



Council Resolution No. 2020/2021-014

## RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF RENAMING JANSSE STEPS TO TONGVA STEPS

**WHEREAS**, The United States of America, including the city of Los Angeles and the greater University of California system, is built upon stolen land; and

**WHEREAS**, The Gabrielino-Tongva people have been Indigenous to the Los Angeles Basin for at least 7,000 years and traditionally identify as the original people and caretakers of the land since time immemorial; and

**WHEREAS**, The Gabrielino-Tongva people's cultural, political, economic, legal and educational systems precede The United States, The State of California and the University of California systems;<sup>1</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, In 1994 the Assembly Joint Resolution 96<sup>2</sup> indicates that the State of California "recognizes the Gabrielino-Tongva Nation as the aboriginal tribe of the Los Angeles Basin and takes great pride in recognizing the Indian inhabitation of the Los Angeles Basin and the continued existence of the Indian community;" and

**WHEREAS**, The continued miseducation of Native American history, including their connection to their homelands, leads to a heightened lack of awareness of Native people and culture, furthering Indigenous erasure; and

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gabrielinotribe.org/historical-sites-1/>

<sup>2</sup> Assem. J. Res. 96, Chapter 146, 1993-1994 Reg. Sess. (Cal. 1994) (recognizing the Gabrielino Tribe of Los Angeles).

**WHEREAS**, UCLA is an established land grant educational institution<sup>3</sup> which promotes the inclusion of all peoples, especially Indigenous students in and out of California, yet has no formal commemoration honoring the original caretakers of the land that this institution is built on, the Gabrielino-Tongva people; and

**WHEREAS**, UCLA's Principles of Community as a land grant institution indicate the university's commitment to acknowledge that modern societies carry historical and divisive biases based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and religion, and seeks to promote awareness and understanding through education and research and to mediate and resolve conflicts that arise from these biases in our communities;<sup>4</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, UCLA is a beneficiary of the contributions and excellence of the cultural properties, artifacts, items of cultural patrimony and other ceremonial objects, despite the concerns from Native communities about the appropriation of sacred properties; and

**WHEREAS**, Haines Hall housed 1,500 Native American remains in the name of "science" whilst Native students battled with professors who claimed "Indian bones were needed for research,"<sup>5</sup> leading them to organize to have these remains repatriated to their tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, Janss Steps, a hallmark of the Los Angeles campus, are named after Harold Janss and Edwin Janss Sr., the previous landowners from whom the University of California purchased the Westwood land; and

**WHEREAS**, In 1925, The University of California purchased 380 acres of land for a quarter of its actual market value from the Janss Investment Company<sup>6</sup> to begin building the Los Angeles campus and surrounding city of Westwood; and

**WHEREAS**, The Janss Investment Company, led by Edwin and Harold Janss, used racial covenants when initially developing Westwood to prohibit people of color from owning property in the Westwood area; and

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ucla.edu/about/mission-and-values>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ucla.edu/about/mission-and-values>

<sup>5</sup> [https://sarweb.org/media/files/bell\\_exhibit\\_activity\\_9-12\\_decolonizing\\_nagpra.pdf](https://sarweb.org/media/files/bell_exhibit_activity_9-12_decolonizing_nagpra.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://catalog.registrar.ucla.edu/ucla-catalog19-20-1476.html>

**WHEREAS**, Property contracts issued in Westwood by the Janss Investment Company such as one cited in the 1925 California Supreme Court case *Janss Investment Co. v. Walden*, read: “No part of said real property shall ever be leased, rented, sold or conveyed to any person who is not of the white or Caucasian race, nor be used or occupied by any person who is not of the white or the Caucasian race whether grantee hereunder or any other person;”<sup>7</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, When Chi Alpha Delta, UCLA’s first Asian interest sorority, attempted to purchase a house on Hilgard Avenue in 1938 for its members and students, the Janss brothers denied their purchase; and

**WHEREAS**, While the University was on board with the purchase, one of the Janss brothers interfered and enforced the racial covenants on the property<sup>8</sup> — leaving Chi Alpha Delta without a house in Westwood for 82 years and counting; and

**WHEREAS**, The grand staircase architecture of Janss Steps serves as a monument to ableism,<sup>9</sup> stigmatizing and excluding those unable to ascend or descend them, and the memorialization of the Janss name on these steps further perpetuates the myth that the campus only values non-BIPOC and able-bodied students;

**WHEREAS**, Over 2,000 UCLA students, alumni, faculty, and other members of the Westwood community have signed a petition<sup>10</sup> to remove the Janss name from the steps in favor of a name that is consistent with UCLA’s mission; and

**WHEREAS**, The North Westwood Neighborhood Council passed a resolution<sup>11</sup> on July 1, 2020 recommending that UCLA “remove and replace the name ‘Janss Steps’ with an individual who accurately represents UCLA’s mission and values *or* rename them ‘Tongva Steps’ after the original owners of the property;” and

<sup>7</sup> <https://casetext.com/case/janss-investment-co-v-walden>

<sup>8</sup> <https://archive.org/details/feelingofbelongi00lims/page/20/mode/2up>

<sup>9</sup> Jay Timothy Dolmage, *Academic Ableism*

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.change.org/p/ucla-rename-janss-steps-at-ucla>

<sup>11</sup> [https://twitter.com/Eurkan\\_Yalcin/status/1278547271588573184?s=20](https://twitter.com/Eurkan_Yalcin/status/1278547271588573184?s=20)

**WHEREAS**, Numerous other universities including Clemson University, University of Oregon, Oregon State University, Vanderbilt University, Georgetown University, and University of Southern California have recently removed the names of people with racist ties from their campus structures;<sup>12</sup>

**THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED**, That the UCLA Undergraduate Students Association, joined by American Indian Student Association at UCLA, Pacific Islands' Student Association at UCLA, Afrikan Student Union at UCLA, American Indian Science and Engineering Society at UCLA, Native American Law Students Association at UCLA, Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM) at UCLA, CampMed at UCLA, Vietnamese Student Union at UCLA, IDEAS at UCLA, Queer and Trans People of Color Collective (QTPoCC) at UCLA Law, Asian Pacific Coalition at UCLA, Asian Greek Council (AGC) at UCLA, Society for Advancing Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) at UCLA, American Indian Graduate Student Association (AIGSA) at UCLA, East African Student Association at UCLA, Latinx Law Student Association at UCLA Law, Samahang Pilipino at UCLA, Muslim Students Association at UCLA, and Queer Alliance at UCLA, recognizes the purposeful dispossessions of lands in the Westwood area from the Indigenous land stewards/caretakers and denounces white supremacist land agreements to further this cause; and

**LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED**, That the UCLA Undergraduate Students Association calls for the name of the steps be changed from "Janss Steps" to read "Tongva Steps" commemorating and acknowledging the contributions of the Tongva Peoples and land upon which UCLA stands; and

**LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED**, That the UCLA Undergraduate Students Association acknowledges the ancestral history, contributions and unique experience of the Gabrielino-Tongva, the original stewards of the land upon which the UCLA currently resides; and

**LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED**, That the UCLA Undergraduate Students Association recognizes that changing the name of the landmark from "Janss Steps" to "Tongva Steps" will promote a consciousness of Indigenous issues that have historically gone unrecognized on the UCLA campus and across the United States, but is only the first step in this process; and

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/07/06/campuses-remove-monuments-and-building-names-legacies-racism>

**LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED**, That the Undergraduate Student Association calls upon the University to promote and formally institutionalize the history of recognizing the original peoples of the lands on which the campus resides. The institution must promote the inclusion of space for Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and community in any and all development in the Westwood and UCLA affiliated buildings; and

**LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED**, That the UCLA Undergraduate Student Association calls upon the UCLA community to recognize that as students, staff and faculty of this campus, they are occupying land belonging to the Gabrielino-Tongva people and, as an expression of gratitude and appreciation, respect the suppressed and forgotten history and experiences of the Indigenous people of California, including the Gabrielino-Tongva people that call the Los Angeles basin their ancestral homelands yesterday, today and for generations to come.