

James A. Blanchard III

████████████████████
Charlottesville, Va. 22902

John D. Wilson, President
Washington & Lee University
Lexington, Virginia 24450

Dear Mr. Wilson:

I very much appreciate your thoughtful letter of October 31st.

It is not surprising that your opinion of coeducation was widely sought last spring. It was a question of some concern to the alumni. Nor do I doubt that there is a faction, represented on the faculty and elsewhere, that refuses to accept the repeated verdicts against coeducation.

I am not persuaded that those circumstances warrant the inquiry to which you have committed the University.

You ask for a "concrete explication" of the impact of coeducation. It is difficult to speak concretely when dealing with a subject as intangible as an atmosphere or a spirit. W & L is a harmonious and prosperous community, due, in large measure, to a homogeneous student body which understands and respects the tradition of which it is a part. The recent developments at Dartmouth College, which has become a scene of bitterness and strife, emphasize the vulnerability of such felicity.

Coeducation necessitates fundamental change in delicate social arrangements and traditions, including the fraternity structure. The extent and ramifications of that change are incalculable. This is no basis on which to embark on a major and probably irreversible project.

You point out that the law school has been coeducational for some time. This development was explained as dictated by the American Bar Association's requirements for accreditation. It was a decision imposed on the University and does not constitute a happy or dignified precedent.

The great majority of the alumni and students do not want W & L to loose control of its destiny. They do want it to preserve the character and identity that have endeared it to them.

Cordially,



November 10, 1983

cc: James M. Ballengee

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY
LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

December 7, 1983

Mr. James A. Blanchard III
[REDACTED]
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

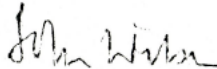
Dear Mr. Blanchard:

I so much appreciate your letter and want to thank you for taking time to write. In many ways I regret the way the issue has arisen, but I am deeply grateful for the advantage of hearing from alumni who can articulate what it is about Washington and Lee that binds them so closely.

I know the Board will profit from having your views placed before it when it meets over the winter and spring to give further thought to this matter. And I have profited a good deal in the meantime.

Every best wish.

Most sincerely,



John D. Wilson
President

JDW/bcb