



June 13, 2022

Dr. Ira Beckerman  
President  
Pennsylvania Archaeological Council

Dear Dr. Beckerman,

Thank you for sending your strong and thoughtful statement regarding the recent events at Montpelier. I apologize for the delay in this response. Please know that your statement and your support influenced the ultimate outcome.

On May 16, The Montpelier Foundation (Foundation) Board of Directors created a relationship of structural parity with the Montpelier Descendants Committee (MDC), the independent 501(c)(3) organization that represents a group descended from the enslaved people of the plantation community. This is a milestone in museum and historic site governance, and we are very excited about the opportunities this presents for Montpelier's future.

The new chairman of the Foundation Board is James French, the former founding chair of the MDC. In addition to his deep ancestral connection to Orange County, Mr. French brings expert governance, financial, and entrepreneurial experience to the position. The Foundation Board now consists of 13 members nominated by the MDC, including journalist Soledad O'Brien, Cornell Brooks from the Kennedy School at Harvard, and historian Joshua D. Rothman.

On May 22, the Foundation Board accepted the resignation of President & CEO Roy F. Young II and named me Interim President & CEO. My top priority has been to welcome back the previously terminated and suspended staff. This has been accomplished with the reinstatement of Dr. Matt Reeves, Dr. Mary Furlong Minkoff, Mr. Chris Pasch, and Ms. Christy Moriarty.

On behalf of the entire Montpelier staff, please accept my sincere gratitude for your help in achieving these milestones. Structural parity recognizes that descendant involvement is not enough; cultural institutions have an ethical obligation to create a structured process whereby the organization shares equal decision-making power and authority with those descended from the enslaved communities whose stories they tell. We thank you for your commitment to this, and for your support of Montpelier. The power of professional organizations calling for Montpelier to recommit to respectful collaboration and co-creation with the MDC cannot be understated. It is through your meaningful work and commitment to transformative leadership that we at Montpelier usher in a moment of cultural change.

We have a long road of recovery ahead of us, one that promises the opportunity to expand our research and interpretation to tell broader, richer and more truthful narratives. Montpelier has a very bright future, and I hope you will continue to be a part of our community.

Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Chew  
Interim President and CEO, Ph.D.