

# Republican Perspective

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## A New World's Record

Tiny Lebanon Valley College in Annville, Pennsylvania, is a private predominantly white liberal arts school. Last December, activist students attending a forum on campus equality called for changes to address long-standing "institutional injustices." Among these demands: renaming of Lynch Memorial Hall. The name "Lynch," it seems, conjured up the practice of lynching, and thus it had overtones of racial injustice.

During our Revolutionary War, there was a Captain William Lynch who led a sort of kangaroo court which punished British loyalists. Thus penalties---including hanging---carried out without legal authority became known as "lynchings."

But was Lynch Memorial Hall named for the notorious Captain William Lynch? Well, no.

Dr. Clyde A. Lynch was not, as far as anyone knows, a racist. And he did not, as far as anyone knows, hang any black American---or anybody else, for that matter. He was president of Lebanon Valley College from 1932 to 1950. He steered the college through the Great Depression and World War II, and he raised \$550,000 (real money, in those days) for construction of the hall which now bears his name. Even today, the college---and in fact the protesting students---benefit from his leadership and generosity.

So what does Lynch Memorial Hall have to do with racism or lynching? Well, nothing.

But never mind the facts and the historical context. The students who attended the forum demanded changing the name of Lynch Memorial Hall as part of their push to end "institutional injustices." This demand was met with resistance, sarcasm, and ridicule. Some commentary from students and alumni:

- Anyone with half a brain would know that the name has nothing to do with racial connotations. It's the last name of a very generous donor who probably helped fund many of these students.
- This is absurd...illogical, irrational, and ridiculous. It is self-caricature.
- These protesting clowns are...biting off their nose to spite their face. If I am a donor and have a penchant for a large gift and naming opportunity, I may look elsewhere...
- Good grief...As a graduate of LVC, I apologize for this foolishness...absurd, poorly thought out, and clearly arises from a fevered imagination.
- This would be funny if it weren't a sad statement on the lack of rational thought...

Apparently sensing that they had jumped the shark, the protestors said they would be willing to settle for adding Dr. Lynch's first name and middle initial to the building instead of removing it altogether. The college administration seems to be going along with this, agreeing to place a plaque fully identifying the benefactor.

As described in my June 18, 2014 column, "It's Just a Camel," St. Thomas University embarrassed itself by canceling "hump day" for fear that Joe the camel might offend "Middle Eastern cultures" and animal rights activists. It looked as though St. Thomas had set the world's record for the absurdity of political correctness. But now Lebanon Valley College is challenging St. Thomas for the title.

Too bad the protestors at Lebanon Valley College did not take their grievance to the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. It would have been interesting to see the reaction of U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch.