

As a professional historian with a specialization in recent U.S. history, I have closely followed the reevaluation of commemorations that has occurred in recent years with the rise of the Black Lives Matter and Rhodes Must Fall movements. I believe decisions such as whether to take down a statue or rename a building can only be considered on a case-by-case basis. I believe there is a very strong case for the de-naming of the Berkeley Library. As the working paper makes clear, Berkeley was not simply a slaveholder but an ideological proponent of slavery.

I do not believe that Berkeley's prominent role in Trinity's history should be forgotten. Indeed, it must be remembered as part of Trinity's reckoning with its past as an imperialist university. But that is a different question as to whether he should be commemorating in the naming of an important building.

In particular, maintaining Berkeley's name on the building sends a disturbing message to current and prospective students of color. This, to me, is the key issue as someone with a lifelong commitment to antiracism and as a current member of Trinity's Working Group on Racial and Ethnic Equality.

I would therefore favor the de-naming of Berkeley library. Trinity has far superior candidates as part of its illustrious history to name the library after. Having a building named after a woman and/or a person of color would be a step forward in making Trinity's commemorative landscape more inclusive. However, I would favor the inclusion of a prominently placed plaque in the newly named library that would indicate that this was once called Berkeley library and explain why it was re-named on consideration of the facts of Berkeley's support for slavery.

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