

Ms. Petty,

It has come to my attention that you and your colleagues (Mr. Tyson in particular) continue to denigrate me personally. Please feel free to share this message with them from me. They continue these attacks with no knowledge of who I am, and the path that God has taken me on and the life I have led. It is done with a visceral attack of sheer hate that I think is unbecoming of Christians. I was informed that last night I was associated with such ugliness as the sins of the KKK and even had my sexuality questioned (which does not bother me either way - but makes me wonder why a persons sexuality is now a point of discussion at your meetings).

It was my understanding that you preached in a church of tolerance and supposedly under the gospel of Christ. You may wish to seek first to understand me before you judge me. A judgement that should be reserved for God.

My whole life I grew up in and out of projects, shelters, and low income housing. It was a life of serious violent and physical abuse, and my parents were in and out of re-habs and jails. It was only the Grace of God, a Christian Pastor, and an African American Mentor that combined to save me. I would raise my siblings after my mom died, go on to college by working multiple jobs, lead relief and recovery efforts in the middle of 9/11, and then dedicate my life to helping thousands of at-risk youth. I have turned down every corporate job ever offered and worked to build homeless shelters and mentoring programs for abused and abandoned children. I spent the last few years building the States mentoring children of prisoners program for thousands of kids.

In all of these efforts most of the children served were minority children. I have never looked at another human being as anything other than a child of God. I have an African American Godson, Tyler, extended minority family members, and a few ex girlfriends who were African American and Latino women. In fact an African American Professor at one of our local universities with a Doctorate in Education is one of my ex-girlfriends and still dear friends who helped me shape my policy views and serves as an advisor today. She is a wonderful woman who was a single mom in Southeast Raleigh when we met (she has since married, but again remains one of my closest friends).

I later collaborated with a team of advisors - many in the African American Community. These are the people and experiences that helped shape my views. I invited many of these individuals and many in the community at large to join me in the first ever Board level committee to focus on the comprehensive issues facing our disadvantaged children in Wake County. Never once did any of you ask to help or be a part of any such efforts. Never once did any of you raise an eye brow or a peep when the system was suspending over 21,000 children annually or failing nearly 50% of our African American boys? Simply diluting the failure across a broad network of schools so it is harder to see and identify does not help these children.

You have never offered to be a part of the solutions. If you all spent the same amount of hours as you have in protesting and organizing media spectacles on actually volunteering for after school literacy initiatives we could have already helped thousands of more children. And if you were really worried about issues of segregation you would be protesting Raleigh Council meetings for how they have integrated low income housing in the community, or how they invest in their latest ivory tower while abandoning those families in Southeast Raleigh who need us the most. Where is that protest rally sign me up and I will bring supporters.

I find it amusing to be continually associated with Mr. Pope by you as I only met him once for 60 seconds at a county function with 1,000 other people there, and never received a dollar from the man (not that I

am judging him by no means). I am sure he is a nice enough man but for your colleagues to claim I am some beholden token or scripted pawn of his could not be further from the truth. No one puts words in my mouth; admittedly sometimes I make mistakes and over the years have said things I wish I could have said differently - but they remain my words, the good and the bad.

Your colleagues do not wish to talk with me and dialogue. I have offered to Mr. Barber and Mr. Gatewood (at the one meeting he showed up to call us names). Both rejected my offer. Which makes me believe they only want grand standing political media opportunities for their selfish agenda. But I continue to extend the offer to share coffee or lunch with your team and talk about the real issues for our kids. I know actually helping the community doesn't meet the need for media attention for some of your colleagues, but if they have a change of heart we can set something up.

I have found it even more insulting that you (the four of you - so feel free to share this email with all of them) would say I claimed to be Thurgood Marshall by quoting a fact about the Brown case. I would never consider myself in such leagues. The tapes can show I simply noted how Rev. Oliver Brown used the term neighborhood school in a plea for his daughter (who was force bussed away from her local neighborhood) over a decade before Mr. Tyson claimed Mr. Wallace coined it. And further that I found it hypocritical of our system to target kids by race or income to force bus them away from their neighborhood today.

The Wake system gave affluent suburbanite families an individual choice with extensive programs to lure them to self select to integrate but targeted blocks and groups of 50-100 families of poverty to force them away without a say in the process. That is not fair. That is not social justice. That is the system you support??? How is that possible? Are you biased against poor minority children? These are the families and children I have dedicated my life to helping and I will not let your hateful biases for a political agenda harm these kids and families.

Further, you all have publicly declared yourselves the modern Martin Luther King Jr. and Henry David Thoreau - Are you serious? You think you could hold the shadows of these giants? Now you mock the real trials of the beloved Dr. King with a mock set of letters from a Wake County Jail? How dare you? Such audacity. This is 2010 in the Research Triangle, not 1960 Selma Alabama - we are integrate caring people who just want to help. But yet you are all filled with such hate and fear mongering in your hearts. I do appreciate the local history lesson Mr. Tyson gave on Wake County Leaders who were instrumental in perpetuating segregation a half a century ago. To learn that Democrats like News and Observer founder J. Daniels and Mayor William Enloe were instrumental in perpetuating segregation was enlightening. As I am opposed to such sins, I believe it is inappropriate for us to honor people by naming our schools after them and will look into opportunities for a name change that is more reflective of people dedicated to equality.

I am still a modest man living in a modest highly diverse community helping my father and siblings who live off our public assistance less than a mile down the road from me. I helped raised those siblings in the Garner schools and my girlfriend for the last few years is a single mom (who grew up here and went to wake schools herself) who also has had the challenges of dealing with the Wake Schools for her own son. It is by the Grace of God alone that I know who I am, where I have come from, and where I am going. I know my dedication to children and communities. I know my world, neighborhood, and church (which I choose for its diversity unlike many of the churches your cohorts attend) are extremely diverse and I embrace it. I know my heart is for all people regardless of race or wealth, and I will not let the evils your cohorts try to portray me different or change my heart of love of all.

If you actually wish to help build the village that will help all of our children then pick up productive tools and stop trying to burn it down. Reach out to us in productive ways - take me up on my offer for coffee and lets have real discussion about real issues. Continued failure to do so shows me only that your true motives are selfish.

I pray this finds you well and not consumed by the hate spewed at your meeting last night.

John Tedesco

Board of Education

Wake County Public School System

District 2