

From: [KELLEY FELCHLE](#)
To: [Nancy Higby](#)
Subject: FW: Removing the Griffin Symbol
Date: Friday, August 21, 2020 8:58:47 AM

From: Kendra Wyatt <Kendra.Wyatt@WATERLOO-IA.ORG>
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2020 8:39 AM
To: QUENTIN HART <QUENTIN.HART@WATERLOO-IA.ORG>; KELLEY FELCHLE <KELLEY.FELCHLE@WATERLOO-IA.ORG>
Subject: FW: Removing the Griffin Symbol

From: [iatjennings@mchsi.com](#) <[iatjennings@mchsi.com](#)>
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2020 8:28 AM
To: Mayor <[Mayor@WATERLOO-IA.ORG](#)>; Sharon Juon <[Sharon.Juon@WATERLOO-IA.ORG](#)>; Dave Boesen <[Dave.Boesen@WATERLOO-IA.ORG](#)>; Margaret Klein <[Margaret.Klein@WATERLOO-IA.ORG](#)>
Cc: Jonathan Grieder <[Jonathan.Grieder@WATERLOO-IA.ORG](#)>; Pat Morrissey <[Pat.Morrissey@WATERLOO-IA.ORG](#)>; Jerome Amos Jr <[Jerome.Amos@WATERLOO-IA.ORG](#)>; Ray Feuss <[Ray.Feuss@WATERLOO-IA.ORG](#)>
Subject: RE: Removing the Griffin Symbol

August 20, 2020,

Honorable Mayor Hart, Honorable Council Member Sharon Juon, Honorable Council Member Dave Boesen, Honorable Council Member Margaret Klein;
City of Waterloo
715 Mulberry Street
Waterloo, Iowa 50704

Dear Honorable Mayor, Council Members;

I would like to respond to the letter of August 5, 2020 in the Waterloo Courier by LaTonya Graves “What Change looks like in Waterloo.” I served as the Chief of Police of Waterloo from November 2000 until I retired January 2010. I still currently live in Ward One in the City of Waterloo.

During my tenure, I continued what was started before me to work to build positive relationships with the Community to include the African-American community, along with current members of the department and those members from past administrations. I took over Chief Koehrsen’s radio program and had my own talk show on KBBG radio with the late Lou Porter and with Deborah Berry. I took calls from the public with questions of concern or to inform the community as to what was taking place in our community.

During my tenure I invited University of Northern Iowa history professor John Baskerville to talk with the entire department about the relation between the police

department and the Black community. This history lesson given to the department by John Baskerville was well received by members of the department and gave them a better understanding of where we have been.

We also reached out to the Black Hawk County NAACP, with the help of Cliff Cooney and Jim Day were able to set up Study groups that continued a dialog between the community and the entire police department so that we all would have a better understanding of each other. Waterloo without a doubt is a diverse community and we invited ALL members to the table for a discussion about how we can become closer. We engaged with Neighborhood Associations to better understand their needs.

We worked with Anna Mae Weems, who secured funding for the department, that allowed Officers from the department to attend Urban Potential style training. Bringing together police officers, business leaders, minority leaders and religious leaders to discuss in an open forum issues that affected all of us.

We started a Citizens Academy and encouraged members of the community to go through a short version of the training individuals receive to become a police officer. Exposing to them many of the tactics we use to protect the community and ourselves. By doing so, our hope was to explain why officers need to take certain actions to protect themselves and the community.

I have lived and worked in Waterloo my entire life, working for the City of Waterloo as a police officer for thirty-five (35) plus years. I still recall the day a group came to my office over their concern of the KKK Dragon being used by the Waterloo Police Department. I cannot describe the surprise I had by this statement, as in all my years in this community no one had ever expressed that concern to me. I produced for this group a brochure explaining what former Police Chief Robert Wright and Waterloo Courier artists, Jack Bender, had in mind when designing the patch back in 1964. I am confused as to why the GRIFFIN is even an issue today.

We worked very hard to recruit individuals to join the department and make a difference in this community. The one question put forth to me over the years, "Why are there not more Black Officers on the Department." The truth of the matter, we cannot hire people of color if they do not apply. Our recruiting efforts both locally and out of town failed. We reached out to a number of groups to help in recruiting a diverse group of recruits, again we failed.

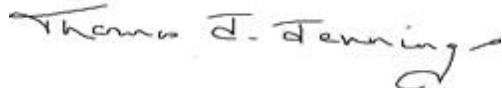
There is no doubt in my mind, that although we have started the process to better understand each other, we have a long way to go and in fact this must be a continuing effort between the police and this community. For some in this community to project wrong information, after being informed of the truth behind the patch is just wrong. For some to belong to organizations that use the Griffin, yet criticize the department for its use, is just wrong.

It's time to stop making up false claims, educate each other as to what is expected from each other to provide a safe community in which to live, work and play. Let's

move on and stop repeating false information that simply is not true. I'm thinking in today's world there are more important issues this city should be addressing like providing adequate Police and Fire protection, than what patch is being used by the police department.

And finally, let me end with a quote from Mark Twain, " A lie can travel half way around the world while the truth is still putting on its shoes."

Sincerely;

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Jennings". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small flourish at the end.

Thomas J. Jennings, Chief of Police, Retired



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