Name is taken off building at USC

Rufus von KleinSmid, the university's fifth president, was a eugenics supporter.

By TERRA WATAMARE
and TOMAS MINN

With its soaring arches, international flags and glitter-topped tower, the Von KleinSmid Center for International and Public Affairs is one of the most prominent buildings at USC. Its namesake, the late Rufus B. von KleinSmid, has held a place of distinction as the university's fifth president.

But on Thursday, USC announced it had stripped Von KleinSmid's name from the building as the university at last renounced its eugenics past.

The scholar, who is credited with expanding the university's academic programs and international relations curriculum as president from 1931 to 1947, believed that people with "defects" had no ethical right to parenthood and should be sterilized. His "Human Betterment Foundation" was instrumental in supporting the 1907 Calif. [Los Angeles, CA]
USC removes ex-president’s name from building

USC President Echo B. Johnson, left, and Universal Pictures producer Mark Hennings in 1984.

For legal justice, triggered by the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, finally pushed USC to action. For decades, the university had been under pressure to remove the name of the university’s late president, a white supremacist, from buildings on campus. USC officials have said that they will remove the name of the late president from multiple buildings.

The university also announced that it will change the name of the nation’s first women’s law school, which was founded by the late president, to the USC School of Law.

The move comes after months of protests and calls for change on the part of students and alumni. The university has faced criticism for its handling of sexual assault allegations and its response to reports of racism and discrimination.

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