

Culture & humanities

On the Renaming of Anthropology's Kroeber Hall

Nancy Scheper-Hughes (/author/nscheper), anthropology professor | July 1, 2020

I was deeply distressed to learn about an administrative plan to remove the name of AL Kroeber from Kroeber Hall. The decision was not discussed with the anthropology faculty. Moreover, the 'statement' on Alfred Kroeber was woefully misinformed and in the pop style of social media "cancel culture", based on shaming and removing public figures thought to have done something objectionable or offensive. But ad hoc censoring without a process including factual knowledge, evidence, and reserach has no place in a public university.

This renaming is happening during a time when the long over due erasures and removals of the names and statues, and monuments of slavers, Indian killers, colonialists, and racists. Of course we want all those odious monuments of exploitation and evil to be taken down or sent to museums including the likes of Junipero Serra, Juan de Oñate, Columbus, and all Confederate statues like 'Silent Sam' who until recently graced the gates of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

But Kroeber had nothing to do with any of these.

A.L. Kroeber founded and built the anthropology department around Indigenous people in California. He worked closely with Native Californians throughout his career. His goal was to document as much of as he could about the cultures and languages of dozens of California tribes and rancherias. His 900 page "Handbook of the Indians of California" (1925) took Kroeber seventeen years of fieldwork and gathering oral histories. Those, including Indigenous Californians who had never heard the language of their ancestors could hear could hear it on the wax cylinders sound recordings taken by Kroeber.

Kroeber had many faults but he was neither a neo-colonialist, nor a racist, nor a fascist (like Boalt!). The criticism of Kroeber has to do with the story of Ishi, the so-called 'last' of the Yahi California Indians and in particular Kroeber's handling of Ishi's death and the autopsy that removed Ishi's brain for reserach, a common practice in the early 20th century for those who died in public hospitals.

During the time that Ishi lived among whites anthropologists and doctors (1911-1916) he agreed to share Yahi myths, origin stories, Yahi gambling songs, and folktales, all of which were recorded. However Ishi refused to talk about the long period of confinement when he and his small group of survivors, including his mother and his sister, of the Yahi Mill Creek Band.

On August 29, 1911, the last living member of his family band, the man who was later named Ishi, appeared in the gold town of Oroville, California. Driven by isolation, hunger and desperation, Ishi emerged from the foothills of Mt. Lassen and was caught in a slaughter house by barking dogs. Police were called and taken to a local jail until Kroeber and young Berkeley linguist, Tom Waterman, were summoned to identify who the frightened and emaciated 'Indian' was. The captive was silent and almost paralyzed. He would not accept food or water. His hair was clipped or more likely singed by fire close to his head, a sign of Yahi mourning. His cheeks clung fast to the bones and accented his deep-set eyes. The first photo taken shows a man of intelligence and deep sorrow.

Ishi accommodated to living and working in the Anthropology Museum which was then located close to the UC medical school. He was given private quarters, but it was too close to a room that contained a large collection of human skulls and bones that shocked him. He expressed his disgust about this unholy practice of white people. Instead Ishi spent most of his time visiting sick people in the hospital. He sat next to their hospital beds, chanting and singing medicine songs. Ishi was likely a Yahi healer. If we are to believe what Kroeber conveyed to colleagues, he said that Ishi was willing to stay in the anthropology museum and the hospital. He could not go home as his territory was occupied by the ghosts and spirits of his kin who had died without the proper death rituals.

Ishi died of Tuberculosis at UCSF hospital during Kroeber's sabbatical abroad. Ishi was showing symptoms of this rabidly communicative disease to which he had no immunization. When Kroeber learned from Saxton Pope, the UCSF surgeon who became Ishi's personal physician and companion that he had plans to perform an autopsy on Ishi's body, he immediately wrote to Pope instructing him to stop the proceedings: "I might be willing to consent if it were to be a strict autopsy in the ordinary sense to determine the cause of death, but as we already know that, I fear that the autopsy will resolve into a general dissection. Please shut down on it."

When Kroeber returned to Berkeley and found sitting on his desk a bottle containing Ishi's brain, he fell into a deep depression. He certainly did not want a brain specimen and he sent the organ off to the Smithsonian Museum. He then took a long leave of absence from his professorship to undergo psychoanalysis and to be a therapist, after which he refused to talk about Ishi following the Yahi tradition of not speaking about the dead.

In 2001 I was invited to the ceremony following the reburial of Ishi's remains on Mount Lassen. When I was asked to speak I tried to apologize for Kroeber's error in sending Ishi's brain to the Smithsonian. But I was chided by Maidu and Pit-River elders who said that just as Ishi was their

grandfather, Kroeber was my grandfather and I should show respect for him.

Kroeber's wife, Theodora Kroeber, who I got to know quite well, wrote the classic book, "Ishi in Two Worlds" that her husband was unable to do. It sold more than a million books, sales that subsidized UC Press over many decades. One UC Press editor called the book, our Bible. And, in a way it was our bible, beginning with our state's original sin. Theodora's book opened with the California Indigenous genocide following the Gold Rush. Throughout the book she honors Ishi as a man of great intelligence and a survivor of an American Indigenous holocaust. I believe that she was the first to use that term.

Alfred Kroeber and Theodora Kroeber's daughter, Ursula Le Guin, published many books based on her early exposure to Ishi's story. Ishi's history informed all of Le Guin's greatest literary works of the 1960s and 1970s: Planet of Exile, City of Illusions, The Word for World Is Forest, The Dispossessed, and her masterpiece, The Left Hand of Darkness.

If UC Berkeley erases Kroeber, the legacy of Kroeber including two brilliant women authors writing in different genres about our Californian Indigenous history will also be erased.

The righteous anger of Native Californians is not really about Kroeber. The demonstrations and hunger strikes over the decades were about the Berkeley Anthropology Museum and its historically stubborn retention of Native remains, ceremonial materials and artifacts, many of which were originally bartered or stolen and purchased or gifted to the museum. I remember so well the annual fall exhibit of the museum: A glass case displaying the ragged clothes, tobacco pipe, and gourd that were taken from Ishi after he was captured in Oroville. How and why did the Museum directors display their indifference to the violence of White and Spanish Californian rustlers, settlers, thieves and kidnappers?

As for re-naming of buildings, the Phoebe Hearst Museum was once the Lowie Museum, honoring Robert Lowie, a specialist in Native American culture, especially his close identification with the Crow Indians. In 1984 then Professor Burton Benedict (now deceased) was an associate director of the Lowie Museum of Anthropology. During his administration Benedict forged a strong relationship with the William Randolph Hearst Foundation to help support the anthropology museum. Benedict's return gift to the Hearst family was to rename the museum as the Phoebe Hearst Museum. Many senior anthropologists, my self included, put on our academic roles to demonstrate against the renaming of the Lowie Museum. Now we are facing the renaming of Kroeber Hall.

I have two suggestions:

1. Given that the first 50 years of the Berkeley Department of Anthropology was steeped in studies of Indigenous Californians, there must be a discussion among current anthropologists and representatives of Native Californian communities and leaders to discuss the renaming of Kroeber Hall.

2. Assuming that there will be a desire to rename the Anthropology Building, I suggest that Kroeber Hall should be renamed ISHI Hall.

The man who Kroeber called Ishi never told anyone his real name, just as he refused to name the dead. His name was consumed in the funeral pyres of the last of his loved ones. He accepted the name Ishi that simply means man or human.

By honoring Ishi's collective name, our university would be honoring all Native Californians.

Comments to “On the Renaming of Anthropology’s Kroeber Hall”

1. **Nancy Scheper-Hughes (<http://anthropology.berkeley.edu/users/nancy-scheper-hughes>)** says:

July 15, 2020 at 10:24 am (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292562>)

I understand from some of my students that there will be a town hall meeting tomorrow (now today) at which there may be a discussion of the renaming of Kroeber Hall. I have made it clear that I support the renaming as long as it is discussed openly and democratically among Anthro faculty, students and graduate students, especially indigenous Californians and other Native American students. It is also our obligation to engage the ideas and feelings of tribal leaders and activists in Northern Californian Rancherias and communities.

Based on my political engagements over time with tribal leaders of Northern California Rancherias, the most urgent issue is not about names. Rather it is about the very slow repatriation of indigenous human remains and ceremonial clothing, art, carvings and other artifacts required for ritual events. UC Berkeley Hearst Museum has been identified as the most indifferent and lackadaisical in response to NAGPRA claims.

This must be corrected. The president of UCOP, the UC Regents, and the Governor of California have targeted UCB and the anthropology museum as the least activist with regard to the repatriation of thousands of Native American remains and possessions that have been held captive at the Hearst Museum.

Surely we can do better.

Last thoughts on Renaming Kroeber Hall without Defaming Kroeber

The founding the Anthropology Department and during its first 50 years was dedicated to the 4 field study of Californian and Southwest Indians.

Thus, Ishi Hall, Yahi Hall, or Olhone Hall would honor some of the Native Californians on which our department was built.

What about AL Kroeber, the photos of the middle aged white man with a beard lighting up his pipe as you enter 221 Kroeber Hall to get your mail?

To refer to Kroeber as ethically atrocious and reprehensible means only one thing: you do not know what you are talking about. You might ask someone who actually knew Kroeber like Professor Emerita Laura Nader who had just arrived in Berkeley from her fieldwork in a Zapotec village in Mexico in time to meet the man that we are talking about.

The danger we are facing is that during this cancelling culture, Kroeber has been unfairly labeled a White Supremacist. Kroeber was an anti-racist trained by Franz Boas. All his life Kroeber wrote that there was no racial difference along the continuum of intelligence, culture, and creativity. Kroeber was also an anti-colonialist who denied that white western civilization was in any way superior to the cultures of North American Native Americans. He speaks the same language as those who are nailing him to a wall. Kroeber introduced the theory of cultural relativism, his primary work was about the values, cultures and especially their arts.

Kroeber served as an expert witness in two Indian land grant law suits. He argued on their behalf that not just small bits of territory belonged to indigenous Californians, but all the territory and land that Anglo and Spanish people had occupied.

Kroeber has been accused of holding Ishi (the so called last of the Yani Indians) captive in the San Francisco Anthropology Museum and using him as a 'specimen'. Please read in my blog about Kroeber's furious response to the autopsy of Ishi that included dissections of his organs and the removal of Ishi's brain by Sexton Pope while Kroeber was on sabbatical in New York and Europe. Kroeber suffered a long and deep depression and two years of psychiatric therapy when he returned to his office and saw Ishi's brain in a bottle. He sent it to the Smithsonian because he did not want it to haunt him nor did he want it as a specimen in the Museum. Kroeber hated dissections as much as Ishi did.

What about Ishi? Ishi was born during a time of intense conflict (1860 -1865) just after the California Gold Rush that brought thousands of immigrants to the traditional homeland of Yahi Indians at Feather River and Mill Creek. The Yahi were blamed for several murders of white settlers near the village of Oroville. After the massacre of remaining members of the Yahi tribe, the Yahi were believed to have been exterminated. Ishi was a child about six years old when he and his few remaining relatives went into seclusion for several years, hiding out, making themselves invisible, from the bounty hunters and white ranchers who were determined to kill every single member of his remaining Yahi tribe of just five people.

When Ishi finally stumbled out of Mount Lassen after having crossed a dangerous river during which one of the women drowned, and one by one of the others had died of exhaustion, drowning and eaten by coyotes, Ishi was indeed the last of his kin group. He had nowhere to go and when he left his territory and was caught in a slaughterhouse in the gold town of Oroville, he was taken to a jail because the local sheriff knew what else to do with him. Ishi was terrified and told a northern Maidu translator how he had wandered alone through the mountains and how the rushing waters had drowned half of his tiny kin group and how he had dug shallow graves to bury them. He sang a death chant while he raised one

finger and pointing to himself showed that he was now alone, that there were no others of his to find and no where for him to go. Sheriff Webber negotiated with the University Of California to take custody of the traumatized man who was now homeless.

AL Kroeber sent Thomas Waterman, a graduate student trained by Boas, to take Ishi from the jail and to bring him to San Francisco to the new Anthropology Museum where Kroeber had his office and a suit of rooms that he could share with Ishi until they could figure out what to do. On arrival to San Francisco Ishi was frightened by the crowds of people when taken on a trolley car to Kroeber's museum he was given a 'room with a view', a comfortable bed, clothing, and as much food as he wanted. Kroeber had enlisted the assistance of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, DC and they gave Kroeber permission to bring the man to San Francisco where he would live an independent life while living and working as a custodian in the Museum.

Of course Kroeber was interested in the stories and songs that Ishi was more than willing to share. But at first the Indian was in no shape to do so. So, as Kroeber had other obligations at that time he assigned T T Waterman to look after the man that Kroeber called Ishi (man, in Yana).

Waterman and Ishi became true friends; they communicated much better than Kroeber. And it was Waterman, a linguist, who wrote the most about Ishi's life before and after his last home in San Francisco. Ishi also befriended the UC hospital surgeon, Saxton Pope with whom he spent many days and weekends hunting with arrows in local woods.

Ishi was not a captive. He rarely spoke about his last years in Yahi country, and when he did he became very sad. Ishi was asked by many people affiliated with Kroeber, and including Kroeber himself) if they could help him to return to his homeland. On one occasion when Kroeber asked Ishi if he would like to go on a camping excursion to Deer Creek, Ishi (according to Waterman) became apprehensive and fearful that the excursion might end with them leaving him for good in the foothills where he had spent his early years. Ishi replied with a number of his objections. One was that in the hills there were no chairs. A second was that there were no houses or beds. A third was that there was very little to eat. Finally he said there were too many ghosts there and that he would get cold and sick. (TT Waterman, 1915, 'The Last Wild Tribe of California', published in Popular Science Monthly, March, 1915, pp. 233-244).

What no one seems to get is that Ishi had suffered enough during the years of his real captivity, hiding with his family, including a woman who may have been his wife, a mother or an aunt, and two older men all of whom died as they they tried to cross a difficult terrain and a river and that left him from a family of 5 to just one.

Ishi was a survivor of a veritable California genocide. He had nowhere to go. Kroeber, without knowing what else he could do, became Ishi's guardian. He mostly let Waterman take care of Ishi's needs. Ishi called Kroeber "big chief" while laughing. They were respectful to each other, but at some distance. Kroeber did take Ishi to his vacation home near Yurok country, while T T Waterman often took Ishi to his home. Ishi had other more intimate friends, his mostly north Maidu translators, Waterman, and Pope not to mention the Italian grocery man down the way from Parnassus and the Museum. Ishi became a celebrity of

sorts. He went to the Opera, he learned to enjoy riding the SF trolley cars and their clanging bells. He often visited the San Francisco hospital nearby the Museum where he sat patiently by sick people at their bedside at the hospital. The patients told their doctors that they saw Ishi as a shaman or a medicine man. Meanwhile, Ishi expressed his ethical and aesthetic disgust of dissections of the dead. Saxton Pope violated the body of a man whom he called a best friend. However, at that time, all 'charity' patients who died at the hospital were subject to autopsies and dissections.

Ishi was an amazing man, more so than can be said here. He was a very disciplined person, extremely tidy and well mannered. He learned very quickly how to eat in restaurants and to manage the silverware and cutlery. He was an intellectual who willingly shared his deep knowledge of Yahi culture, songs, stories, religion and cosmology. He demonstrated for museum visitors how to use a fire starter and how to make bows, arrows, points, a rope snare from hemp fibers, a salmon harpoon, and other crafts essential to his early life. The University of California should have given him an honorary PhD. When he became ill with TB Ishi knew that he was dying and he said goodbye to Kroeber who was leaving for New York. Ishi said in English: You stay, I go. He believed that he would soon gather together with his dead relatives by entering a hole in the sky that would take him to his spirit homeland. May we all have a death as dignified as Ishi's, as told by Waterman,

2. **Alan H. Nelson** says:

July 13, 2020 at 10:28 am (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292552>)

I agree that a good name for the Anthropology building might be Ishi Hall, though consideration might be given to the possibility that Ishi himself might not have approved.

Another possible name would be The Theodora and A. L. Kroeber Hall. Though Theodora was not a member of the Faculty, she was a member of the Berkeley community, and gave a permanent life to the memory of Ishi, far beyond what A. L. Kroeber managed with his academic publications. This would not be the first UCB building named for a person outside the faculty (see McCone Hall), but it would be among the few named after a woman.

Accusations of racism against A. L. Kroeber are inaccurate and lamentable. What we know about Ishi today is almost an entirely due to his efforts. He even recorded Ishi's voice on wax cylinders, which have been digitized so that his voice can be heard today. Who among Kroeber's modern critics have done a fraction as much for Ishi? As for the argument that Kroeber was responsible for Ishi's death, this is to assume that Ishi would not have contracted tuberculosis by any other means. (I am old enough to remember when tuberculosis and polio were risks of everyday life for everybody in the U.S. population.)

Adding Theodora Kroeber to the name of the hall would recognize her contributions to the survival of the Ishi story. Her book preserves Ishi's humanity, and also his tragedy and heroism both before and after his life became intertwined with that of A. L. Kroeber.

3. **Grace Lim, MD, MPH** says:

July 11, 2020 at 11:58 am (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292542>)

I appreciate this thoughtful discussion. Initially, I was completely on board with what I read, but as I contemplate more, I am deeply concerned that the voices so strongly in defense of Kroeber are majority white. Yes, he may have had good intent and even tried very hard to be sensitive within the confines of the times and system. Bottom line, it was still harmful to the indigenous population by portraying one of their own as a relic. Unfortunately, I now find this response to be a strong example of white fragility.

As a UC Berkeley alumnus, I hope we find it within ourselves to hear what the Native community is saying and realize that changing the name of a building does not erase history but starts to address injustices that we took part in as an institution. Instead of spending so much time defending Kroeber, can we instead use this energy to uplift their concerns and voices? I don't know much about the history of anthropology as a discipline, but I am guessing it is similar to all other academic disciplines where voices from people of color have been "heard" and then run over time and time again. In order to start creating equity in our systems, the majority must learn to listen and sit with their discomfort.

Why are we so adamantly against changing a name? Keep teaching about him and using him as an example of how no one is perfect, no matter how hard they try, especially within a racist system. But we can start learning how to honor other parts of our history. We don't need to give suggestions for what it should be named. We need to let others take a turn at deciding how history should be told.

4. **Ray Cervantez** says:

July 11, 2020 at 11:34 am (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292539>)

I am very proud to have taken a Social Cultural Anthropology course at U.C. Berkeley. I am also chagrined at the information about Mr. Kroeber and his legacy of misguided good intentions. There is significant conjecture about his questionable intentions about Ishi. So lets call Kroeber Hall another name. Have the anthropology faculty, Native American California leaders, and university representatives arrive at a new name.

5. **Lawrence Ross** says:

July 10, 2020 at 1:06 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292536>)

My name is Lawrence Ross, and I'm a Cal alum, and the author of BLACKBALLED: The Black and White Politics of Race on America's Campuses. In my book, I detail hundreds of building names and statues on college campuses that are named for racists, white supremacists,

misogynists, and other notables who wouldn't reflect the values of today. And why their presence on campuses should be struck. Blackballed is pretty much a standard on college campuses.

I say this because I think the first thing we should note is that 'history doesn't get erased' when buildings are renamed and statues removed. It happens all the time, particularly when alumni or donors get involved.

And it's a bit flip to call this 'cancel culture' when it's really more about minorities, particularly on campus, finally having a voice...and having their voices heard. While it's easy for us to say that Dr. Kroeber wasn't a white supremacist, even if that's true, that doesn't mean that his methods weren't still tied to the philosophy of white supremacy. Or that they weren't still colored by the idea of white supremacy when looking at Native Americans. And yes, even folks like Zora Neale Hurston, had troubling viewpoints when it came to black people, even though *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is a masterpiece.

No one deserves a statue or a building named after them. It is not a divine right. There are always new accomplishments, new innovators, who either build upon or completely change the paradigm of what came before, without the racism, sexism, etc. Nothing about Kroeber's life can't be taught. And for every building without Kroeber's name on it, there are thousands of forgotten Black, Latinx, Native American, and Asian American anthropologists who weren't seen or heard, so they were never considered for the honor.

Ironically, one of my first memories of Kroeber centered around Dr. Vincent Matthew Sarich, a racist we Black students protested every year, as he made his fallacious arguments about the IQ of Black people. Perhaps the impressions of Kroeber Hall, and the anthropology department, would have been more positive if the representation of Kroeber wasn't the hiring of someone like the late Dr. Sarich. After all, it should be expected that who you name a building after is based upon the ideals you'd like for those who study and teach within.

6. **Nancy Scheper-Hughes (<http://anthropology.berkeley.edu/users/nancy-scheper-hughes>)** says:

July 9, 2020 at 8:21 am (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292532>)

Thank you for so many thoughtful comments. I will respond to a letter signed by various faculty about Kroeber stating that is a caricature and a defamation of Kroeber that found its way in the SF Gate story that referred to Kroeber as a 'white supremacist'. I will respond to that later and yes, please read the book by Charles King, *Gods of the Upper Air: How a Circle of Renegade Anthropologists Reinvented Race, Sex and Gender in the 20th Century*. It is the history of the early US anthropologists- Boas and his students: Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, Edward Sapir, A L Kroeber and Zora Neale Hurston (*Their Eyes were Watching God*) who together fought against racism and biological eugenics and who argued with hard data that racial categories and the false science that supported 'white supremacy' was a total fiction.

But as Chuck Striplen notes there are much more important issues: number 1 is the defamation letter was signed by a small group of faculty including archeologists who are trying to shift public attention from the on-going and long overdue investigations, audits, and governmental critiques of the Hearst Museum and its longterm policy of refusals to return plundered Indigenous human remains and ceremonial and mortuary objects required for life cycle rituals. These are human rights violations that need to be revealed to the public. Among the faculty who have been appointed to the Berkeley NAGPRA committee and to the renaming committee include biological and archeology faculty who are “protectors” of the 9,000 to 11,000 human remains stored in the museum for no purpose at all , except hoarding.

This problem is historical. In 1985 I chaired an American Anthropological Association panel on “Anthropological Perspectives on the Protection of Native American Burials: Cultural Values and Professional Ethics in the Treatment of the Dead”. This was 5 years before the law of NAGPRA was passed. The panel was packed and dozens of Native American leaders, who were not allowed into the panel, demonstrated with a hunger strike. In March 1999 I was invited to speak at a California Senate meeting on “Ishi and Reparation at UC Berkeley”. One of our esteemed Berkeley archeologists was put on the spot. He was asked how many NAGPRA petitions for the repatriation of indigenous possessions and human remains had been returned to them. The answer was none. It was almost ten years after NAGPRA. The reason for the delay, he said, was the need to catalogue hundreds of unidentified California Indian remains and objects which were in great disarray. I think that speaks for itself. Later many human “specimens” were “drowned” in the basements of the Museum buildings , one of which was under the Hearst pool.

One of many examples of the Museum’s non-cooperation with NAGPRA by Anthropology Museum staff occurred in 2008 when I was asked to accompany an official NAGPRA team of Tlingit leaders and elders arriving from Sitka Alaska. They spent a few week in Berkeley trying to have access to viewing their several hundreds of precious wooden carvings, robes, headdresses, and human remains. They were denied to see almost everything by the Museum staff. The Tlingit inventory was sent to me by the US government. It was enormous. After days of negotiation the NAGPRA team was only allowed to view several objects while wearing plastic gloves and watched over by the museum staff. I was with them when they prayed over a dozen objects and later asked me, “Did you hear them? They were saying “let us out of here; we are cold down here”. The leader of the NAGPRA team, Harold Jacobs, was mute with rage. He literally could not speak for the first few days.

Here’s an excerpt from my article “The Body in Tatters: Dismemberment, Dissection, and the Return of the Repressed” that was published in 2012 by Wiley.

NAGPRA and the Hearst Museum

Repatriation issues continues to haunt the Phoebe Hearst Museum as other tribal groups have come and made requests for the return of anatomical “specimens” and ceremonial and sacred objects linked to life-cycle rituals. They don’t often, if ever, return with what they have come to request. In March 2008 a delegation of Tlingit Indians from Alaska including four tribal elders – Harold Jacobs, Herman Davis, George Ramos and Bob Sam, all Tlingit speakers

– and three younger men in training to assume clan leadership – Kelly Johnson, J. P. Buller, Justin Henricks – asked to see and to have time alone with a few dozen of the several hundred Tlingit sacred objects entombed in the bowels of the Phoebe Hearst Museum, a prelude to what will be a long, very long, process of repatriation. The delegation was warned by the museum staff to put on tight surgical rubber gloves (provided by the museum) that barely fit their hands to prevent direct contact with the DDT, arsenic and other toxic preservatives that were coated on the artifacts to preserve them. Oddly, however, the curators wore no gloves and freely touched the objects.

The leader of the team, Harold Jacobs, a massively built man with dark black eyes that could bore a hole through your skull, was a man of so few words that he approached clinical mutism. When asked by the then Director of the Museum on what he wanted to accomplish Harold opened and closed his mouth and then clamped his large, hands over his mouth... It was a shamanic, moment. After chasing the museum staff away the Tlingit NAGPRA team pushed their way inside the Director's office. The eldest man, George, explained that they needed time alone to purify the museum. "It was filled with ghosts." After a long ritual the team descended to the bowels of the museum. They confronted a long examining table reminiscent of autopsy tables used by pathologists. On the table arrayed were a dozen Tlingit carvings including wooden masks, shaman rattles, wooden helmets, armors, all manner of wood carvings, stylized images of salmon eating men, a life-sized carved wooden figure of a woman laid on her back with feet and arms coiled as if in labor and partly covered by animal pelt.

"Human turning into beaver", I was told. by George.

Harold swept his arms here and there, teeth clenched, demanding that certain objects be removed from sight immediately.

(They were too sacred to be displayed, he told me later.)

The next evening I hosted a welcome buffet dinner for the Tlingit delegation. Following dinner, drums and headdresses appeared. Heartfelt singing began and the elders installed the two youngsters as future clan leaders. Beautiful red woven vestments were draped over the shoulders of two of the startled young men whose faces revealed their panic and their dilemma (Were they ready for what lay ahead for them? Did they want it?). One of the young men was hoping to enter Arizona State University in the fall. The second was frightened. Would he be left alone to assume the responsibility? How many years would it take for young Kelly or Justin to become more fluent in Tlingit and familiar with the key rituals and shamanic practices of their tribe?

Our fireplace was stoked and seemed to invite the elders to approach the flames, where the names of deceased clan ancestors were quietly recalled. Harold asked permission to "feed" the ancestors by offering pieces of meat, bread and sticks of tobacco into the fireplace. It felt as if the dead might descend any moment.

Then, each of the Tlingit guests rose to speak ever so softly about the beautiful ceremonial objects and wood carvings they had seen and been able to touch albeit briefly in the bowels of the "Lowie" museum (as the the Tlingit still called it), and they spoke hesitantly about what the visit had meant to them. Harold began by saying that he had recently passed through a

difficult period in his life. He was very angry and depressed for a long time. He lost faith in everything and he refused to speak in English or in Tlingit. When the NAGPRA grants supporting the delegation's visit to the Hearst Museum Tlingit collections came through Harold said that he knew that he would have to try to speak. He said that the visit into the Museum was painful: "They [the objects] hadn't been spoken to in a long time". The elder, Herman Davis, said "When I spoke to them, the figures told me: 'Have pity on us! Save us! We are lonely. It is too dark. We are trapped down here.'" He replied : "We hear you. That's why we are here. We will try to rescue you." The objects are alive, Herman explained: "The hats and the crests and the amour are alive with the blood and the sweat and the hair of all those who carved them or sewed them or wore them. Bob Sam told of having been turned away from the Hearst museum on three previous trips from Alaska. This time he at least got to see the remains of several hundred indigenous Alaskans in pull out-catalog type drawers. I had given Bob Sam the list of human remains that was sent me by the U.S. Department of the Interior. I had not made a request, but the Tlingit had officially included me as a member of their official NAGPRA team visit. [They said that they wanted a witness as they did not trust the Museum staff). The NAGPRA package sent to me at my Anthropology Department had been torn open and scotch taped together before it got into my mailbox. The cover letter was missing so I do not even know who in the US Department of the Interior sent it. The package also contained inventories of several thousand historical human remains of indigenous tribes including the Tlingit .

"I cried for a long time down there," Bob Sam said. "Our people don't belong in drawers. Tlingit, means 'Human Beings.'

We are human beings. Why have you done this to us? Why?"

I am sick at heart, Yours, Nancy

7. **Michael B. Ross AIA** says:

July 8, 2020 at 8:13 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292525>)

I read this article with interest. Kroeber was a man of his era but with a much broader world view than many of his time. U.C. Berkeley should respect Kroeber's academic legacy and the human decency he offered the man name Ishi. Ishi arrived on the scene during a time with little social safety net. Where should he have gone? I agree the stealing of Ishi's brain by the institution following his death was a spiritual crime that had to be addressed, and sincere remorse and apologies expressed. I am pleased he was laid to rest on the flanks of Mt. Lassen. Striking the name Kroeber from Kroeber Hall is a too simple reaction to a much deeper issue. Kroeber Hall should remain as named.

8. **J Harris** says:

July 8, 2020 at 11:01 am (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292522>)

Most thankful to read Nancy Scheper-Hughes' efforts to thoughtfully remind us of the details of Kroeber's work.

The administration's unilateral move reflects poorly on a notable research university. What a terrible irony, given the department's remarkable contributions to the preservation of indigenous peoples' language, values and culture. This ought to be an expansive discussion.

I wonder how Ishi would view this conversation.

J Harris
UCB, Ph.D. 1983

9. **Otu Nwoke** says:

July 8, 2020 at 10:56 am (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292521>)

No mention of why anthropologists are keeping human bones and skulls that should be interred.

I'm guessing the commenters defending Kroeber are also white

10. **Carlos Bazua** says:

July 7, 2020 at 6:08 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292514>)

Dear professor Hughes,

Thank you for making these very important statements. I'm an under grad alumni from UCB and I learned so much in Kroeber hall from 1993-1997. I was also lucky to be introduced to the red road also thanks to the community of people that get drawn to the anthropology department. I currently teach Introduction to anthropology At DVC and Laney college and we carefully review the complex history of CA. I feel honored to have met you several times because I worked with Beatriz Manz and Dr Joyce. I'm going to share your statement with my class we just reviewed this case ! Thanks again for this great summary to educate the non anthropologist

11. **Ron Hendel** says:

July 7, 2020 at 5:00 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292513>)

Kroeber was Franz Boas's first Ph.D. at Columbia. For more on the legacy of this remarkable group, see Charles King's recent book, *Gods of the Upper Air: How a Circle of Renegade Anthropologists Reinvented Race, Sex, and Gender in the Twentieth Century*. Boas's last words were: "We should never stop repeating the idea that racism is a monstrous error and an impudent lie." It is perhaps ironic that anti-racists should try to cancel Kroeber, an imperfect person, but in whose footsteps they walk.

12. **Chuck Striplen, PhD** says:

July 7, 2020 at 1:16 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292511>)

Dr. Scheper-Hughes,

I wasn't sure where you were going with this when I started reading your essay, but I'm glad I kept going. As a locally-Indigenous, Berkeley alum, I wholeheartedly agree with your second suggestion. But I don't think a committee process is required to change the name of an ephemeral chunk of brick and mortar at one UC campus. A discussion among current anthropologists and representatives of Native Californian communities and leaders IS sorely needed and long overdue, for some of the reasons you state, but the naming of a single building need not constitute the agenda for that effort. There are far more weighty issues to resolve (like repatriation and recognition). Especially since the current namesake would quite likely jump for joy at the notion of an "Ishi Hall" – but the target recipient would equally as likely have cringed at the idea, for reasons that still escape those who still think it's honorable to put names on buildings.

To me, what this whole movement is really about is us – modern people, and how we equip ourselves to sustain our society, our species, into the future. For that to happen, ALL human institutions must continually improve their accountability to those they serve, especially when those institutions are permitted to cause pain to a great many they serve – for generations. In the case of Berkeley, a modestly-aged institution of "higher learning" – it did that for me. On one of the first campus tours I took as a grad student, a wonderfully wry, Asian-American Asst. Dean in the Graduate School walked us around campus detailing the horribly racist stances and actions perpetrated by the old dead white men whose names are on a great many of those buildings. So I knew what I was in for at Cal (which is true at most other campuses). This, and other "mitigations" by extraordinary individuals (some even in Anth), helped me successfully navigate UC Berkeley.

Changing the name of this building should just be the start of Berkeley's process of introspection and renewal. It shouldn't be about erasing the legacy of one flawed human to elevate that of perhaps a less-flawed human. It should be about elevating the discussion. Elevating the accountability, equity, and fairness of our institutions. And I'm glad you gave some detail as to the profitability of *Ishi in Two Worlds* – "It sold more than a million books, sales that subsidized UC Press over many decades." I was not aware of that history. Yes – I'm sure it was their "bible". I wonder how many California Indians students could have been sponsored at Cal with those funds. How many could be now?

But thank you for this piece – it's a good discussion to catalyze.

13. **Hannah** says:

July 7, 2020 at 11:01 am (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292509>)

Nancy,

The call to rename has not actually happened and you will have as much of a say as every other member of the Berkeley community. That's what the public comment is for and your language in this post falsely gives the impression that this is already a done deal.

Keeping the name of Kroeber hall continues to ignore the fact that the origins of anthropology and museums as a whole are steeped in imperialism, colonialism, and white supremacy. You can still teach about Kroeber in full in your classes and books, and the institution should continue to do so. However, no one is learning from the name of a building and written interpretives are not enough to counteract the tacit acceptance of Kroeber's behavior. Being "of his time" is not a sufficient argument. There were Indigenous folks who were opposed to his practices at the time. In defending Kroeber in this way, you are implying that a single person's legacy is more important than the psychological safety and humanity of Indigenous staff, faculty, students, and community members. Please rethink your position on this.

AI says:

July 9, 2020 at 1:56 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292533>)

Thank you for your comments, Hannah. You are correct that public comments will be reviewed before any final decision will be made, and I appreciate that public input from all sides will be hopefully carefully considered without bias or prejudice.

I just want to comment about your point regarding the history of Anthropology being rooted in aiding colonialism and a white imperialism that used anthropological arguments to argue for their own racial supremacy. You are absolutely correct. But you have tied that history specifically to Alfred Kroeber when you write, "Keeping the name of Kroeber hall continues to ignore the fact that the origins of anthropology and museums as a whole are steeped in imperialism, colonialism, and white supremacy."

However, the particular school of Anthropology to which Alfred Kroeber belonged was rooted in the work and training of Franz Boas; this thread of Anthropology was radical and very progressive and cannot be lumped into the history of the field of Anthropology being used for colonial and racist endeavors. As another person in the thread of comments has pointed out, a very recent and well researched book, "Gods

of the Upper Air", by the Georgetown political scientist Charles King has laid out the history and impact of the Boas school of Anthropology in helping create the idea of multiculturalism as well as subverting many assumptions held by racists and sexists.

Alfred Kroeber was not a participant with the groups of anthropologists who helped advance colonialism and racial supremacy. There is no evidence that he held racist or imperialist views. There may be other arguments for his name to be removed, but I find it problematic to argue or even imply that his name symbolically carries a collective guilt with it for the darker history and origins of the discipline of Anthropology.

14. **Pathma Venasithamby** says:

July 6, 2020 at 9:15 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292502>)

A very interesting history, though I have heard of Ishi, I now know more about him. If anything, it was because of the renaming controversy. Given a life that was not ended in the proper cultural fashion, perhaps the renaming debate should also be spread across as large a period as possible to draw more people to this sad history. The renaming discussion itself should symbolically be an exhibit. Something visitors to the museum would have to weigh, consider and write out their thoughts, feelings and judgement.

15. **Deborah Hensler** says:

July 6, 2020 at 6:34 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292501>)

Thank you all for your thoughtful contributions, and especially Prof. Scheper-Hughes.

16. **Vera Candiani** says:

July 6, 2020 at 4:11 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292498>)

It would seem to me that at the heart of the issue is democratic governance at UC — who makes decisions and how. The faculty should certainly have a say, but so too should the other constituencies of the university, and, given that it is public, the public. In a system run by unelected and unaccountable regents, the outcome of these debates winds up being a tug of war between activists who may or may not know what they are talking about and an administration which at best seeks self preservation. Democratic governance could entertain these debates while also provide a legitimate way of resolving them.

17. **Eugene N. Anderson, Ph. D. UCB 1967** says:

July 6, 2020 at 4:02 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292497>)

I never met Kroeber, but I trained in Kroeber Hall from 1962 to 1967 when I got my Ph.D. there. I enormously admire Kroeber. He made some mistakes, with the best of intentions, but he did more for Native Californians than probably any other non-Indigenous person. He recorded languages and cultures, funded and organized others recording languages and cultures, saved groups from bureaucratic oppression, testified (not hard enough, though) at the Land Claims hearings that eventually got Native Californians small but real compensation for land grabs, and otherwise did everything he could to help. Some of his actions were misguided, but that was the times—times, remember, when most settlers just wanted to “get rid of the Indians.” And he did found and run the Department and make it the best anthro department in the west. His name deserves to be remembered. Everybody has feet of clay. If we trash Kroeber’s name for admittedly serious mistakes and disregard the far more important good works, nobody is safe and no name is worth remembering.

18. **dave** says:

July 6, 2020 at 9:53 am (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292491>)

Casting shade on Phoebe Hearst seems at best questionable if Wikipedia is correct:

“Founded in 1901 under the patronage of Phoebe Apperson Hearst, the original goal of the museum was to support systematic collecting efforts by archaeologists and ethnologists in order to support a department of Anthropology at the University of California. The Museum was originally located in San Francisco from 1903 (open to the public as of 1911) until 1931...”

If Ishi could speak from beyond the grave, he would almost certainly NOT want the Anthropology Building renamed Ishi Hall because that would be in conflict with his humbleness imo..

Also Ishi appears to be a gendered noun and probably only refers to females when collectively grouped but which primarily refers to a male as an individual as Ishi did.

The attempted shaming of Cal by alleging mistreatment of Ishi is probably also going to have to always be dealt with so is it really worth it to create a prominent “lightning rod” for such flak?

<https://hyperallergic.com/571779/uc-berkeley-hearst-museum-repatriation-nagpra/>
(<https://hyperallergic.com/571779/uc-berkeley-hearst-museum-repatriation-nagpra/>)

19. **Patrick Naranjo** says:

July 5, 2020 at 4:45 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292486>)

thank you for the written perspective.

20. **Nancy Scheper-Hughes (<http://anthropology.berkeley.edu/users/nancy-scheper-hughes>)** says:

July 5, 2020 at 12:37 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292484>)

Bringing it All Back Home: Remorse, Repatriation, and Restorative Justice

The final Chapter of Ishi's story opened in the spring of 1999 with the long overdue acknowledgement and repatriation of Ishi's brain from the Smithsonian Institution where it was found in a warehouse bobbing in an aquarium. Anthropologists at Berkeley differed in their opinions of what, if anything should be said or done. Some were embarrassed by the initial denials about the facts of the autopsy and removal of Ishi's brain. A former Director of the Museum sent a letter to Art Angle, a Maidu leader from Enterprise Rancheria, close to Oroville, who had begun the search to locate Ishi's brain. The anthropology professor wrote to Angle stating: 'There is no historical support for the idea that his brain was maintained as a scientific specimen.' But Angle was certain that the brain was removed, from his own research about archaeologist's seemingly endless diggings in search of Native remains. Art knew about the end of Ishi's 'captivity' (as he called it) with the "Anthros".

Following the official news release indicating that Ishi's brain had, indeed, been traced to the Smithsonian, a departmental meeting was held and a proposed statement was debated, many times revised, and finally accepted as the collective response of the Department of Anthropology at Berkeley. I was one of three anthropology department members who were asked to write a statement that would be released to the public media. While falling short of the apology to Northern California Indians that a majority of the faculty had signed, the final unanimous statement read:

"The recent recovery of a famous California Indian's brain from a Smithsonian warehouse has led the Department of Anthropology at the University of California Berkeley to revisit and reflect on a troubling chapter of our history. Ishi, whose family and cultural group, the Yahi Indians, were murdered as part of the genocide that characterized the influx of western settlers to California, lived out his last years at the original museum of anthropology at the University of California. He served as an informant to one of our department's founding members, Alfred Kroeber, as well as to other local and visiting anthropologists. The nature of the relationships between Ishi and the anthropologists and linguists who worked with him for some five years at the museum were complex and contradictory. Despite Kroeber's lifelong devotion to California Indians and his friendship with Ishi, he failed in his efforts to honor Ishi's wishes not to be autopsied and he inexplicably arranged for Ishi's brain to be shipped to and to be curated at the Smithsonian. We acknowledge our department's role in what happened to Ishi, a man who had already lost all that was dear to him. We strongly urge that the process of returning Ishi's brain to appropriate Native American representatives

be speedily accomplished. We are considering various ways to pay honor and respect to Ishi's memory. We regard public participation as a necessary component of these discussions and in particular we invite the peoples of Native California to instruct us in how we may better serve the needs of their communities through our research related activities. Perhaps, working together, we can ensure that the next millennium will represent a new era in the relationship between indigenous peoples, anthropologists, and the public."

I read the full statement, including the original apology, into the record of the California state legislature repatriation hearings held in Sacramento, California on 5 April 1999.

"We are sorry for our department's role, however unintentional, in the final betrayal of Ishi, a man who had already lost all that was dear to him at the hands of Western colonizers and we recognize that the exploitation and betrayal of Native Americans is still commonplace in American society".

Some Indian leaders who were present accepted the apology, seeing it as a 'big step' for anthropology and for the University of California. Others dismissed the apology as 'too little and too late'. Obviously, the mistrust between Native Americans and anthropologists founded in the history of genocide (and genocide ignored) requires more than an apology or a scholarly conference to honor Ishi.

The return of Ishi's brain from the Smithsonian to the Pit River tribe on 8 August 2000, and the two-day celebration at Summit Lake on Mt. Lassen of communal feasting and healing dancing, a few weeks after the secret burial, was a first step toward more constructive engagement between anthropologists and the survivors of California's genocides. Not all Native Californians spoke well of Ishi at that event. Some resented the fact that he accepted sanctuary with whites and the 'anthros'. Young people, in particular, were quick to judge Ishi: Why didn't Ishi run away from the Anthro Museum? But their elders were more understanding, putting themselves in his shoes, imagining how they themselves might behave in similar circumstances. They recognized Ishi as a man facing genocide. 'We need to think in a good way now and to find ways to honor our grandfather Ishi.'

We, too, have to think in a good way and to find ways to honor our Great Grandfather, Alfred Kroeber, recognizing that it is not always clear what is required at particularly fraught historical moments. We need to recognize, value, and acknowledge the great cultural, spiritual and historical legacy of California Native Americans, and the perversity of refusing recognition to peoples whose ancestors were exposed to mass deaths at the hands of the Republic and State of California. Genocide is California's original sin'. As Pogo said: We have met the enemy and he is us."

UC Berkeley and the Department of Anthropology and the Directors of the Anthropology Museum still have a lot of work to do. Let us begin with a University meeting and conference among Berkeley anthropologists/archaeologists and leaders of all the northern Californian tribes to discuss their relations with the University of California, Berkeley, and in particular their thoughts about the history of the Department of Anthropology, the naming or re-naming of Kroeber Hall, and how we might best honor Ishi by animating and expediting the repatriation of indigenous remains and sacred artifacts that are still in possession at the

Anthropology Museum. Second, it appears that only 24 Native Americans are currently enrolled in our university

This seems to be another place to begin
Indigenous Lives Matter!

21. **Dan Hicks** says:

July 5, 2020 at 1:38 am (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292482>)

When are Berkeley colleagues going to address the long overdue return of two looted Benin Bronzes presently in the care of your Hurst Museum to the Royal Court of Benin? And review the collections for other objects violently taken as trophies of anti-black violence?

22. **Michael R Nunley** says:

July 3, 2020 at 5:04 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292479>)

I agree whole-heartedly with Dr. Scheper-Hughes. This is another case where it is unfair to condemn someone for being a person born into his own culture and time who may have made a mistake but whose positive contributions should be honored. In this case it is particularly galling because Kroeber did so much to change "his own culture and time" for the better. Anthropologists know better than anyone that human thought and behavior is to significantly shaped by forces beyond that person's individual control. I think it should be an embarrassment to the University of California if the building that houses the Department of Anthropology were renamed because so many others have, in spite of anthropologists' best efforts, failed to understand this basic truth. It would be, in a sense, an admission of failure.

23. **Nancy Scheper-Hughes (<http://anthropology.berkeley.edu/users/nancy-scheper-hughes>)** says:

July 3, 2020 at 1:26 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292477>)

Thank you all for your comments.

Here are a few things I might have added to the story.

When Kroeber arrived in San Francisco in 1901 to take up the post of museum anthropologist at the UCB CAL it was at the tail end of a horrendous, wanton, and officially sanctioned 'extermination' and genocide of Northern California Indians that began during the Gold Rush and culminated in the early decades of the 20th century. At this time the native population of California experienced a 90% reduction of pre-contact numbers. The die-out was the cumulative result of disease epidemics, military campaigns, massacres, bounty

hunting, debt peonage, child kidnapping, land grabbing and enclosures by the Anglo settlers that began during the California Gold Rush in the mid-19th century and lasted through the first decades of the 20th century.

Kroeber was a complicated and imperfect person. He allowed Ishi to perform on display at the Anthropology Museum, then in San Francisco and at the 1915 Pacific Exhibition. In each of these Ishi was exposed to a disease to which he had no immunization: tuberculosis.

At the end of this, I would say that Kroeber was inadvertently responsible for Ishi's death. This alone warrants a renaming of Kroeber Hall.

Finally, renaming is just the beginning. Beyond acknowledgment of the genocide we need a Truth, Repatriation, and Reparations University Committee led with Native California governmental leaders. The first goal would be the expeditious return and repatriation all California Indigenous bodily remains and ceremonial and spiritual belongings. The Museum needs to follow not just the legal but the spirit of NAGPRA.

24. **Sarah E Murray** says:

July 3, 2020 at 8:20 am (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292476>)

To rename Kroeber Hall without understanding of the facts and our history is a travesty and a betrayal of the values of our university. It is also a betrayal of our ancestors and betrays an important shared value of indigenous American societies and Euroamerican societies. And it won't work to heal what is broken. It is good that we are in a moment when many Americans, for the first time, are ready to reckon with our country's history – our real history, not just the airbrushed history taught to so many young school children. It does not serve to heal what has been broken to simply reverse the polarities and to blindly demonize and discard people like Alfred Kroeber who have public place of honor from our past. To heal requires to learn and to grow to a higher level of consciousness together. If UC Berkeley can't do that, if our institutions of (supposedly) higher learning cannot do that, who can? Who will?

25. **Ariadne H Prater** says:

July 2, 2020 at 9:08 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292475>)

As a graduate of the Department of Anthropology and a retired member of the UC Berkeley staff, I concur with Nancy Scheper-Hughes' statement. I find it rather insulting to the academic community and specifically the Department of Anthropology to even suggest removing AL Kroeber's name from Kroeber Hall. The move is especially heinous given the fact this appears to have been done in the "darkness" of summer without any consultation with faculty, staff, students or alumni. It seems the campus administration (or development office) is only interested in naming buildings after large donors and could care less about

recognizing the scholarly contributions of its past faculty and research staff. Who next will be erased from UC Berkeley's History? Tolman? Stephens? Pimentel? A cowardly and ill-informed move.

26. **Jon Marks** says:

July 2, 2020 at 3:49 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292471>)

I think Nader Hall has a nice ring to it.

27. **Edward** says:

July 2, 2020 at 1:37 pm (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292470>)

What a powerful story. Thank you so much for recounting the details of this fascinating history. Indeed, we would all be well advised to learn history before trying to cancel them. All of us related to Cal must rise above the essentialist reading of race and identity that simplifies oppressors and victims to race and color. Alfred Kroeber's life's work was to show racists and eugenicists that human beings cannot be reduced to phenotypes and genetics. Indeed, Kroeber's most lasting impact was to center the human experience in culture and pointed the social sciences towards behavior, language, and social formations. To strike the name Kroeber from the anthropology building is to basically surrender any form of academic discernment—the heart of what it means to be a member of UC Berkeley.

28. **Mariana Leal Ferreira, Ph.D.** says:

July 2, 2020 at 10:38 am (<https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2020/07/01/on-the-renaming-of-anthropologys-kroeber-hall/#comment-292467>)

Dear Nancy,

Thank you for the wonderful essay on Kroeber and Ishi!

I learned a lot from Kroeber's writings on the Yurok people, and discussed his ideas with the Yurok community with whom I worked on my dissertation about the social causes of diabetes in the 1990s.

All of them agreed that if it hadn't been for Kroeber, much knowledge about Yurok history would have been lost. I am pretty sure they'd agree with ISHI, if the Anthro Hall needs to be renamed.

Most Indigenous Peoples name themselves, in their languages, man or human. And isn't that what we all are? Humans. ISHI for humanity.

In Solidarity,

Mariana Leal Ferreira, Ph.D.

Medical Anthropologist, UC Berkeley-UCSF 1996

Comments are closed.

Berkeley: University of
California

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