

**The Graduate Student Assembly
The University of Texas at Austin**

Sponsor(s): Gillian Grindstaff, GSA Representative for Math
Gregorio Ponti, GSA Representative for Physics
Sinclair Manning, GSA Representative for Astronomy
Samantha Fuchs, GSA Legislative Affairs Director

Resolution: G.R. 17 (F) 6 – Resolution to Change the Name of Robert Lee Moore Hall

WHEREAS (1): Robert Lee Moore Hall was named in 1973 to honor the mathematician Robert Lee Moore for his tenure as a faculty member in the University of Texas at Austin Department of Mathematics for 39 years; and,

WHEREAS (2): Robert Lee Moore was an outspoken segregationist, who refused to allow Black students into his classes even after the formal desegregation of UT in 1956, and declined to acknowledge his Black academic successors, for reasons explicitly due to race,¹ which is classified as illegal discrimination in Title IV of the Civil Rights Act²; and,

WHEREAS (3): He was known to declare anti-Black sentiment during his class,³ as well as his negative views of women and Jews,^{4,5} conduct which would today be classified as harassment in UT nondiscrimination policy⁶ and by the Department of Education, promoting a racially hostile environment by Title IV of the Civil Rights Act⁷; and,

WHEREAS (4): UT Austin is no longer a segregated institution, nor does it condone the promotion of anti-Blackness, misogyny, or anti-Semitism, so that the prominence of the name and legacy of Robert Lee Moore is a contradiction to our values and explicit UT policy⁸; and,

WHEREAS (5): This ambiguity of the value of inclusion and diversity to the University is counterproductive to the recruitment of traditionally underrepresented students; and,

¹ Hersh and John-Steiner, *Loving and Hating Mathematics*, Princeton University Press, 2011.

² Title 34. U.S. Department of Education. <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/reg/ocr/edlite-34cfr100.html#S3>

³ Albert C Lewis, *The beginnings of the R.L. Moore school of topology*, *Historia Mathematica*, Volume 31, Issue 3, 2004, Pages 279-295.

⁴ Murray, M.A., *Women becoming mathematicians*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2000.

⁵ Albers, Donald J. and Reid, Constance, *An Interview with Mary Ellen Rudin*, *College Math. J.*, Volume 19, Issue 2, 1988, Pages 114-137.

⁶ Handbook of Operational Procedures: Nondiscrimination Policy. 2017. <https://policies.utexas.edu/policies/nondiscrimination-policy>

⁷ Racial Incidents and Harassment Against Students. Federal Register, Vol. 59, No. 47, Thursday, March 10, 1994. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/race394.html>

⁸ University of Texas at Austin Hate and Bias Incident Policy, <https://policies.utexas.edu/policies/hate-and-bias-incidents>

WHEREAS (6): An attempt was made in 2016 to change the name of RLM Hall, garnering 100+ signatures on a petition,⁹ leading to an agreement from administration that the building would be renamed during renovations. However, these renovations have no timeline, and are contingent on the renovations of Welch Hall taking place first, and;

WHEREAS (7): Students from the Physics, Math, and Astronomy departments at UT have already begun organizing to have the name changed immediately, beginning with a town hall on October 6th which had 80+ attendees and a petition garnering 400+ signatures from undergraduate, graduate, staff, and faculty members as of October 8th, 2017; and,

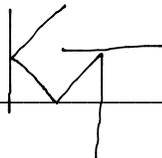
WHEREAS (8): As stated at the town hall by Suzanne Jacobs, a graduate student in Physics who has been spearheading the name change process: “Today, in 2017, continuing to honor Moore with the naming of this building sends, at best, a message that we value his achievements more than we value the inclusion of all people in these fields, and at worst, it sends a message that we agree with his prejudices.”; now,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT (1): The Graduate Student Assembly calls for the removal of Robert Lee Moore’s name from the Physics, Math, and Astronomy building at 2515 Speedway, as well as from all University maps and materials, to be replaced with “Physics, Math, and Astronomy building,” until a new suitable name is found; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (2): A public forum be scheduled on the topic of a new name for the Physics, Math, and Astronomy building and/or donors be solicited for sponsoring the name of the building; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (3): Copies of this bill shall be delivered to the Office of the Chancellor, the Office of the President, the Office of Executive Vice President and Provost, the Office of Diversity and Community Engagement, and the departments of Math, Physics, and Astronomy.

PASSED by the GSA General Assembly, October 11, 2017

Signature of the GSA President _____


⁹ Cobler, Paul. “Petition calls for name change of Robert Lee Moore Hall.” *The Daily Texan*. October 28, 2016.