



MECKLENBURG COUNTY

March 5, 2024

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Remembrance Project Steering Committee

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It is with solemn solidarity that I submit this letter of support for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Remembrance Project (CMRP), a cross-sector coalition that formed in partnership with the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) with the purpose of honoring victims of racial terror lynching and reflecting honesty on the history and legacy of racial injustice in our community. The CMRP aims to raise awareness and inspire action through dialogue, community education and public memorials.

I have learned that, in 1913, Mr. Willie McDaniel, 22, was murdered in racial terror lynching on the grounds of Mel Grier's farm in northeast Charlotte, most of which is now Mecklenburg County's Reedy Creek Park and Nature Preserve.

In partnership with Mecklenburg County, soil will be collected on the grounds of Reedy Creek Park and Nature Preserve in a somber ceremony to recognize and memorialize Mr. McDaniel. The soil will permanently be on exhibition at EJI's The Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama.

To enhance the public's awareness of Mr. McDaniel's story and the legacy of racial terror lynching in this county and across the nation, a historical marker will be installed on the grounds of Reedy Creek Park and Nature Preserve, in collaboration with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation.

Finally, I am proud for Mecklenburg County to partner with the steering committee members of the CMRP on this important effort. I fully understand that Mecklenburg County staff and steering committee members of the CMRP will collaborate to ensure that the site is treated with the utmost respect that Mr. McDaniel's legacy deserves. The spirit of this project is collaboration with the ultimate goal of telling the truth about our community's history of racial violence and injustice. This goal is aligned with Mecklenburg County's mission to build and sustain a culture of advancing equity and inclusion through understanding, analyzing and eliminating the root causes of racial disparities and creating a culture of equity that meets the needs of all residents and starts with an honest reflection on county history.

I am honored for Mecklenburg County to be a partner in this important community effort.

Sincerely,

Dena R. Diorio
Mecklenburg County Manager

Lee Jones
Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Director