

To Our Brother Rats of the Class of 1974

20 MAR 2023

In response to MG Wins 1 FEB 2023 letter to the Class of 1974 through our 50th Reunion Committee, we offer this abbreviated response:

We believe in VMI 's original mission statement by Colonel J. T. L Preston that is forever enshrined on the parapet.

Our response is very simple yet profound: Do not abandon the rich traditions and the system of achievement through merit that begins by having all cadets shed their prior accomplishments and then prove themselves in the distinct and initially egalitarian crucible of the VMI time-tested experience.

Do not, as Stonewall Jackson said, "Take counsel of your fears."

We are only attempting to give an alternative to those who are otherwise refusing to give money to the VMI Alumni Agencies out of concern for the changes that have occurred at VMI. We are helping to provide a choice that still helps the cadets.

We do not deserve to be the subject of calumnies just because we believe in the traditional virtues of VMI. Those who do not, must justify themselves.

Inclusive Excellence/DEI does not accomplish VMI's mission of bringing cadets together. This ideology is anathema to the traditional VMI system which demands uncompromising effort while rewarding those who persevere, stay honorable, and demand the same from others they mentor and lead.

MG Wins, who admits he did not suffer systematic racism at VMI, should be our greatest supporter. We agree with him that it was not a systemic problem then or now. He is severely misled if he believes we do not support VMI. We love VMI certainly as much as he does.

Preserving VMI and its inspiring history of honor, physical and moral courage, and resilience under challenges in peace and war should be our mutual goal. VMI has always in the past attracted extraordinary new cadets and successful alumni. If retained, it will do likewise in the future. Let us do the honorable thing by restoring meritocracy, critical thinking and core values to the VMI experience as we remember the immutable words of our 5th Superintendent MajGen John Lejeune: "Honorable men are the greatest asset that a nation, state, community or college can have. All else is secondary to honor."

For those interested in reading a detailed response to the inaccuracies and misinformation proffered in MG Wins' letter of 1 FEB 2023, please go to the link provided here. http://thecadETFoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/74_WINS_Response_AS.pdf

In the Bonds,

Ron Stelmasczyk, Gene Rice, James Cottrell, Mike Andriani, John Williams