

News from

Mississippi's First Alumnae Association

The original and historic association of graduates and former students of Mississippi University for Women, not affiliated with MUW

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Re-branding 'The W' Beats Name Change

Mississippi's First Alumnae Association has responded to Dr. Claudia Limbert's recommendation for changing MUW's name to Reneau by passing a resolution declaring MFAA's support for a re-branding campaign for the W as a viable alternative to changing the name.

In a special called meeting Monday, Aug. 10, the MFAA's board of directors voted unanimously in favor of supporting a re-branding campaign for the W. Association President, the Rev. Anghaarad Teague Dees notes that through re-branding, the good and positive attributes of a "product" are retained while perceived negatives are de-emphasized or eliminated. "You don't have to change the name of an institution to change its image and the public's perception of it."

The W's current name certainly carries some powerful and positive associations. Not only was the W the first state-established institution for the higher education of women; throughout its distinguished history, the institution has enjoyed a reputation for academic excellence.

In a recent letter to the editor, W alumna Linda Ross Aldy wrote, "Simply keep the full name and market it as "The W," which is what most people call it anyway. Just as the University of Mississippi is known far and wide as Ole Miss and ... Kentucky Fried Chicken, American Telephone and Telegraph, and International Business Machines are known as KFC, AT&T, and IBM, no name needs to be changed." Call it "The W – Educating Women Since 1884 – Men Since 1982." Women and Men...in the tag line would cover the gender issue concerns.

Aldy added, "Re-branding this way would honor the history and the mission of the institution with class and without the divisiveness of a name change."

The name change issue will now go to the IHL board and then on to the Mississippi Legislature for final review. Lillian Wade, president-elect of MFAA, praised the board of directors for passing the new resolution, noting that "re-branding provides a more cost effective, less divisive solution than changing the name."