*, which was sent to 176,800 American doctors. Fifteen thousand additional copies were sent to editors, reporters, columnists, and members of Congress. A poll conducted two years later showed that ‘neither the press nor the public seems to be reacting with any noticeable fear or alarm to the recent attacks [on smoking].’”³³ The goal of the booklet was to push the message that no links between smoking and cancer had been proven and that more research was needed. As Oreskes and Conway note, “The industry made its case in part by cherry-picking data and focusing on unexplained or anomalous details.”³⁴
5. In 1955, Little did a TV an interview with Edward R. Murrow in which he was asked the following question: “Suppose the tremendous amount of research going on were to reveal that there is a cancer-causing agent in cigarettes, what then?” Little replied: “It would be made public immediately and just as broadly as we could make it, and then,

²⁹ Proctor, *Golden Holocaust*, p. 274

³⁰ K.M. Cummings, C. P. Morley, A. Hyland, “Failed promises of the cigarette industry and its effect on consumer misperceptions about the health risks of smoking,” *Tobacco Control* 11 (2002): i110-i117

³¹ K.M. Cummings, C. P. Morley, A. Hyland, “Failed promises of the cigarette industry and its effect on consumer misperceptions about the health risks of smoking,” *Tobacco Control* 11 (2002): i112.

³² K.M. Cummings, C. P. Morley, A. Hyland, “Failed promises of the cigarette industry and its effect on consumer misperceptions about the health risks of smoking,” *Tobacco Control* 11 (2002): i112, quoting R.W. Pollay and T.E. Dewhurst, “The Unscientific Perspective of the Tobacco Industry Research Committee (1954),” University of British Columbia, History of Advertising Archives, Working Paper 98.5, August 1998.

³³ Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt*, p. 18

³⁴ Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt*, p. 18

efforts would be taken to attempt to remove that substance or substances."³⁵

Cummings, Morley, and Hyland note: "Despite the promise made to disclose information about smoking and health issues to the public, internal industry documents reveal that cigarette companies failed to keep this promise. A 1953 document from the files of the public relations firm of Hill and Knowlton which helped create the TIRC, suggests that the purpose of the 'Frank Statement' advertisement was to assure smokers that it was safe to smoke rather than to share what was known about the health dangers of smoking: 'There is only one problem—confidence, and how to establish it; public assurance, and how to create it . . . And, most important, how to free millions of Americans from the guilty fear that is going to arise deep in their biological depths—regardless of any pooh-poohing logic:—every time they light a cigarette.'"³⁶

6. In a 1957 magazine article authored by Clarence Little, director of the TIRC, he wrote that: "the industry intends to support research until these charges can be proved or disproved by direct experimental evidence."³⁷
7. On July 12, 1957, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a statement linking smoking with lung cancer. C.C. Little immediately responded in his position as Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Board of the TIRC, declaring that the statement added "nothing new," that it "only reflects the opinions of some statisticians," and that "research, thus far, has produced no evidence that cigarette smoking or other tobacco use contributes to the origin of lung cancer."³⁸
8. In 1964, the Surgeon General issued *Smoking and Health: Report of the Advisory Committee to the Surgeon General*, which held that cigarette smoking was responsible for a 70 percent increase in the mortality rate of smokers over non-smokers, and detailed a number of other adverse health implications of smoking. Nonetheless, in 1967, Little did a series of radio spot announcements arguing that the link between cigarette smoking and cancer was only statistical, "that no clinical or biological evidence has been produced which demonstrates how cigarettes relate to cancer or any other disease in human beings," and that more research was needed.³⁹ He also declared that "Concerning the anti-cigarette controversy you should know that nonsmokers get lung cancer while the overwhelming majority of people who smoke do not get lung cancer.

³⁵ K.M. Cummings, C. P. Morley, A. Hyland, "Failed promises of the cigarette industry and its effect on consumer misperceptions about the health risks of smoking," *Tobacco Control* 11 (2002): i113

³⁶ K.M. Cummings, C. P. Morley, A. Hyland, "Failed promises of the cigarette industry and its effect on consumer misperceptions about the health risks of smoking," *Tobacco Control* 11 (2002): i110-i117

³⁷ K.M. Cummings, C. P. Morley, A. Hyland, "Failed promises of the cigarette industry and its effect on consumer misperceptions about the health risks of smoking," *Tobacco Control* 11 (2002): i113

³⁸ TIRC, *Some Scientific Reactions on the Smoking Question*, 1957,

³⁹ Tobacco Records

The Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health, while condemning cigarettes, clearly states that more research is needed.”⁴⁰

The C.C. Little Science Building

The C. C. (Clarence Cook) Little Science Building was built in 1925 as the East Medical Building and is located on the eastern side of the Diag. Its limestone neoclassical facade with four Ionic-inspired columns was designed by noted architect Albert Kahn. The structure originally served as a medical building, although it now houses a number of Natural Sciences departments and laboratories, many related in one way or the other to the Geology Department.⁴¹

The building itself only became C.C. Little in 1968, when the Regents of the University of Michigan voted to change the name of the East Medical Building (EMB) to the Clarence Cook Little Science Building as part of a broader effort to rename university buildings in honor of previous university presidents.⁴² The medical departments were relocating to the expanding medical campus and the EMB was slated for remodeling.⁴³ Even at the time of the building's renaming, the Regents and the University Planner found it difficult to decide which building should bear Little's name, as it was felt that he did not have a strong connection to any particular building on campus.⁴⁴ In comparison, the buildings selected for the other Presidents honored by the University during this push for building renaming, Hatcher and Ruthven, were far easier to select, as the presidents' legacies were directly tied to the University and the buildings that would bear their names, unlike Little.⁴⁵

There was little pushback from most of campus about the renaming, save from the Geology

⁴⁰ Tobacco Records

⁴¹ Currently housed in Little: Argon Geochronology Lab; Atomic Absorption Lab; BioGeochemistry & Micropaleontology; Computational Facility for Geodynamic Research; Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences; Earth and Environmental Sciences Facilities; Earth Surface Processes; Electron Microbeam Analysis Lab; Experimental and Aqueous Geochemistry; Experimental Petrology Lab; Geochronology and Isotope Geochemistry Lab; Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Lab; GeoThermal Lab; Keck Elemental Geochemistry Lab; Mineral Chemistry & Computational Mineralogy; NanoGeoRadio Materials Lab; Noble Gas Lab; Oceanography and Marine Geology Lab; Ore Deposits Lab; Paleoclimate Modeling; Paleomagnetism Lab; Radiogenic Isotope Geochemistry Lab; Raman Spectroscopy and Diamond Cell Lab; RIGL ICP; Seismology Lab; Stable Isotope Lab; Structure Lab; Structure Lab – Chemistry; Surface, Crust & Lithosphere Explorations Lab; Thin Section Lab; X-Ray Diffraction and Crystallography Lab.

⁴² Request for Action: Building Names, Submitted by W. K. Pierpont, Vice President, University of Michigan, 12/16/1968. Box 123, [Board of Regents University of Michigan records 1817-2011, 1899-1989, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.](#)

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Fred Mayer (Retired University Planner) interviewed by Joshua Hasler, 3/16/17.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Department, which made up the bulk of the faculty in the East Medical Building. John Dorr, the head of the department, made his grievances known in a letter to the Regents, imploring them to name the building after one of the University's many distinguished earth scientists.⁴⁶

The CC Little Building occupies a prominent spot on Central Campus. Because the main bus stop for Central Campus is located adjacent to the C. C. Little building and named after it, the building is broadly known throughout the student population. Most students know of C.C. Little, even if they have no idea what goes on in the building much less who President Little was. This accident of topography has meant that Little has taken on an outsized presence in the undergraduate cognitive mapping of the campus. It is questionable whether Little is important enough in the university's history to merit such prominence, regardless of whether he ought to be memorialized at all.

The Politics of Building Names

Many colleges and universities across the United States are engaged in debates over building renaming on their campuses due to legacies of slavery, racism, and discrimination. After a series of vocal protests from students, Yale's president announced that the university would change the name of Calhoun College to Hopper College. John C. Calhoun had been a proponent of slavery, a white supremacist, and the nation's 7th Vice President, while Grace Murray Hopper was a trailblazing computer scientist and mathematician. While many universities are grappling with legacies of slavery in their renaming and public history efforts, other institutions have dealt with their eugenic legacies. For example, last year the University of Virginia renamed Jordan Hall, named after former School of Medicine Dean and prominent eugenicist Harvey E. Jordan, after Vivian Pinn, who was the only African American woman to graduate from the school of medicine in the class 1967 and went on to receive numerous awards for her work as a physician. Advocates for change argue that it is an affront to the dignity of the universities and an insult to racially and socially diverse populations of students to maintain buildings named after such leaders with records of slavery, racism, and discrimination. Opponents to renaming often assert that such leaders made important contributions, are deeply connected to proud institutional histories, and should not be judged by anachronistic standards.

At UM, C.C. Little is one of two names of buildings that has been brought up consistently by undergraduates as meriting reconsideration (the other is Winchell Hall). In 2006, 2015, 2016, and 2017 editorials or op eds in the *Michigan Daily* raised the issue of maintaining Little's name on a prominent central campus science building, and most suggested that the name should be

⁴⁶ John A. Dorr to The Regents of the University of Michigan, President Fleming, and LSA Dean Hays, December 26th, 1968. Box 2, Departmental Correspondences July 1 1968 – December 31 1968, University of Michigan Department of Geological Sciences, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

changed.⁴⁷ UM itself has shown little reluctance in recent years to change a building name if it seemed in the university's interest. Most recently the David M. Dennison Building, named after a prominent UM physicist, became Weiser Hall, named after UM alumnus and donor Ron Weiser, in recognition of the \$50 million Weiser and his family donated to the University. Dennison spent all of his long and illustrious career at UM, and his scientific contributions are much more directly tied to the institution than were Little's.

Arguments Against Name Change

1. The current name is causing little harm. Most of the campus community does not know who Little was and few appear to find it upsetting or disturbing to attend classes in the Little building.
2. There is no evidence that while acting as president Little was an explicit racist who sought to exclude students of color or minorities. For example, he did not institute quotas on Jewish students and in at least one instance even spoke out against such quotas.
3. Little made significant contributions to science in the areas of mouse genetics, cancer genetics, and organ transplantation. He was prescient insofar as he hypothesized about the role of genetic predisposition to certain types of cancer. He made advances in uses of the mouse as a model organism for cancer research.
4. Little founded the Jackson Laboratory in Bar Harbor, Maine, which was and is a premier laboratory for genetic research into cancer; in this capacity, he helped to set up summer training programs for high school and college students and some consider him an educational innovator in this regard.
5. An institution should honor its previous leaders even if some of their ideas were distasteful. To remove his name is to engage in "PC" censorship.
6. By removing his name, we are sanitizing the past, and erasing history that, even if ugly, should not be forgotten.
7. If we start renaming this building, we will set a precedent of retrospective judgment that is sanctimonious and will prompt a culture of constant cycle of renaming that is

⁴⁷ See Christopher Zbrozek, "Strange Career of CC Little," *Michigan Daily*, September 26, 2006; "Roundtable: What's in a Name?," *Michigan Daily*, December 7, 2015; Peggy Korpela, "Questioning C.C. Little's Legacy," *Michigan Daily*, April 17, 2016; and Jackie Charniga, "Looking in the Mirror: The Push to Change History on Campus," *Michigan Daily*, February 21, 2017.

distracting from the true mission of the university and wasteful of time and resources.

Arguments for Name Change

1. While Little's eugenic legacy and career may not make certain students at Michigan uncomfortable, it can be a more disturbing experience for students and faculty who are aware of it and hold identities that were directly targeted by Little's work.
2. Just because Little is best-known for his other scientific work and not eugenics is merely an indicator of what he has been remembered for, not what he was most actively involved in or believed in during his lifetime.
3. C. C. Little never disavowed eugenics or the American Eugenics Society. While this is not a standard most people ought to be historically judged by, it should be considered when commemorating figures who were actively involved in eugenics at one point in their career.
4. Little spent much of the last phase of his career representing the tobacco industry and working to undercut efforts to warn the public about the dangers of smoking. However inadvertent, Little contributed to disinformation about tobacco and cancer that helped maintain tobacco industry profits at the cost of thousands of lives and billions in healthcare.
5. It seems particularly egregious to have a science building named after someone who was not only an advocate of eugenics, but also part of an industry effort to develop a strategy to protect companies from adverse findings about the health implications of their products through campaigns to create doubt about scientific findings.
6. Changing the name of the C. C. Little Building does not necessarily have to result in a sanitization of the past, as it could be accompanied by a plaque or other form of memorialization of the building's history and the rationale behind renaming.
7. While a leader of this institution, President Little did not have a lasting impact that would warrant his name remaining on a building out of respect for his achievements, despite his personal philosophies.
8. Most of Little's major achievements were associated with other institutions than the University of Michigan, unlike other Presidents who have prominent campus buildings named after them.

9. Little has no especially strong connection with the building itself. In fact, the building was selected for him in the 1960's because it was the most fitting of several less-than-ideal options.
10. The C. C. Little Building is commonly referred to by university students to at least the same degree as buildings such as Angell Hall or the Hatcher Library. A president of such little impact on the university does not deserve a place in the lexicon of students on par with the likes of Presidents Angell or Hatcher.
11. Universities across the nation are doing their due diligence and reassessing how the figures they commemorate demonstrate – or do not demonstrate – the values for which they claim to advocate. The “Leaders and Best” must also lead in this new movement and demonstrate the University's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Addressing the Principles

1. ***First, The Principle of Pedagogy:*** As an institution of learning our naming process and outcome should always be an opportunity for learning, about our past, about path breaking contributions by our faculty, the distinguished lives of alumni, extraordinary acts of generosity, or important contributions to administrative leadership.

Answer: Renaming the Little Building provides an opportunity to promote reflection and conversations about the meaning of diversity, equity, and inclusion on our campus, and to consider how Little's work – as university president, eugenicist, and tobacco apologist – militated against values we now hold dear. It also raises the question of how and when to apply contemporary definitions of justice and inclusion to the past, when we have the luxury of hindsight. Renaming the building would also provide the opportunity to seek more diverse representatives of the university community memorialized on the university campus. At the moment, buildings are overwhelmingly named after white males. Moreover, Little's contributions to the University were modest at best. His scientific work was pursued largely either before he came to Ann Arbor or after he left. His major programs for the university while President were never enacted, and his lasting influence on the institution was slight. Finally, it is clear from the historical record that the decision to name a building after Little was occasioned solely by the desire to have all U-M presidents memorialized, and that the East Medical Building was chosen not because it was associated with his presidency or his scientific work, but solely because it was available and had something to do with science. There are now a number of U-M presidents without buildings named after them, suggesting that this criterion is no longer as powerful as it may have once seemed.

2. ***Second, The Principle of Interpretation:*** When a name is selected for a building or portion of a building the obligation to explain and interpret that name does not end at the end of the naming ceremony. Indeed, it is not only good stewardship on behalf of those after whom spaces are named, but also an affirmative obligation of our Pedagogical Principle to continuously interpret – and if necessary reinterpret – the names and the stories behind the names of our facilities. When questions are raised about the name of a space the issue may actually be about the interpretive information provided about the name. In some cases changing a name may be less important than providing adequate interpretation of it

Answer: In the Little case, it is incumbent on us both to rename the building for the reasons outlined in this document, and to interpret and contextualize Little’s role at UM and beyond. Interpretation can be an integral part of renaming so that Little’s relationship to UM and the naming process itself is not forgotten, but situated in a longer history of value setting and place names at Michigan. It should be noted that building names in and of themselves in most instances have little pedagogical power. Little’s name has been on the building for almost 50 years, and yet few students know who he was, what he did, or even why there might be controversy about having a building named after him. We see it as critical that part of the process of renaming the Little building should entail some sort of permanent plaque or exhibit that explains the various names of the building and why they were changed. But we are realistic enough to acknowledge that the number of students who will take advantage of the opportunities for reflection that such a plaque or exhibit would provide will probably be small.

3. ***Third, The Principle of Due Diligence:*** In approaching a naming decision the University owes it to itself and to succeeding generations to do substantial research into the name. We believe that this research should be focused on the public record.

Answer: As should be apparent, this document is the result of extensive research, relying on the public record, archival sources, and secondary sources. It is the product of the labors of five U-M faculty members (including two with expertise in the history of eugenics and two with expertise in the history of activism) and of a U-M undergraduate writing a senior thesis on C. C. Little. On the basis of this experience, while we agree on the need for thorough research before the university decides to remove or preserve a building name, we also question whether placing the research burden on those questioning the appropriateness of a name is either reasonable or in the best interests of the university. It is our sense that most groups of students, in particular, would not have the wherewithal (or even the time) to engage in the level of research that this document represents. Perhaps what is here is more than necessary, but the principles for naming decisions provide little guidance about what is enough. C.C. Little is also a

figure about whom a great deal is known, and thus the research job was less daunting than it might have been. Still, we only found time to compile this document in the summer, when there was a sufficient respite from teaching and administrative duties to provide us an opportunity to put it together. It is hard to imagine that most individuals or groups desiring to challenge a name would have the opportunities we have had. And so we respectfully suggest that the process be reimagined. We suggest that some minimum criteria for the reassessment of a name be established. Once an individual or group has provided sufficient information to show that those criteria are met in a given case, then the university itself (perhaps by employing undergraduates as researchers) should undertake the obligation to do a full-scale investigation into the individual and to make that information publicly available. On the basis of this extensive dossier, a public discussion could be organized to talk through the merits of changing or retaining the name. The committee could then meet to determine its final recommendations, which would go to the President and Regents. We would remind the committee that, in the end, the greatest single beneficiary of a careful consideration of the university's names is the university itself. It is the university that suffers when building names no longer reflect its values. Students, alumni, faculty, and staff are vital contributors to this process and, as members of the university community, are affected by the names the university has chosen to memorialize. But placing too much of the burden of making the case for a change risks insuring that few names, if any, will ever be successfully challenged. While in the short run this might seem easier for the institution, in the long run UM will suffer if it does not insure that its public face accords with its values. That questions have been raised about the CC Little building for over 10 years without any firm resolution of them is indicative of what can happen if the process of initiating a change is made too burdensome.

4. ***Fourth, The Principle of Commitment:*** In general the University community makes a significant commitment to an individual or a family when it names a space after a person. This applies both to spaces named for donors and for others. In some cases involving donors this naming is regulated by a binding legal agreement. Those who wish to change the formally designated names of spaces or buildings carry a heavy burden of argument to justify it. And in all instances, any such discussions must take account of appropriate legal analysis from the Office of the Vice President and General Counsel and the 2008 Policy and Guidelines for Naming of Facilities, Spaces and Streets

Answer: As far as we know none, since this building was not named as part of an endowment or gift. The primary commitment would be to the status quo and respecting the wishes of the regents in 1968 when the decision to name the Little building was made with little deliberation.

5. ***Fifth, The Principle of Revision:*** The exciting and important thing about the study of

history is that both the materials for and the understanding of the past are constantly changing. At a research university historical scholars must lead the way in producing these new historical discoveries and interpretations. If these new understandings, from time to time, produce controversy over space names, that is not an unnatural thing, far from it. Indeed, the historical foundations of a naming decision by one generation may appropriately be questioned by the new historical understandings of another

Answer: We submit that a combination of the historical record regarding Little and our collective desire to create and maintain a university topography of names and places representative of current institutional values compels a renaming of the Little building. There is some debate about how to weigh Little's accomplishments over the course of his career, and clearly he produced some keen scientific insights, particularly with regard to mouse genetics. Just as clearly, however, he also promoted a scientific theory anchored in invidious judgments about the relative worth of different kinds of people and was a central figure in a campaign orchestrated by a PR firm to discredit public health evidence in order to protect a profitable industry. Moreover, Little's time at UM was brief and not noteworthy, whether looked at in terms of his scientific research or his contributions to the university. Thus in our view the Little building exemplifies the kind of university structure that should be renamed based on a critical and substantive reevaluation in one historical moment of a previous historical moment.

6. ***Sixth, The Principle of Historical and Institutional Context:*** It is easy to blame those in the past for lacking the knowledge, wisdom and values that we seem to possess. Keeping in mind that we will likely suffer the same fate at the hands of those who come after us, it behooves us to understand that it is impossible to hold someone accountable for failing to share our contemporary ideas and values. Instead, the question must be what ideas, values, and actions were possible in a particular historical context. Moreover an institution of knowledge must leave room for an essential truth: the search for new knowledge through research is messy and today's shared values or reigning frameworks may be overturned through the give and take of scholarship in the long run

Answer: We do not deny that in many ways Little was typical of leading eugenicists and scientists in the 20th century. He held positions at elite institutions and was a member of a range of organizations that advocated for various scientific and social positions. It is important to contextualize Little's presidency and to recognize the ways in which it reflected the historical era of eugenics and what we look back on today as misguided science. However, we would also note that even with regard to eugenics, Little was more active and more vocal in his support of eugenics measures than many of his scientific contemporaries. No mere foot soldier, Little was a Director or President of the American Eugenics Society for 18 years and president of the third Race Betterment Conference; he was also a vice president of the Immigration Restriction League, and

continued to advocate for eugenics well into the 1930s, after many scientists had renounced their support for eugenics. When we turn to his work for the tobacco industry, there again while Little's initial doubts about the links between smoking and cancer may have been shared by a number of researchers, Little continued to publicly advocate for this position well after the Surgeon General's report of 1964, when the evidence for tobacco as carcinogenic had become quite strong. In both instances, Little's actions eventually placed him well outside of the mainstream of the his contemporary scientific community and suggest that even judged by the standards of his time, his positions are open to serious question. In our view, renaming the Little building is not the perfect answer to addressing the uncomfortable aspects of a past U-M presidency nor to satisfying our drive to create a more diverse and equitable campus. But it does allow us to claim and inhabit a university in the 21st century that represents what are becoming ingrained values of nondiscrimination and diversity.

7. ***Seventh, The Principle of Consistency:*** There have been more than 16,000 faculty members in the history of the University; many more staff members, fourteen presidents, etc. Why some are honored with space names and others are not is a major question about our past. To take just one example that raises this question, there currently is no dormitory hall named after one of our most famous faculty members, John Dewey, although he was on the faculty at the same time as Alexander Winchell, Henry Carter Adams, and Alfred Henry Lloyd. If all space names recommended to the Regents by administrators are fixed forever, then the idea of using named spaces to honor faculty members, for example, is almost at an end. Because they were selected in the past some space names also tend to reflect the early composition of the University: an all-male student body until 1870 and an overwhelmingly male faculty for much of the twentieth century

Answer: We concur with the underlying sentiment of this principle that opportunities for memorializing important figures in the history of the university will become more and more infrequent if past naming decisions are held sacrosanct. Indeed, if the university is to have any hope of reflecting the diversity of its community, it must look for opportunities to rename existing buildings in order to bring to light the contributions of women and non-white students, staff, and faculty to the university. At present, there appear to be three basic approaches to naming employed on the campus: geographic or functional names, such as West Hall; names honoring UM faculty, staff, or administrators, such as Hutchins Graduate Library; and names honoring donors, such as the Ross School of Business. Renaming buildings with functional or geographic names is certainly one possibility for diversifying the set of individuals memorialized on campus. A second might be to limit major donors, such as Ross or Taubman, to one naming opportunity, rather than allowing them to have their names on multiple buildings. Even with these changes, naming opportunities would be limited and weight of past decisions

would bear heavily on the university. Thus developing a process that involved critical assessment of all building names, perhaps on a 10-30 year cycle, might be one way to honor the past while also providing new opportunities to determine if past names are still relevant and appropriate, or whether new names reflecting better the values of the university ought to be proposed. In this light, we would argue that C.C. Little is a building ripe for renaming. Not only was Little himself a problematic figure historically, but it would be difficult to argue that he had a major impact on the university during his short time as president. East Medical Building was renamed for Little only because the Regents thought it important to have every U-M president memorialized, and since there was no particular building associated with Little while President, they chose EMB as a building with some connection to science, if not to Little.

8. ***Eighth, The Principle of Contemporary Effect:*** Honorifics given at one time can have significantly different effects on community members at another and these too are worthy of consideration.

Answer: We would argue that C.C. Little is an excellent example of the changing implications of a building name. When the East Medical Building was renamed for Little in 1968, few members of the UM community knew much about Little or his presidency. Save for some protests from the Geology Department, which believed the building housing their department should have been named after a prominent U-M earth scientist, responses to the name change were limited. Consumed by the struggles over the Vietnam War, Civil Rights, and other social issues, the campus paid little attention to the name change. In subsequent years, some members of the community have begun to question the presence of the name on such a prominent building on campus. They have noted that Little's advocacy of eugenics may make some parts of the community feel unwelcome on campus; some have also observed that Little's work for the tobacco industry to amplify doubt about the harms of smoking rather than to promote action to deter people from smoking may have contributed to the early deaths of many as well as helped to establish a pattern for industry-sponsored science to try and obscure the deleterious effects of the industry's products. At a moment of intense concern about climate change denial, C.C. Little may appear to be an unfortunate choice as the name for a prominent science building on campus.