

# Ethics Editorial

Vol. 4, Issue 2



## CHANGE: Breaking Ground, As Always

Zion Kaauwai, CHANGE President

As the first-ever undergraduate president of CHANGE (Creating Habits and Norms Guiding Ethical Decisions), I am pleased to speak about all the new things happening at the Rutland Institute for Ethics' very own student organization. I have been an active member of CHANGE for almost three years and have had the privilege to work with all three of the Graduate Assistants. However, I could not have predicted the global pandemic's effect on our operations. As we exited the pandemic, my fellow student leaders supported my election to my current position. Taking office, I noted that our future as an organization was uncertain, though laden with potential. As a result, I have found myself busy rewriting some of our historical structures.

The most significant change has been to the office of the president. Since the inception of CHANGE, Rutland's Graduate Assistant has filled the president's office. However, to ease the disparity between graduate assistantship and the undergraduate school year, it has been prudently decided to sever the office from the graduate student and create the opportunity for undergraduates to run and hold the presidential position. The graduate student is still responsible for ensuring the completion of the organization's duties, but now there is more responsibility placed on the undergraduate student to keep operations running smoothly.

Naturally, this ambitious decision, among others, has created unexpected challenges. However, I believe that the bravery and insight of my fellow student leaders will aid me as I continue in my endeavors: changing our operations, increasing membership, or collaborating with other student organizations. We are excited about what tomorrow brings as our beloved University revitalizes.



### Rutland Institute for Ethics Contact Information:

Dr. William McCoy, Director  
wmccoy@clemsion.edu  
864-656-6147

Rachel Dial, Assistant Director  
dial2@clemsion.edu  
864-656-2473

Lane Mayfield, Graduate Assistant  
mayfie2@clemsion.edu  
864-656-5379

### Spring 2022 Events

#### CHANGE

What Are the Ethics of Critical Race Theory?

March 31st, 2022 at 6pm  
Brackett 114

A Roundtable Discussion with the  
Management Student Advisory Board

March 7th at 7pm  
College of Business G029

#### Rutland Institute for Ethics

Ethical Student Leadership Conference  
February 18-19th

High School Ethics Case Competition  
March 4th

TIDE Conference  
March 7th-10th



You can follow CHANGE on Instagram @clemsionchange or their website (clemsion.edu/ethics/change) for more information about their events!

## CHANGE Executive Column



My name is Sergio Antonio Gonzalez Varela, and I am a junior political science student. This will be my third year serving as a representative for the

College of Behavioral, Social, and Health Science in CHANGE, and this semester, I also have the pleasure of serving as the Vice President of our organization. In spite of the difficulties seen these last two years, there have recently been many exciting changes in our organization, such as the new executive board roles.

As Vice-President, my new responsibility largely revolves around recruiting new members into our organization so that we can continue to grow. We are especially interested in recruiting students from underrepresented colleges in CHANGE because, in order to spread ethical awareness through our events and programs, we need to have representation from every college on campus.

Although this has been an interesting year in terms of programming, the event that has stood out to me the most was the 2022 High School Ethics Case Competition hosted by the Rutland Institute for Ethics. The event, which takes place every spring, is a competition between high schoolers to see which group can make the best argument addressing a particular ethical dilemma. This year, I was in charge of keeping track of scores throughout the competition, and when I had a chance to talk to the students, I could tell that they were very passionate about the competition and that they had put a lot of effort into their presentations and arguments. I remember participating in this event when I was in high school, so I understand how much effort has to go into these presentations.

Needless to say, this was my favorite program of the semester because it afforded students the liberty to work through difficult dilemmas in interesting ways while making them keenly aware of ethics and ethical behavior.

## Meet the New Members of CHANGE

### Hannah Lane



Freshman  
College of Engineering, Computing, and Applied Sciences

Hannah joined CHANGE because they wanted to bring awareness to ethics in the engineering field. They are also passionate about bioethics

and they love animals!

### Chandler Shelnut



Junior  
College of Business

Chandler joined CHANGE because he feels it is important to weigh ethics in every business decision. Embedding Ethical decision-making into the College of Business is something

he feels is critical for his generation as we face unprecedented challenges in our professional careers.

Fun Fact: Chandler was an exchange student in Berlin!

**Thank you to the CHANGE members who helped make this year's editorial come to life!**

Lindsay Einbinder  
Sergio Antonio Gonzalez Varela  
Hannah Lane  
Zion Kaauwai  
Helen Schmidt  
Lane Mayfield

# The Ethics of Acknowledging Clemson's History

By: Lindsay Einbinder and Hannah Lane

One of the most notable Clemson University landmarks is Clemson's Historical Woodland Cemetery. Located right next to the University's beloved Memorial Stadium, Woodland Cemetery serves as the final resting place for former faculty and presidents, each having served Clemson for more than two decades. However, the historical cemetery also contains more than its fair share of secrets.

In April 2004, ground-penetrating radar technology confirmed the presence of countless unmarked graves in Woodland, most of which belonged to African Americans. It wasn't until 2020 that a team of researchers and students began to memorialize these graves and present this part of Clemson's history in its full accuracy.

Since the excavation project began, researchers have uncovered 667 unmarked graves on campus property, and the number continues to increase. The individuals in these graves are presumed to be enslaved peoples, sharecroppers, and domestic workers that built both the Fort Hill Plantation and the original Clemson College. Their graves are haphazardly placed; in many cases, new graves have been overbuilt on top of them. Therefore, in order to prevent further complications (and to respect the people currently resting within the site), Clemson University has proposed the cancellation of future burials, in addition to voting to tell the complete history of the University.

Now that grave recovery has begun, new questions have been raised about the bodies and the future of the cemetery. Policymakers are now faced with a new ethical dilemma; how does the University consolidate both the extensive history beneath the grounds of the Cemetery while also acknowledging those who wish to be buried in this historical campus cemetery? This issue can be viewed through the lenses of the ethical principles, the Moral Duty to Remember and Reconciliation.

The people within Woodland Cemetery's unmarked graves suffered greatly to construct and maintain the grounds that are now the University. They were placed into the ground and forgotten to time, and their (most likely forced, in the case of the enslaved individuals) life's work was ignored. It can be said that Clemson has a moral obligation to remember the past and acknowledge the evils that these people have suffered at the hands of her founders; both to honor those people and their communities, and to prevent such evils from recurring. However, Clemson also has a duty to reconcile with the living members of her community who have been robbed of the honor of being buried on campus in reserved plots.

A potential solution for this dilemma would be to construct a new columbarium (a structure for the respectful and usually public storage of funerary urns) on campus to house cremated remains of those previously eligible for burial at Woodland. Plans for a columbarium were presented in 2019, although construction of the structure has yet to begin. Since Clemson cannot legally bury another person on top of the recovered graves, a columbarium would be a good way to fulfill the wishes of faculty members and alumni who want to be buried on campus.

Additionally, the archaeologists, students, and researchers responsible for the excavation project have been working closely with local African American communities to mark the graves and identify the individuals buried there, in hopes of being able to properly tell their stories and honor their lives. Panels have been created throughout the region in order to bring in the perspectives of all potential stakeholders and decide the best course of action for preserving the site.

## Ethical Principles:

### *The moral duty to remember*

- We have a duty to remember the victims of racial evil.
- "Consistent with the spirit behind truth and reconciliation"
- "But the existence of a duty to remember is controversial, with some maintaining that there is no general duty to remember the past and even that there may in some cases be a duty to forget."

### *Reconciliation*

- "is an improvement in the relations among parties formerly at odds with one another"

## Sources:



# An Interview with Sam Erwin

## Member of the Rutland Institute Advisory Board



### **About Sam Erwin**

I have a degree in financial management from Clemson and I had actually had a focus area of banking. Now you all have your seven different tracks in the Business School but back then you picked a focus area. After

my days at Clemson I joined First Union National Bank which is now Wells Fargo and went through a commercial training Program. This was about a year long program and I became a commercial banker. My career has been about equal parts commercial large banks and smaller banks or community banks. Today I'm a regional President for First Horizon Bank. In that role, I lead our commercial banking, retail banking, and private banking efforts in North and South Carolina. Historically over my career I've been the CEO of two community banks, both of which sold. So I've had a lot of experiences in my over 30 year career.

### **What do you think of when you hear the word "ethics?"**

First of all, I appreciate the work that Rutland has done to bring ethics to the forefront at the Business School and in the business community. I think it's a really important conversation to have. When I think about ethics to me it's really about the decisions I make when no one else is looking. From a leadership perspective, particularly from a CEO perspective, I think; What are the decisions you make when no one can challenge your decisions?

### **Was there anything about your upbringing that inspired you to become interested in ethics?**

I was fortunate to have a wonderful family. My father was a lawyer and he spent his life in the courtroom as a Defense lawyer. My mother was just outstanding in her own right and both of them doing the right thing was really important. In my case, having that wonderful background that my parents provided certainly showed me how important it was to do the right thing. I also come from a strong faith background and every day I think about my faith and how that guides me and decisions that I make.

### **How is ethics relevant in your career?**

Well let's start with the fact that I'm a banker so you're dealing with other people's money. It is very important that my clients and our clients view me and the banks that I work for as trustworthy so it really is what I do every day. If our clients cannot trust me or our clients cannot trust the bank, they're not going to leave their money with us. It really is the foundation of what we do and how we do it. So that's really important, but even beyond that there's just so many opportunities every day to make decisions that impact others and I've been fortunate to be a leader for a long time in this business and people look up to you, and people look to you to make decisions and they're watching how you're going to react, or how you react to certain situations, you have to have trust and you cannot have trust without ethics, you cannot have trust without integrity and I truly believe that the foundation of effective and strong leadership is trust. Trust only comes from a place of strong ethics and strong integrity, so it really has been a part of what I've done or how I've tried to carry myself throughout my career. I've studied a lot of leaders. I've read a lot of books and it's amazing how really strong leaders have that centering about them through their entire careers that keeps them focused on doing the right thing and when they do the right thing they're effective leaders. I really can't state strongly enough how important I think trust is to effective leadership.



### **Favorite leaders:**

Abraham Lincoln. The combination of dealing with very difficult circumstances, doing what is best for the greater good. Abraham Lincoln is the greatest example of this. Lincoln was in an unbelievable situation, the weight was enormous, but he always held what was best for the country as his guiding principle. Good leaders think about not what is best for themselves, but what is best for the organization or group.



## An Interview with Sam Erwin (con't) Member of the Rutland Institute Advisory Board

### **What is an ethical dilemma you have faced?**

Probably the one that sticks in my mind most came when I was the CEO of a community bank early in my career, so in the late 90s. I mentioned this early on, but CEOs have the opportunity to make decisions that no one's going to challenge. The board of directors is there to make sure that you make the right decisions but occasionally there's a lot that goes on, that the board doesn't see every day and so it's really important that we think about the decisions that we make every day and whether that is the right thing. I had the opportunity at that first bank to create a sort of a retirement plan that in my mind was tremendously beneficial to me personally. But what it did for the shareholders in my mind did not measure up, so in that situation in this particular retirement vehicle if the bank sold I would make a lot of money and the shareholders really would not. I felt like at that time that I had not done enough for that company and not really done enough in my career to justify a big payday like that. I don't know that the board would have approved it, although many boards were approving similar vehicles at that time, they may have, and they may have not, but if they had, I couldn't have slept at night. I really didn't think that I contributed enough to the company and success to justify a payday of that magnitude. It was very, very prevalent at the time, I thought long and hard about it. I had a very good mentor who also consulted with us from a human resources perspective, we talked through it. There was no way I could do that and feel good about myself, and so I never ever brought that up to the board, and I really felt that was the right thing and I still today think it was the right thing. I could have made a lot of money in that situation, but you know it wasn't right.

### **What has it been like to serve on the advisory board?**

Someone invited me to be a part of this board, which I greatly appreciated but there was something about this opportunity that resonated given my commitment to ethics, ethical behavior, and ethical leadership. I really appreciated what it stood for at the time that I joined the board, but it was not as defined as it is now. In fact, we were a little bit adrift, honestly...

...Bill McCoy is a tremendous leader, he has worked tirelessly to reinvigorate the board. He's worked tirelessly to bring ethics to the students at Clemson. He's worked tirelessly to create an ethical conversation across all colleges at Clemson. So I'm really proud to have been a part of it, particularly now. I look at you all, and your involvement with CHANGE and how that brings the students really into the conversation as a student led organization. I just give Bob Rutland all the credit in the world for his vision and his understanding of how important ethics is and for creating this Institute. I also give credit to Bill McCoy for taking what was a great gift and really making something of it and giving our university something to be proud of, because ultimately, what we want is that ethics is taught across all curriculum, taught across all majors, doesn't matter if it's business, engineering, or architecture. I hope that in the future that you'll remember some of these ethics classes and some of the work that your student group is doing and realize that that's really the right way to carry yourself every day.

### **The Institute has accomplished a lot in the last 20 years, how would you like to see us continue to grow in the future?**

First of all, again we've come so far so I'm thrilled with the direction of the Institute, as we see it today, and so really it's just more the same. Primarily around getting students very involved in this conversation, making sure that every college at Clemson university is involved in the ethical conversation. What I would like to see overall is just a greater scale we're moving in the right direction in a very positive way. Let's keep that going and spread it even further across the university.



# McCoy's Corner

## RIE: An Inspiring Model for Higher Education

By John C. Knapp, Ph. D.  
President, Washington & Jefferson College

*As a tribute to the impactful work of our founder – Bob Rutland, and as a satisfying nod to the dedication of one of our longest serving advisory board members, I've asked Dr. John Knapp to convey a personal and heartfelt message in my stead this semester.*

-Bill McCoy



Most of us would likely agree that Clemson should aim to produce graduates who exemplify the highest ethical standards in their personal and professional lives. Indeed, the university's mission statement declares that Clemson is "committed to the personal growth of the individual and promotes an environment of good decision making, healthy and ethical lifestyles, and tolerance and respect for others."

Yet beyond fostering such an environment, what can a university really do to develop ethically grounded individuals? On this question, there is often less consensus. Some argue that ethical commitments are learned in childhood – at the "kitchen table," so to speak – so little more can be accomplished with students of college age. Others assume ethics education should be limited to the study of moral philosophy or legal compliance.

The Rutland Institute was founded on the belief that ethical competencies and commitments are developmental. All of us can learn to recognize and address ethical issues in more productive ways. We can become skilled at thinking through complex problems, at anticipating the wider effects of our decisions and actions, and at taking in to account the perspectives and interests of others. Through instruction and practice, we can hone our skills in resolving conflict and championing shared values and standards.

The initial vision of RIE also asserted that ethics should be integral to every area of study, recognizing that ethical responsibilities and values are foundational to all good relationships and professional outcomes.

I am now concluding 20 years of rewarding service on the RIE advisory board and am proud of the Institute's impact on countless Clemson students during that time.

At the time of RIE's formation, Robert J. Rutland was an Atlanta business leader who had been an enthusiastic participant in programs of The Southern Institute for Business & Professional Ethics, a non-profit

executive education center that I founded and directed. Mr. Rutland saw that similar learning opportunities could be of great value to Clemson students, and he approached then-President James Barker with the idea that ultimately became the Rutland Institute for Ethics. I was pleased to help develop a framework for a university-wide center of excellence.

The results of this work are well-documented. Clemson has earned a reputation as a leader in ethics education, and is increasingly seen as a model for other colleges and universities. In 2008, I went to Samford University in Birmingham, AL, to serve as founding director of the Mann Center for Ethics & Leadership, a program patterned in part on RIE's approach to integrating ethics across the university curriculum.

Today I serve as president of Washington & Jefferson College, a 241-year-old, four-year college in Pennsylvania. We have just launched a new Center for Ethical Leadership to ensure that every undergraduate student has four years of curricular and co-curricular experiences designed to develop their potential as leaders committed to ethics in every area of life. As a key plank of our strategic plan to ensure professional readiness, the Center will be a catalyst for our longstanding mission of producing graduates of "uncommon integrity." Among the Center's programs will be our annual Symposium on Democracy, a full-day event that replaces scheduled classes with sessions exploring the state of democracy in the U.S. and abroad, as well as our responsibilities as citizens.

As we developed our plans for the Center for Ethical Leadership, we learned from many experts across the country including the Rutland Institute's William McCoy who visited our campus to meet with a committee of our faculty and staff. RIE has been an inspiration to our college, and will be a partner with us in programming as we move forward.

It has been a privilege to serve Clemson University for two decades. I am not a graduate of the university, but couldn't be prouder to be a friend and avid supporter of this extraordinary institution.

## The Rutland Institute Celebrates 20 Years

Founded in 2001 by Robert J. Rutland, the Rutland Institute for Ethics has been a major partner in helping Clemson University achieve its mission by fostering young, ethical leaders on campus and beyond.

Following Rutland's vision, the goal of the Institute is to provide the tools and support necessary for each college to expand ethics education and ethical leadership. Our impact on campus includes establishing the STAR Decision-Making Model in each college and creating an Annual Ethics Day, which reminds the Clemson community about the importance of ethical decision-making in their personal and professional lives.

This year marks our 20th anniversary of encouraging ethical discourse and intelligent discussion on campus and in the community. In honor of this milestone, we've taken the opportunity to reflect on our long-standing commitment to promoting ethical decision-making and remember those who've helped us further our mission over the years.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary, we created our first ever fundraising campaign with the Office of Annual Giving with a goal of raising \$100,000. The Rutland Institute advisory board was very generous in providing the seed funding for this campaign and we through the Fall semester we have raised over half of our goal. Thank you to everyone who has worked on and contributed to this campaign so far. You truly are impacting ethics education at Clemson!



## The Graduating Seniors of CHANGE



Louise Franke  
College of Science

Helen Schmidt  
College of Behavior, Social,  
and Health Sciences



Ansley Cordero  
College of Business



Eric Coleman  
College of Education  
College of Architecture, Arts,  
and Humanities

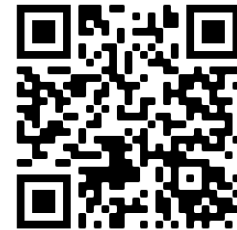


Erica Wearing  
College of Agriculture,  
Forestry, and Life Sciences



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- Enhance critical thinking skills in ethics education
- Get involved with ethical leadership, ethics programming, and ethics coursework



CHANGE is an officially recognized student organization on campus. Among its activities, CHANGE is the creator of the Rutland Institute for Ethics bi-annual newsletter.



For more information about CHANGE, please contact Lane Mayfield at [mayfie2@clemson.edu](mailto:mayfie2@clemson.edu) or 864-656-5379.

