Appendix: F. Edward Hébert, Tulane and Beyond

The following document was prepared by Justin Wolfe, William Arceneaux Associate Professor of Latin American History, and informed the Task Force's analysis of the history of F. Edward Hébert.

Hébert at Tulane

F. Edward Hébert (1901-1979), a native New Orleanian, graduated from Jesuit High School before attending Tulane University from 1920-1924. Hébert's life at Tulane centered on his lifelong passions: sports, journalism, and politics. He was a leading member of Tulane's debating societies and the drama club, was twice elected class president, served as student manager of the football team, and inaugurated the position of sports editor for the Tulane Hullabaloo. Hébert left Tulane after three years without obtaining a degree. Although Hébert remained fond of his alma mater, his support appeared thin. His connections seemed to be with Tulane's football team, for which he served as student manager in 1922, and the university's ROTC programs.

Hébert's Career in Journalism

Hébert's career in journalism began in high school. While still at Jesuit High School, he started working as a stringer for the Times-Picayune. He continued this practice at Tulane, pulling double-duty as a part-time assistant sports editor for the Times-Picayune and as sports editor of the Hullabaloo. After three years at Tulane, Hébert responded to the strain his work produced on his academics by enrolling as a part-time "special student" in the Fall of 1923. By the Spring of 1924, he had left Tulane without a degree to accept a full-time job at the Times-Picayune. He soon moved over to the New Orleans States, where he stayed for the next 15 years, except for a brief interregnum working as the publicity director for Loyola University. He moved up the ladder at the States, taking over the paper's front-page society column, "The Periscope," in 1930. His diligence earned him the position of city editor in 1937, a post from which he oversaw a career-making series of stories on the deep tendrils of fraud and corruption at the heart of the Huey Long political machine. The investigations of what came to be called the "Louisiana Scandals" battered the Long machine, ending political careers and sending some, including then-Governor Richard Leche and LSU President James Monroe Smith, to prison. \(\)

¹ On the scandals and Hébert's political fortunes, see, Betty M. Field, "The Louisiana Scandals," in The Age of the Longs: Louisiana, 1928-1960, ed. Edward F. Haas, The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History, v. 8 (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2001), 271–84; Harnett T. Kane, Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride: The American Rehearsal for Dictatorship, 1928-1940 (1941; repr., Grenta, La.: Pelican Publishing, 1971); Michael G. Wade, "Villainy, Virtue, and Louisiana Political Culture: Paul Hebert and the Augean Stables at LSU, 1939-1941," Louisiana History 49, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 21–29; Jerry P. Sanson, "Reflections of Reform, Shadows of War, and a Portent of Things to Come: The Louisiana 1940 Congressional Elections," Louisiana History 33, no. 4 (Autumn 1992): 341–61; Robert D. Leighninger, Jr, Building Louisiana: The Legacy of the Public Works Administration (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009), 56–68; Felix Edward Hébert and John McMillan, "Last of the Titans": The Life and Times of Congressman F. Edward Hébert of Louisiana (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1976), 152–54.

Hébert's Politics and His Congressional Career

Riding the fame generated by the reporting and the upsurge in anti-Longite sentiment, Hébert ran for Congress, winning his first term in the House of Representatives in 1940.² He remained in the House until 1977, when he retired. During that time, he became the senior representative from Louisiana and an aggressive supporter of the US Military, particularly the Navy.³ While serving on the House Armed Services Committee, he worked simultaneously to uncover fraud and overspending within the military while also expanding its budget and focus to areas that he deemed essential. At the same time, he proved remarkably canny in bringing millions of dollars of federal funding, resources, and jobs to Louisiana, especially to his congressional district in Orleans and Plaquemines Parishes. For example, beginning at the end of the 1950s, Hébert began taking advantage of a federal policy meant to distribute disused military property to local universities and research institutions in his district.

In 1963, Hébert facilitated the largest of these donations—approximately 500 acres—to Tulane University to develop a Mississippi River research complex in Belle Chasse, Plaquemines Parish. In recognition of this, Tulane named the facilities the F. Edward Hébert "Riverside" Research Center. In 1971, during a ceremony in Washington, DC, celebrating the university's most illustrious political alumni—Sen. Allen Ellender, Rep. H. Edward Hébert, and Rep. Hale Boggs—Tulane President Herbert Longenecker lauded Hébert's contributions to Tulane, especially his "efforts in acquiring a five-hundred-acre site for the university which had once housed the old Naval Ammunition Depot in Belle Chasse, Louisiana." Hébert retorted that there was little to laud in 1924 when he dropped out of Tulane. "I was trying my damnedest to stay in school and they were trying to kick me out," he explained. "That's because I played the whole time.... I was the campus con artist." Despite Longenecker's discomfort at Hébert's admission, the congressman suggested it was all to the good. Had he stayed at Tulane and graduated, "I would have gotten a degree in law and would have probably become an ambulance chaser. I would not have gone to work on the newspaper, I would not have broken the Louisiana Scandals, and would not have gone to Congress where I got on the Armed Services Committee and in a position to manipulate the transfer without cost of more than 500 acres of land, worth more than \$2 million, to Tulane for a campus in Plaquemines Parish." However, little manipulation may have been required since transfers like this had been part of federal law since 1949.

While in Congress, Hébert first earned notice during a brief stint on the House Un-American Affairs Committee. By all accounts, his history as an investigative journalist made him a tough and relentless questioner. He achieved a starring role in the Alger Hiss case, but he only lasted on the committee one year because of his defection to the Dixiecrat ticket in 1948. Hébert's defection came as a result of inclusion of a civil rights plank in the Democratic Party platform.

² Sanson, "Reflections of Reform, Shadows of War, and a Portent of Things to Come"; Jerry Purvis Sanson, "Sam Jones, Jimmie Noe, and the Reform Alliance 1940-1942," Louisiana History 27, no. 3 (Summer 1986): 239–48. For a fuller understanding of Hebert's place in Louisiana politics, see also, Edward F. Haas, "Political Continuity in the Crescent City: Toward an Interpretation of New Orleans Politics, 1874-1986," Louisiana History 39, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 5–18.

³ For details of his political career and character, see "Memorial Tributes in the House of Representatives to F. Edward Hébert, Late a Representative from Louisiana," H.Doc 96-400, 96th Cong., 2d sess. (1980).

⁴ Hébert and McMillan, Last of the Titans, 36–37; "Tulane Dinner in D.C.: Nixon Unexpected Guest," States-Item, May 21, 1971; Sally Quinn, "Hail to the Chief'...Surprise!," Washington Post, May 21, 1971, sec. Style.

Arguing that the plank, read "almost word for word similar to Josef Stalin's 'All Races' provision of the Russian Soviet Constitution," Hébert supported Strom Thurmond's candidacy for president and hoped to force Truman off the Democratic ticket in Louisiana. Unable to achieve that, he and his chief political ally, Judge Leander H. Perez, the arch-segregationist strongman of Plaquemines Parish, did succeed in wresting the rooster—the traditional Democratic party symbol in Louisiana—for the Dixiecrats and refused to "allow their names to appear in the national Democratic column" under Truman's name.

Hébert's exile, like that of other Dixiecrats, proved short-lived, but according to Daniel Rapoport, who covered the House of Representatives for UPI, "that experience shaped the attitude that Hébert would adopt toward the national party for the rest of his career: pay no attention to it but keep your mouth shut and take it for what you can get, i.e., the fruits of congressional seniority." Hébert was brought back into the Democratic fold and worked slowly, but steadily on building seniority, particularly on the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), where he served as a member from 1948 to 1977. In 1952, Carl Vinson, the Chairman of the committee, and a fellow segregationist from Georgia, appointed Hébert Chair of the Investigating Subcommittee, which oversaw investigations into wasteful military procurement and spending. Hébert dubbed it the "Chamber of Horrors," boasting of his cost-cutting efforts. That said, as Andrew Cerise notes, "when his own district's economy was on the line, he fought tooth and nail to preserve defense spending in his district even when it was considered wasteful." Over his career, his most notable achievements included:

- Obtaining decommissioned land from the Naval Munitions Depot and the Algiers Naval Station free of cost for:
 - Construction of schools for children with disabilities in Orleans and Plaquemines Parishes;
 - o A science and research site for Tulane University in Belle Chasse;
 - o A West Bank campus for Delgado Community College;
 - o Fire and police training facilities;
- A \$50 million expansion of Naval Air Station (Alvin Callender Field) in Belle Chasse;
- Preventing the closure of 8th Naval District Headquarters in Algiers;
- Establishing of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Md., to train military doctors;
- Helping establish the Junior ROTC program in high schools;
- Authoring legislation to authorize the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet;

⁵ Quoted in Melissa Kean, Desegregating Private Higher Education in the South: Duke, Emory, Rice, Tulane, and Vanderbilt (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 45–46.

⁶ Glen Jeansonne, Leander Perez: Boss of the Delta (Oxford: University Press of Mississippi, 2006), 182; "Four Presidential Candidates on Louisiana Ballot," Monroe Morning World (La.), October 24, 1948.

⁷ Daniel Rapoport, Inside the House (Chicago: Follett, 1975), 115–16; on the larger context of the Democratic rehabilitation of Dixiecrats, see, Sean J. Savage, "To Purge or Not to Purge: Hamlet Harry and the Dixiecrats, 1948-1952," Presidential Studies Quarterly 27, no. 4 (1997): 773–90.

⁸ Mark D. Carson, "F. Edward Hébert and the Congressional Investigation of the My Lai Massacre," Louisiana History 37, no. 1 (1996): 63; Andrew Cerise, "The All-American: A Historical Examination of the Political Career of Louisiana Congressman F. Edward Hébert" (Honors thesis, Tulane University, 2020), 32.

The end of his career in Congress began with the arrival of the Watergate class of representatives in 1973. These new congresspeople arrived with a mandate to clean house and to instill a new level of accountability. He decided in 1975 not to seek reelection and retire when his term expired on January 4, 1977. At the same time, although it was not announced publicly, Hébert was struggling with congestive heart failure, from which he would die on December 29, 1979.

The Hébert Foundation Gift and the Naming of Hébert Hall

In 1973, as Hébert neared retirement, the F. Edward Hébert Museum (later renamed the F. Edward Hébert Foundation) was formed to begin collecting donations for an eventual memorial to the congressman. Ernest A. Carrere, Jr. was its President. Soon after its creation, the Hébert Foundation began negotiating with Tulane to house a planned museum of Hébert's mementos at the Belle Chasse facility. That plan collapsed, however, because of the location's remoteness. By 1975, the plans had shifted to a standalone museum in Lake Oaks Park, just to the east of the University of New Orleans. The land, owned by the Orleans Levee Board, authorized the lease of the land on January 16, 1974, with a formal agreement signed on February 26, 1975. The lease called for the Foundation to be charged \$3.30 per year and agreed that upon Hébert's death, the Levee Board would take on the responsibility for maintaining and operating the museum at public expense.

In mid-April, the States-Item ran an editorial criticizing the lease for what it saw as a vanity project representing "no major public service." Since Hébert's papers had previously been donated to Tulane, the museum would simply be "a showroom for trophies, plaques, medals, souvenirs, and military hardware Hébert has accumulated." More importantly, it argued that the Orleans Levee Board neither sought public input nor offered an estimate of the long-term cost to taxpayers. ¹¹ A week later—just one day before President Gerald Ford was to dedicate the proposed site on April 23, 1975—John Robbert, a local lawyer, and Henry Arnold, a Tulane Law student, sued the Levee Board and the Hébert Foundation for violating Louisiana's state 1940 public lease law by negotiating the lease privately without advertising or requesting public bids. ¹² The law, one of several enacted under Governor Sam H. Jones, whose election marked the collapse of the Longite machine, formed part of a package of legislation meant to curb

⁹ Jack Davis, "Hebert Library: 'All My Hardware," States-Item, March 5, 1975; Jack Davis, "Followup: Hebert Library Faces Long Delay," States-Item, September 7, 1976. According to Davis, the Foundation was the brainchild of Hébert's longtime friend William G. Helis, Jr. Among the Foundation's board of trustees were Hébert's daughter Dawn Duhé, William Fitzpatrick (former editor of the New Orleans States), Don Heumann, Thomas J. Lupo, E.B. Benjamin, Sr. Lt. Gov. James E. Fitzmorris, Frederick B. Ingram (a member of the Tulane Board until his conviction for bribery in November 1977), Sam Israel, Jr. (a member of the Tulane Board, 1968-1979), former Gov. James A. Noe, Dr. Alton Ocshner, and Chalin and Lea Perez (sons of Leander H. Perez). The close relationship between the Foundation's trustees and the Tulane Board further benefited from the personal and professional ties between Carrere and Tulane Board member Arthur J. Waechter, Jr., as two of the six named partners in the renowned New Orleans-based law firm Jones, Walker, Waechter, Poitevent, Carrere & Denegre.

¹⁰ C. Manly Horton, Jr. to Ernest A. Carrere, Jr., May 15, 1973, "F. Edward Hebert Memorial, 1976-1978, 1979-80" folder, Box 17, Sheldon Hackney Papers, Tulane University Archives, Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Library, New Orleans, Louisiana.

¹¹ "The Hebert 'Library," editorial, States-Item, April 15, 1975.

¹² Jack Davis, "Hebert Library Faces Court Test," States-Item, April 22, 1975.

corruption and the "spoils system" of the Long era. ¹³ The Levee Board won the case in Civil District Court a month later, but the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals annulled the decision on February 10, 1976. On remand to the Civil District Court, the judge issued an injunction against any construction unless and until the Hébert Foundation won the lease by public bid. ¹⁴

The controversy over the Orleans Levee Board lease stung the Hébert Foundation, both because it delayed construction and because the lawsuit against the lease had connected it with an emerging public debate about corruption at the Levee Board. On December 21, 1978, the Foundation voted unanimously to cancel the lease. Its president sent the request to the Orleans Levee Board on January 2, 1979, noting that "This action has the approval of Congressman F. Edward Hébert." The Levee Board voted to drop the lease at its subsequent monthly meeting, but when a reporter from the Times-Picayune reached out to Hébert regarding the situation, he responded that "he was unable to say anything because had nothing to do with the foundation."

During the time the Hébert Foundation remained publicly committed to the Lakefront location, pursuing legal and legislative remedies to maintain its lease, privately, the Foundation began negotiating with Tulane to house the museum on its uptown campus. ¹⁸ Clarence Scheps, the university's executive vice president, wrote to Edmund McIlhenny, chair of the Tulane Board of Administrators, to report on his meeting with Carrere and Hébert:

In attempting to work out a possible site for a building on the Tulane campus, we had to keep in mind, first, that the number of good building sites is extremely scarce and that it would be tragic to put a small building (which is what this one will be) in a location that would block the future construction of a larger building. Furthermore, we had to keep in mind the probability that the location of a single-purpose museum—one designed solely to house the papers and memorabilia of Eddie Hébert—would meet with stiff objection from students and faculty. ¹⁹

Scheps suggested the idea of modernizing the old gymnasium at the downtown corner of Freret Street and McAlister Place—then, as now, housing the Navy ROTC program—and replacing the

Sanson, "Reflections of Reform, Shadows of War, and a Portent of Things to Come," 342; Dewey W. Grantham, The Life and Death of the Solid South: A Political History (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 95.
 "Hebert Library Construction Halted by Judge," Times-Picayune, December 2, 1977. The article noted that following the appeals court decision, "the opposing sides drew up a joint agreement of the issues with the board admitting it did not follow the Public Bid Law."

¹⁵ Juan Nyla Hutchinson, "3 Bills Ratifying Property Sales, Leases Passed," Times-Picayune, June 16, 1978; "Those Levee Board Leases," editorial, Times-Picayune, July 7, 1978; Juan Nyla Hutchinson, "Bid Irregularities Reported in N.O. Levee Board Audit," Times-Picayune, August 15, 1978; Therese L. Mitchell, "Levee Board's Irregularities 'Not Illegal," Times-Picayune, August 17, 1978, sec. 7; "Levee Contracts Reviewed," States-Item, August 29, 1978; Juan Nyla Hutchinson, "Law Urged to Curb Costs of Building Change Orders," Times-Picayune, December 14, 1978.

¹⁶ Ernest A. Carrere, Jr. to Guy F. LeMieux, January 2, 1979, "F. Edward Hebert Memorial, 1976-1978, 1979-80" folder, Box 17, Sheldon Hackney Papers, Tulane University Archives, Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Library, New Orleans, Louisiana.

¹⁷ Therese L. Mitchell, "Board Agrees to Cancel Hebert Library Lease," Times-Picayune, January 18, 1979. ¹⁸ "F. E. Hebert Library Lease Voided," Times-Picayune, February 11, 1976.

¹⁹ Clarence Scheps to Edmund McIlhenny, August 20, 1976, "F. Edward Hebert Memorial, 1976-1978, 1979-80" folder, Box 17, Sheldon Hackney Papers, Tulane University Archives, Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Library, New Orleans, Louisiana.

"substandard" ROTC barracks, located where the Law School now stands, with a single facility for all three ROTC units. Hébert and Carrere reportedly "bought the concept enthusiastically," which subsequently appeared in the new master plan documents produced by the design firm Sasaki Associates. ²⁰ In a letter to Ernest Carrere dated January 10, 1979, Clarence Scheps wrote to indicate, "It is a privilege for Tulane to participate in a community effort memorializing the services of an outstanding Congressman. It is particularly appropriate to Tulane, since Congressman Hébert is a distinguished alumnus of the institution and has been among its foremost supporters for many years." The next day, Carrere responded, acknowledging Scheps' letter, but noting that he had failed to mention the named professorship in Hébert's honor, which Scheps and President Hackney had agreed to in conversation with Hébert's daughter Dawn Duhé. ²²

A little over a week later, Carrere, representing the Hébert Foundation, presented a draft memorandum of understanding to President Hackney, noting:

We understand that Tulane has selected the "History Department Building", which originally housed the Physics Department, to name, in perpetuity, the "F. Edward Hébert Hall", and that to the extent of the funds made available to Tulane by the F. Edward Hébert Foundation, the building will be refurbished and modernized. It will contain a replica of the Congressman's Washington office and it will contain space for display of his memorabilia.²³

On June 8, 1978, President Hackney wrote to Dawn Duhé to let her know that Tulane's Board of Administrators had approved the proposal he and Board President Edmund McIlhenny presented for "renovating the History Building to become Hébert Hall and to create an Hébert professorship."²⁴ A month later, an article appeared in the newsweekly Figaro noting the History Department's displeasure at the idea. Professor Charles T. Davis pointed out, "Some of us are concerned about having this close association with Hébert.... What would our black constituency think?"

The original plan for an Hébert Museum at the Belle Chasse location would have placed maintenance costs upon the Hébert Foundation, but with the shift to the lakefront location, this cost would be borne by taxpayers. In returning to Tulane, the Foundation negotiated to place the onus of maintenance on the university: "It is required that the building be maintained by Tulane

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²⁰ Rick Lerner, "Multi-Year Development Estimates Hit \$31M," Tulane Hullabaloo, April 14, 1978.

²¹ Clarence Scheps to Ernest A. Carrere, Jr., January 10, 1979, "F. Edward Hebert Memorial, 1976-1978, 1979-80" folder, Box 17, Sheldon Hackney Papers, Tulane University Archives, Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Library, New Orleans, Louisiana.

²² Ernest A. Carrere, Jr. to Clarence Scheps, January 11, 1979, "F. Edward Hebert Memorial, 1976-1978, 1979-80" folder, Box 17, Sheldon Hackney Papers, Tulane University Archives, Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Library, New Orleans, Louisiana. Noting Carrere's "reference to a named chair as agreed," Scheps assured Hackney that "I made no mention of it in my letter." Clarence Scheps to Sheldon Hackney, handwritten note, January 12, 1979, "F. Edward Hebert Memorial, 1976-1978, 1979-80" folder, Box 17, Sheldon Hackney Papers, Tulane University Archives, Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Library, New Orleans, Louisiana.

²³ Ernest A. Carrere, Jr. to Sheldon Hackney, February 20, 1979, "F. Edward Hebert Memorial, 1976-1978, 1979-80" folder, Box 17, Sheldon Hackney Papers, Tulane University Archives, Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Library, New Orleans, Louisiana.

²⁴ Scheps to McIlhenny, August 20, 1976.

to a degree and in a manner at least equal to that of other buildings on the uptown Tulane campus."

Hébert on Civil Rights and Segregation

Hébert was a staunch segregationist throughout his life. Publicly he claimed these views in support of states' rights; privately he called himself one of the last "unreconstructed rebels." In a retrospective of his career, published a few years before he died, Hébert claimed that throughout his life, he based his refusal to support civil rights legislation on principle, not prejudice, a position for which "I need not apologize." A review of his life and politics, however, reveals that Hébert believed in white supremacy and worked aggressively to undo efforts at establishing racial equality and discredit those who supported it.

Newspaper reporting provided Hébert with his entrée into public life, particularly through his frontpage column, "The Periscope" and his work as city editor New Orleans States. This work provided a mix of sports boosterism, society gossip, and local politics. In 1935, however, he sharpened his pen in response to the Tulane University Student Council's decision to hire Cab Calloway and his band to play at that year's Homecoming Dance. Offended by the idea of bringing Calloway's "sepia orchestra from Harlem" to Tulane, he used his column to single out "those who are responsible for the selection of the band." Within a week, he wrote that the students had "taken the hint" from his column, "for which I feel a great satisfaction." Struck by the students' failure to protect what he would often call "Southern traditions," however, he decided to become an Alumni Association representative to the homecoming planning committee until 1940, when he quit following his election to the House.

Hébert's career in Washington began at the start of World War II, just as the Allied rhetoric of democratic equality and freedom began to dominate popular discourse. This, combined with Black participation in the war effort, began a process of desegregating the US armed forces. As the war dragged on, New Orleans proved increasingly critical to US naval efforts and the War Shipping Administration began using New Orleans as a transfer location for naval personnel. When, in 1943, the navy needed more centralized short-term lodging in the city for servicemen, it looked first to lease, and subsequently to purchase through eminent domain, the Senator Hotel in the French Quarter to be used as integrated housing. As soon as Hébert discovered the plan, he wrote officials in Washington, decrying this "diabolical scheme to shatter our southern traditions" with the goal "to inflame the racial issue in our community." 27

At the same time, Hébert used a radio address to incite public resentment against the project. To his listeners, he explained:

²⁵ Carson, "F. Edward Hébert and the Congressional Investigation of the My Lai Massacre," 62.

²⁶ Hale Boggs, "All-University Dance Date Set," New Orleans States, October 11, 1935; F. Edw. Hebert, "The Periscope," New Orleans States, October 16, 1935; F. Edw. Hebert, "The Periscope," New Orleans States, October 25, 1935; "The Orchestra Change," editorial, Tulane Hullabaloo, October 25, 1935.

²⁷ F. Edw. Hebert to Douglas P. Falconer, June 5, 1944, Jack Kamaiko Papers, Professional Activities, 1943-1947, United Seamen's Service. New Orleans Controversy Over Segregated Facilities, NY Official Correspondence, Box 5, Folder 13, University of Minnesota Libraries, Social Welfare History Archives, https://umedia.lib.umn.edu/item/p16022coll470:953.

Tonight, I come to you with a solemn warning of an insidious movement being fostered in the city of New Orleans and urge you to take immediate steps to halt this movement towards equalization of the black and white races before it is too late.

This is just another attempt by certain influences to equalize the negroes and the whites. This is another effort by certain parties to open the doors still further with the result that there will be permanent mixture of the races.

We cannot dodge this issue much longer. We have got to face it. There have been repeated and repeated transgressions on white supremacy in the South.... The next thing the division signs in our street cars will be removed, our theaters will be thrown open to a mixture of the races, our restaurants will be told to provide tables for blacks and white [sic].²⁸"

Language like this makes it difficult to accept at face value Hébert's claim later in life that his decision, for example, to join the Dixiecrats in 1948 in refusing to support Democratic presidential nominee Harry S. Truman, "was not motivated by the lure of segregation, but by the magnetic appeal of its individualism, and by its insistence on the rights of the states." It is worth considering Hébert's claim in the context of the Dixiecrat party platform. After opening with praise for the US Constitution as "the greatest charter of human liberty ever conceived by the mind of man," the bulk of the platform (§3-6) defended segregation against the Democrats' "totalitarian" support for civil rights:

- 3. We stand for social and economic justice, which, we believe can be guaranteed to all citizens only by a strict adherence to our Constitution and the avoidance of any invasion or destruction of the constitutional rights of the states and individuals. We oppose the totalitarian, centralized bureaucratic government and the police nation called for by the platforms adopted by the Democratic and Republican Conventions.
- 4. We stand for the segregation of the races and the racial integrity of each race; the constitutional right to choose one's associates; to accept private employment without governmental interference, and to earn one's living in any lawful way. We oppose the elimination of segregation, the repeal of miscegenation statutes, the control of private employment by Federal bureaucrats called for by the misnamed civil rights program. We favor home-rule, local self-government and a minimum interference with individual rights.
- 5. We oppose and condemn the action of the Democratic Convention in sponsoring a civil rights program calling for the elimination of segregation, social

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²⁸ "Radio Address by Congressman F. Edw. Hebert of Louisiana over Station WNOE, New Orleans, Louisiana" (transcription, May 23, 1944), Jack Kamaiko Papers, Professional Activities, 1943-1947, United Seamen's Service, New Orleans Controversy Over Segregated Facilities, Box 5, Folder 14, University of Minnesota Libraries, Social Welfare History Archives, https://umedia.lib.umn.edu/item/p16022coll470:399.

²⁹ Hébert and McMillan, Last of the Titans, 324, 325.

equality by Federal fiat, regulations of private employment practices, voting, and local law enforcement.

6. We affirm that the effective enforcement of such a program would be utterly destructive of the social, economic and political life of the Southern people, and of other localities in which there may be differences in race, creed or national origin in appreciable numbers.³⁰

Hébert's growing seniority in the House of Representatives did not keep him from inserting himself into local issues back home. In 1949, members of the Young Men's Business Club of New Orleans (YMBC), alerted Hébert to the participation of several Tulane faculty members in the Southern Conference of Human Welfare (SCHW), an interracial organization dedicated to supporting New Deal reforms in the South and the end of segregation.³¹ Founded by some of the South's leading liberal and leftist leaders, its civil rights advocacy put it squarely in the crosshairs of Southern segregationists who labeled it a Communist front organization, a practice that provided cover for their segregationist attacks.³²

Hébert, then serving as a member of the House Un-American Affairs Committee, excoriated the university stating, "I am from Tulane," before blasting it as home "to more Communists...than Americans." In correspondence with Tulane President Rufus Harris, between December 1948 to January 1949, Hébert complained of subversive faculty at the university who supported the "the so-called Civil Rights plank" of the 1948 Democratic Platform. Hébert argued that the plank, read "almost word for word similar to Josef Stalin's 'All Races' provision of the Russian Soviet Constitution." ³⁴

Although Southern Democrats retained a stranglehold over civil rights legislation in Congress, they found themselves increasingly disaffected from the national party and the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education shifted the political calculus of white southerners.³⁵ Hébert and Leander Perez represented the most powerful voices of this shift in New Orleans. In the wake of Brown,

³⁰ Gerhard Peters and John Woolley, eds., "Platform of the States Rights Democratic Party," August 14, 1948, Minor/Third Party Platforms, The American Presidency Project,

https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/platform-the-states-rights-democratic-party.

³¹ See, Kean, Desegregating Private Higher Education in the South; Jeff R. Woods, Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948--1968 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 29.

³² Kean, Desegregating Private Higher Education in the South, 45. Among the SCHW's founders were US Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black, Alabama governor David Bibb Graves, civil rights activist Mary McLeod Bethune, Highlander Folk School co-founded James Dombrowski, and civil rights activist Virginia Durr. It seems a cruel irony that Sheldon Hackney—the President of Tulane who negotiated the Hebert gift and naming—was married to Virginia Durr's daughter Lucy Durr. On the YMBC, which retained a whites-only membership policy until 1979, see, Arnold R. Hirsch, "Race and Politics in Modern New Orleans: The Mayoralty of Dutch Morial," in Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization, ed. Joseph Logsdon and Arnold R. Hirsch (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 468. Hébert joined the YMBC as a college student and served as president of in 1932.

³³ Hébert spoke these words at a hearing before the Committee of Un-American Affairs on July 31, 1948. Quoted in Clarence L. Mohr and Joseph E. Gordon, Tulane: The Emergence of a Modern University, 1945-1980 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 71.

³⁴ Quoted in Kean, Desegregating Private Higher Education in the South, 45–46.

³⁵ For a fuller examination of white politics in the South in the 1950s, see, Grantham, The Life and Death of the Solid South, chap. 6.

Perez spoke at a dinner celebrating his 35th year in office, declaring, "I am dedicating the rest of my life to the fight to prevent the relaxing of segregation policies." Hébert responded by hailing the judge with a nod to the Trail of Tears and neo-confederacy: "Perez is a man who, like Jackson, believes no just cause is ever a lost cause." A few months earlier, Hébert had made the same reference to Jackson in what Ellen Blue has called "the most blatant foreshadowing of what would become the South's campaign of 'Massive Resistance' to integration":

Referring to Supreme Court decisions in 1832 that could have prevented the Cherokee removal from Georgia, Hébert said, "I am reminded at the moment of what Andrew Jackson told the chief justice of the supreme court, 'You have handed down the decision. Now let's see you enforce it."³⁷

A year later, Hébert participated in the creation of the Federation for Constitutional Government, one of "the bookends of massive resistance," further cementing this position.³⁸

After a bitterly contested election campaign, Hébert pledged himself to a Southern strategy of resistance to civil rights. In a statement thanking his supporters, Hébert noted:

For the future I can only say that I will continue to conduct myself in the same manner as in the past.... I shall continue to be a Jeffersonian Democrat and never forget that I represent a Southern constituency drenched in the traditions of the South.³⁹

Hébert normally held fast to this "states' rights" rhetoric, but occasionally he felt compelled to state more unambiguously the meaning of "Jeffersonian democracy." Just one week later, during a heated meeting with Louisiana Governor Jimmie Davis, Louisiana state legislators, and Louisiana's representatives to the US Congress, speakers tripped over themselves to show off their segregationist bona fides. Hébert would not be one-upped:

I own my own political soul, and it is not for sale for any political patronage or favor. I am definitely, emphatically and positively in favor of segregation, and opposed to integration, period.⁴⁰

The intensity of white resentment against integration in New Orleans exploded in 1960, when Judge J. Skelly Wright set a March 1 deadline for the city's public schools to integrate. At the end of August 1960, Perez raised the alarm against "the most dangerous people in this country today—the Zionist Jews," whom he lambasted as leading figures in the effort of "integration, amalgamation, mongrelization to destroy our civilization." After Judge Wright shifted the

³⁶ "Desegregation Blasted By DA Perez at Dinner," New Orleans States, December 13, 1954.

³⁷ Ellen Blue, "The Citizens Forum on Integration: 'Underground' Methodist Response to the Brown Decision," Methodist History 43, no. 3 (April 2005): 214.

³⁸ Sarah H. Brown, "The Role of Elite Leadership in the Southern Defense of Segregation, 1954-1964," Journal of Southern History 77, no. 4 (November 2011): 827–64; on the origins of the FCG, see, Anthony Lewis, "Segregation Group Confers in Secret," New York Times, December 30, 1955.

³⁹ "Rep. Hebert Thanks Voters, Pledges Fight," New Orleans States-Item, November 10, 1960.

⁴⁰ James H. Gillis and Robert Wagner, "Gov. Davis Tries to Calm Solons," Times-Picayune, November 17, 1960.

⁴¹ "Perez Calls for Solidarity in Mix Fight," New Orleans States-Item, August 30, 1960.

integration deadline to November 14, Perez held a public meeting in New Orleans attended by 5,000. "Don't wait for your daughter to be raped by these Congolese. Don't wait until the burrheads are forced into your schools," he warned them. ⁴² The next day 2,000 whites rioted in New Orleans. A week later, Hébert offered the valedictory speech at Perez's retirement party, praising his "farsightedness, vision, judgment and knowledge of what the future holds for us." ⁴³

The tide of civil rights continued to shift away from Southern Democrats. In 1965, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act. Most Southerners voted against, it, but a handful defected, including Louisiana's Hale Boggs, then Majority Whip of the Democratic Party. Boggs did the same with the 1968 Civil Rights Act, which passed on March 11, 1968. Nonetheless, Hébert remained true to his cause, arguing that it was those who favored civil rights who stoked the flames of racial conflict. As he commented upon the news of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, less than a month after the vote, "I'm not surprised.... King preached violence under the guise of nonviolence. And when you play with fire you get burned." Hébert repeated this language in the first of his memoirs, published three years later. 45

In 1971, Hébert finally achieved his lifelong dream of chairing the House Armed Services Committee, but his tenure would be short. Against Hébert's objections, the House Democratic leadership placed Representatives Pat Schroeder (Colorado, 1973-1997) and Ron Dellums (California, 1971-1998) on the committee. The Watergate class of Democratic representatives that swept into office in 1973 on campaign promises of institutional reform and challenged the traditional rules of seniority embodied in Hébert. It was not just that they sought to place the first woman and the first African-American on the committee, but also to make committee chairs more responsive to their caucus. Schroeder relates the story of how she and Dellums arrived at the committee organizing meeting to find that Hébert had supplied only one chair for the two of them to share:

Hébert was patronizingly contemptuous of women in politics (he inscribed a copy of his book. Creed of a Congressman, "For the House Armed Services Committee's first lovely den mother"). He also objected to the appointment of Congressman Ron Dellums (Democrat from California). Ron had been in the House only one term when it was decided that it was time for an African-American to be on the Armed Services Committee. Hébert didn't appreciate the idea of a girl and a black forced on him. He was outraged that for the first time a chairman's veto of potential members was ignored. He announced that while he might not be able to control the makeup of the committee, he could damn well control the number of chairs in his hearing room, where he was enthroned on a carpet of stars, surrounded by military flags. He said that women and blacks were

⁴² David Zinman, "Perez Spurs Orleans Fight behind Scene," Birmingham News (AL), November 29, 1960.

⁴³ "Honor Is Paid to Perez at Testimonial Banquet," Times-Picayune, December 6, 1960, sec. 2.

⁴⁴ "Orleans Leaders Deplore Brutal, Senseless Slaying," Times-Picayune, April 5, 1968.

⁴⁵ Glenn R. Conrad, Creed of a Congressman: F. Edward Hébert of Louisiana., The USL History Series (Lafayette, La.: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1970), 147; Jack Anderson and Les Whitten, "Public Pays for Hebert Chronicles," Washington Post, January 3, 1977.

worth only half of one "regular" member, so he added only one seat to the committee room and made Ron and me share it. 46

Despite the chilly reception, Schroeder made an effort to smooth things over with Hébert. As she explained, "When I first came to Congress, committee chairmen were demigods." Hébert's control of the Armed Services Committee was iron-fisted. According to his former press secretary, Hébert "basically ran the military.... Nothing went into or came out of committee without his stamp of approval." For example, House Speaker Carl Albert named Schroeder to a House delegation advising on US-Soviet disarmament talks in Geneva, but the State Department required that she request authorization from Hébert to travel "on official committee business." Hébert refused, writing to Schroeder, "I am unaware of my having designated you to represent the Committee on Armed Services for this purpose. Therefore, I regret that I am unable to send the letter you request."

If Schroeder hoped for comity, Hébert seemed disinclined to negotiate a truce. In Schroeder's memoir of her years in Congress, she explained:

I tried to come to some sort of truce with Hébert. I paid a call on him in his office. He was the only congressman with a patio entrance and a seven-room suite, including an "adultery" room with nude paintings, a bar, a couch and no windows. There were hundreds of pictures of Hébert in his office, and one likeness etched in marble that he planned to use for a tombstone. Back in his Louisiana district, he had named streets, hospitals and other institutions after himself. He was an ego run amok. He had long ago lost all sense of the Armed Services Committee as a democratically run body. "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away," he told me, "and here I am the Lord." He had outlived all rivals for the chairmanship and thought he was above challenge, literally stomping in fury if a junior member like me made a suggestion that diverged from his own considered opinion. "There are certain people who make me shudder," he once said, looking at me, "every time they open their mouth." No truce could be negotiated. 49

In 1975, the Watergate class was determined to shake up the seniority system that had ruled the House since 1910. Past efforts at reform had failed, but the freshman Democrats provided the necessary votes and audacity to challenge the incumbency of many older and more conservative members of their caucus: "For four days the Capitol has been treated to an unlikely spectacle—

⁴⁶ Pat Schroeder, 24 Years of House Work... and the Place Is Still a Mess: My Life in Politics (Kansas City: Andrews McMeel, 1999), 41.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Carson, "F. Edward Hébert and the Congressional Investigation of the My Lai Massacre," 62–63.

⁴⁸ Rapoport, Inside the House, 124.

⁴⁹ Schroeder, 24 Years of House Work... and the Place Is Still a Mess, 42–43. A profile of Hébert published in 1972, described him as possessing "an irrepressible and ribald sense of humor and a lasting appreciation for the finer things in life.... He rides around in a Cadillac and owns three homes. In each home is a complete expensive wardrobe, so he never has to pack a bag. Since he first came to town, some of the nicest looking girls in Washington have graced his offices.... Off his private office as two other rooms. One he calls the 'Adult Room.' It is a little bar decorated with seductive pictures of naked ladies and a street sign from Bourbon Street. There other is furnished with a television set, chairs and a couch. 'That's the "Adultery Room," Hebert chuckles." Orr Kelly, "Some Changes Since Rivers: Arms and Mr. Hebert," Washington Star, August 13, 1972.

powerful House committee chairmen filing in one by one to be looked over by freshman Democrats who will decide if they deserve re-election." Although many grumbled at the freshmen's impertinence, it was Hébert who "challenged fate by addressing the caucus members as 'boys and girls." Within a fortnight, Hébert had been stripped of his chairmanship, and soon after that, retired. 51

The Hébert Naming and Protest

On October 13, 1979, Tulane held a dedication ceremony for F. Edward Hébert Hall that featured speeches from Ernest A. Carrere, Jr. (President of the Hébert Foundation), Rev. Phillip Hannah (Archbishop of New Orleans), and General Bernard W. Rogers (Supreme Allied Commander Europe).⁵²

A week later, a group of Tulane students, led by sophomore Paul Kircher and senior Sara Washburn, organized a petition drive against the naming. Having learned about Hébert's opposition to civil rights legislation, they questioned the university's desire to memorialize Hébert. The petition, directed to President Hackney and the Tulane Board of Administrators, read:

We, the undersigned members of the Tulane community, hereby protest the dedication of the History building to F. Edward Hébert. Because of the congressman's outspoken opposition to the cause of civil rights for blacks throughout his career, we cannot accept the association of his name with the university, and demand a reconsideration of this decision.⁵³

Within three weeks, they had gathered over 500 signatures. Learning of the petition from a reporter, President Hackney argued, "I think that it is a great mistake to try and apply political criteria to accepting gifts." Two weeks later, the students met with Hackney to present the petition, but during the hour-long meeting, he told them the dedication was "irreversible." Despite suggesting some sympathy for the students' cause, Hackney argued that "A university has to be broad enough to include people from all points of view." Dissatisfied with Hackney's position, senior James H. Cahn challenged it in a letter to the editor in the Tulane Hullabaloo:

To build a shrine for a man (upon his request) for all to see, which asserts our love and admiration for him should require that we love and admire what he stands for! But how it is possible that we could respect such a despicable, outspoken tyrant as F. Edward Hébert is beyond imagination. Do we agree that black people ought not to have a right to what white people have a right to? The issue is as simple as this.

⁵⁰ Richard L. Lyons, "Freshmen Assess House Chairmen," Washington Post, January 14, 1975, sec. General.

⁵¹ "Hebert Ends Fight to Stay as Head of Key Committee," Los Angeles Times, January 22, 1975.

⁵² Don Lewis, "Hebert Praised at Tulane Building Dedication," Times-Picayune, October 14, 1979.

⁵³ Paul Kircher et al., petition against the dedication of the History building to F. Edward Hebert (June 21, 1979), "F. Edward Hebert Memorial, 1976-1978, 1979-80" folder, Box 17, Sheldon Hackney Papers, Tulane University Archives, Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Library, New Orleans, Louisiana.

⁵⁴ Greg Swift, "Controversy Arises Over Hebert Building," Tulane Torch, November 13, 1979.

⁵⁵ Rhonda McKendall, "Hebert Stays, Students Told," States-Item, November 30, 1979.

I would be ashamed to admit that the "Hébert History Building" was part of the Tulane University I regard so highly.⁵⁶

The students continued to press their case and while Hackney noted that plans for the renovation were too far advanced to back out, he "also agreed to form a committee, which would be partly comprised of students, that would serve as an advisory committee on any gifts the University should receive." Nothing indicates that the administration followed through on this plan.

The issues of racism, inequality, and Tulane's history of white supremacy and segregation continued to find voice on campus over the succeeding decades. ⁵⁸ By the early 2000s, Students Organizing Against Racism (SOAR) had established itself as the leading anti-racist organization on campus, promoting campus activism and organizing workshops, teach-ins, and other activities. In 2005, SOAR put together the first of several tours of campus that highlighted the university's long history of resistance to desegregation and the continuing historical presence of naming related to this history, including Tulane's namesake, whose donation for the creation of a whites-only institution formed a central element of a multipronged strategy to ensure a post-Reconstruction return to white supremacy. Hébert's name and his record on civil rights was also featured. In a prepared statement of response to SOAR, the university public relations office noted the university's dedication to campus diversity and promised that "As part of this effort, the administration will bring to the attention of the Office of Institutional Equity the issues raised by the Students Organized Against Racism as the office moves forward in formulating a university-wide program of equality and inclusiveness." Whether in the form of contextualization or renaming, SOAR's efforts appeared to fall on deaf ears.

In the wake of the murders of Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Walter Scott, Sandra Bland, and Freddie Gray, among so many others, and the development of the Black Lives Matter movement, the Tulane Black Student Union (tBSU) and Students Organizing Against Racism (SOAR) organized a "Call for Unity" rally on November 19, 2015. It brought together a broad spectrum of the Tulane community, including Muslim, Latino, and white students. Assistant Vice President for Multicultural Affairs Carolyn Barber-Pierre reported that in her entire time at Tulane she had "never seen this kind of cooperation and collaboration." That said, she also warned, "There are other institutions who are a lot further because they've made the commitment, they've really sat down and listened. I just think we've got a ways to go. We've got some work to do."

As the movement to remove monuments to slavery and the Confederacy blossomed across the South, notably in New Orleans with Take 'Em Down NOLA, SOAR continued its efforts,

⁵⁶ James H. Cahn, letter to the editor, Tulane Hullabaloo, November 30, 1979.

⁵⁷ Steve Marban, "Angry Students Petition Hackney to Reverse Hebert Hall Naming," Tulane Hullabaloo, December 7, 1979.

⁵⁸ See, e.g., Steve Hoggard, "Tulane Falls Short for Minorities," Tulane Hullabaloo, November 5, 1982; Casey Davidson, "Tulane in History: The 20th Anniversary of Desegregation," Tulane Hullabaloo, December 2, 1983; Jonathan Epstein, "Administration Pushes for Racial Parity," Tulane Hullabaloo, January 29, 1988; "Renaming A&S Is an Affront to Minority Students," editorial, Tulane Hullabaloo, October 8, 1993.

⁵⁹ Sami Siddiq, "SOAR Explores Racism," Tulane Hullabaloo, March 11, 2005.

⁶⁰ Emily Carmichael, "Black Students, Allies Demand Racial Equality," Tulane Hullabaloo, November 19, 2015, sec. News, https://tulanehullabaloo.com/1577/news/black-students-allies-demand-racial-equality/.

leading a new tour of Tulane's "history of white supremacy and student activism." These efforts finally moved from discussion to action in Fall 2017 when undergraduate students Shahamat Uddin, Sonali Chadha, and Juhara Worku proposed a resolution through the Undergraduate Student Government (USG). They collaborated with the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GAPSA), which passed the resolution in Spring 2018. Executive Director of Public Relations Mike Strecker noted that Tulane took no action because, "The gift agreement requires that the building remain F. Edward Hébert Hall in perpetuity and that any replacement building bear the same name." By contrast, in February 2020, Tulane did respond when alerted to the plantation origins of the so-called "Victory Bell" that had been placed in front of McAlister Auditorium. Without the financial or legal difficulties inherent to the Hébert Building, the university acted quickly to remove the bell.

In June 2020, responding to the long disquiet about the name on the building that housed the History Department, Africana Studies and the Center for Academic Equity, and elaborating on the efforts of Uddin, Chadha, and Worku, a group of 14 History faculty (out of the Department's 22), took it upon themselves to rename the building. In place of Hébert, they chose to honor of Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, a renowned historian of Black enslavement and author of the groundbreaking study, Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century. A native of New Orleans, Midlo Hall attended Sophie Newcomb College in the early 1940s where she studied history and engaged in interracial organizing across Tulane, Loyola, Xavier and Dillard—the same institutions that now participate in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Week for Peace, which Tulane students first organized in the 1980s. That said, Mike Strecker, executive director of public relations, had to explain that while "Tulane is committed to building a more diverse, equitable and inclusive academic community," no official change of name had been made. 65

⁶¹ Luo Qi Kong, "SOAR Guides Students through Tulane Racial History in 'Tours of Truth,'" Tulane Hullabaloo, March 29, 2017, sec. Intersections, https://tulanehullabaloo.com/22651/intersections/soar-guides-students-through-tulane-racial-history-in-tours-of-truth-cl-np-ccl-ct-bd-jf/. See, also, Jonathon Marks, "Uptown Buildings Shed Light on Founding Members of the University," Tulane Hullabaloo, December 7, 2017, sec. News, https://tulanehullabaloo.com/34395/news/uptown-buildings-shed-light-founding-members-university/.

⁶² Nile Pierre, "Tulane Confederate Monuments Remind Students of Past, Present Oppression," Tulane Hullabaloo, April 6, 2017, sec. Intersections, https://tulanehullabaloo.com/23673/intersections/reminders-oppression-students-consider-tulanes-confederate-monuments/; Adrienne Underwood, "USG Confronts Racism, Resolves to Rename Hebert Hall," Tulane Hullabaloo, November 30, 2017, sec. News, https://tulanehullabaloo.com/34363/news/usg-confronts-racism-resolves-rename-hebert-hall/.

⁶³ Josh Axelrod, "Hebert Hall Should Be Renamed Following Ultimate Frisbee Team's Lead," Tulane Hullabaloo, September 12, 2019, sec. Campus, https://tulanehullabaloo.com/48489/views/hebert-frisbee-team/.

⁶⁴ Sanjali De Silva, "Entangled with Plantation History, Tulane Removes Iconic Campus Bell," Tulane Hullabaloo, March 5, 2020, sec. News, https://tulanehullabaloo.com/52388/news/entangled-with-plantation-history-tulane-removes-iconic-campus-bell/.

⁶⁵ Haley Soares, "Tulane's Hebert Hall Takes on New Name in Face of Controversy," Tulane Hullabaloo, June 22, 2020, sec. News, https://tulanehullabaloo.com/53478/news/tulanes-hebert-hall-takes-on-a-new-name-in-face-of-controversy/.