



Buildings with Changed Names

Concurrent with its adoption of [Naming Principles](#) in March 2022, and consistent with those principles, the University's Board of Trustees [renamed six campus buildings](#). Information about those buildings, their new names, their previous namesakes, the rationale for the original naming decisions, and the reasons for the removal of those names can be found here.

As expeditiously as possible, the University will update the building names in all places that they appear (building and campus signage, campus maps, the University's website, housing assignments, classroom assignments, University publications, etc.). In addition, consistent with the Naming Principles, the University will take steps to preserve and make accessible the historical record relating to the buildings, their original namesakes, the role of the original namesakes and their contributions to the University, and the reasons for the removal of their names. In cases in which the previous namesakes were enslavers, information about those enslaved by them will also be made part of the available historical record.

A) The Refectory (Previously Sarah Brunet Memorial Hall)

Sarah Brunet Memorial Hall, completed in 1914, was the original dining facility of Richmond College on the present campus, and was known until the early 1920s as the Refectory. It was then named by the Board of Trustees in memory of Sarah W. Brunet (1799-1888) of Norfolk, Virginia in recognition of her support of the institution. Although not directly affiliated with the institution, Brunet was a supporter of Baptist causes. She made at least one gift to Richmond College during her lifetime, and named Richmond College a beneficiary of her estate, resulting in the University receiving several land parcels over a period of many years. Brunet held numerous properties in Norfolk and other areas after her husband's death in 1830. The Slave Schedule of the Federal Census and City of Norfolk personal property tax records document Brunet as enslaving several persons in the years between 1835 and 1865.

B) Residence Hall No. 3 (Previously Freeman Hall)

Freeman Hall opened in 1965 and was named by the Board of Trustees in memory of Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman (1886-1953) in recognition of his service to the University. A 1904 graduate of Richmond College, he served as a University of Richmond Trustee (1925-1950) and Rector (1934-1950). Freeman was the editor of the *Richmond News Leader* (1915-1949) and the author of Pulitzer Prize-winning, multi-volume biographies of George Washington and Robert E. Lee. Extensive research into his life and work was conducted by the University in 2020. [The resulting research report](#) describes his roles at the University of Richmond and his vast body of work as a historian, editor, and commentator. His work focusing on Robert E. Lee and the U.S. Civil War advances the discredited "Lost Cause" view of the Confederacy. The University's research also documents his public views and writings favoring the eugenics movement and laws against racial mixing; asserting white racial superiority; advocating for segregation and resisting federal studies and reports advocating integration (e.g., the reports of President Truman's 1947 President's Committee on Civil Rights and President's Commission on Higher Education); and advocating for the poll tax in order to deny Black citizens the right to vote.

C) Residence Hall No. 1 (Previously Jeter Hall)

Jeter Hall was completed in 1913 as one of the first two dormitories on the University's new campus and was initially referred to as "Dormitory No. 1." It was named by the Board of Trustees in 1916 in memory of Dr. Jeremiah Bell Jeter (1802-1880) in recognition of his service to the institution. Jeter launched an initiative that led to the formation of Virginia Baptist Seminary, eventually chartered as Richmond College; was a Trustee of Richmond College from its founding until his death; and was President of the Board of Trustees (1868-1872 and 1873-1880). A Baptist minister, Jeter served as pastor of several churches, including First Baptist Church and Grace Street Church in Richmond; was President of the Baptist Association; and was co-owner and editor of *The Religious Herald*. Federal Census records affirm that Jeter enslaved persons in Northumberland County, Henrico County, and Richmond, Virginia.

D) Fountain Hall (Previously Bennet Puryear Hall)

Bennet Puryear Hall, opened in 1927 as one of three science buildings and was originally known as the Chemistry Building. It was named by the Board of Trustees in 1944 in memory of Bennet Puryear (1826-1914), who served Richmond College as a tutor and then a science professor (1849-1858 and 1866-1895) and as Chairman of the Faculty (1869-1885 and 1888-1895), a role akin to President at that time. In his published work, writing as “Civis,” a pseudonym he acknowledged publicly as his own in 1876, he referred to himself as having been “the owner of slaves.” Federal Census records and personal property tax records for Mecklenburg County, Virginia, also document his leasing of enslaved persons owned by others.

E) Humanities Building (Previously Ryland Hall)

Ryland Hall, originally referred to as “the Administration Building,” was one of the first buildings constructed on the University’s new campus in 1913-14. It was named by the Board of Trustees in 1915 in memory of Dr. Robert Ryland (1805–1899) and Dr. Charles H. Ryland (1836-1914) to recognize their service to the institution, and particularly Robert Ryland’s leadership in sustaining the institution in its arduous first decades. Having served as Principal/Superintendent (1832-1840) of Virginia Baptist Seminary (precursor to Richmond College), he was the first President of Richmond College (1841-1866), a Richmond College Trustee (1841-1868), and longtime President (i.e., Chair) of the Board of Trustees. Charles H. Ryland (1836-1914), nephew of Robert Ryland, attended Richmond College and served as Trustee, Financial Secretary/Treasurer (1874-1911), Secretary (1876-1914), and Librarian (1883-1914). Extensive research into the life and work of Robert Ryland was conducted by the University in 2020. [The resulting research report](#) describes Robert Ryland’s role at Richmond College; his work as pastor of the First African Baptist Church (a congregation of more than 2,700 free and enslaved Black people in Richmond that was required by Virginia law to be supervised by a white pastor); and his direct involvement in enslavement, including his enslavement of more than two dozen people and oversight of Richmond College’s leasing of enslaved persons (including some he enslaved) to labor for the institution.

F) Residence Hall No. 2 (Previously James Thomas, Jr. Memorial Hall)

James Thomas, Jr. Memorial Hall was completed in 1913 as one of the first two dormitories on the University’s new campus and was initially referred to as “Dormitory No. 2.” It was named by the Board of Trustees in 1916 in memory of James Thomas, Jr. (1806-1882) in recognition of his service to the institution. Thomas was a founding Trustee of Richmond College, serving initially as Treasurer and later as President (i.e., Chair) of the Board of Trustees (1872-1873 and 1880-1882). His financial support enabled the University to re-open after its financial ruin in the Civil War. Thomas was the owner of tobacco factories that he operated using the labor of scores of enslaved people. According to Federal Census records, he enslaved more than 100 individuals in Richmond and was also an extensive participant in the “slave hire” system of leasing laborers from their enslavers.