



STAFF EDITORIAL

HOW WE SEE IT

It's easy to ignore the ugliness of the United States' history, but the challenge is confronting the systematic issues that continue to affect us.

With the opening of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama, the United States has the opportunity to face a dark sect of its past that is hard to do. The museum commemorates the lynchings of more than 4,000 African Americans from the late 1800s to 1950. The new museum contains 800 dark, rectangular steel columns that represent the counties where lynchings took place in the United States. Some of the columns even hang from the ceiling, which is an accurate portrayal of how black bodies hung from trees in towns and cities across the southern part of the country. As Billie Holiday famously sang in 1939, "South-

ern trees bear strange fruit, with blood on the leaves and blood at the root."

At times, it can be uncomfortable to publicly acknowledge such heinous, vile acts. But in order to move forward, it has to be done. There are at least 100 recorded lynchings in North Carolina, including at least one in Alamance County. That instance was the lynching of Wyatt Outlaw in 1870. According to the Burlington-Times News, his body hung from a tree next to the Graham's Sesquicentennial Park. Now, in that very city, a Confederate statue proudly stands next to the Alamance County Courthouse. The dichotomy of this story

and these locations proves that there is still work to be done to improve race relations in America and in the South — and Alamance County isn't immune to this.

The only way to initiate reparations for the United States' racist history is by facing it, especially for an issue in which the effects are still felt today. The black community still faces racism and prejudice today as a result of the United States' attitude toward blacks in the late 1800s, and moving to resolve that can only happen if people don't dance around the issue.

It's no secret that today's society is deeply divided. Beginning to piece the nation back together requires looking at the mistakes and wrongdoings of our past, which is exactly what the National Memorial for Peace and Justice is doing — by laying out the United States' history for all to see. Confederate's Day, coming up on May 10, is still celebrated in places such

as Graham, and organizations such as Taking Back Alamance County are still active. It's clear that racism is largely present in our surrounding community, and ignoring it isn't doing anyone any favors. Forcing the United States and the Alamance community to face its racist history is not meant to be damaging, but rather meant to be a way to begin stitching the country back together.

The memorial is the brainchild of Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) and author of "Just Mercy," the common reading book for the 2016-2017 academic year. Stevenson dedicates himself and his organization toward ending mass incarceration and unfair systemic injustices embedded in this nation's policy and attitudes. The EJI poses a challenge to U.S. citizens with the establishment of this memorial: Face our history and learn from it, don't ignore it.

CAMPUS VOICES

Women and climate change: Why their experiences can make an impact



Susannah
Anderson
Columnist

When it comes to taking action on climate change, women are often left out of the conversation. Women's voices and perspectives go unheard in decision-making processes and policy reforms that aim to allow the world to adapt to a changing climate.

It is all too predictable that women are excluded from vital conversations at influential levels such as governing bodies, national delegations and intergovernmental forums. But women need to be at the forefront of these discussions.

Considering about two thirds of the world's population lives outside of Western civilization, I will refer to what is often called the "third world" as the "two-thirds world." In the two-thirds world, women and children are often the most exposed to the instability of

the climate.

For example, despite Africa's minimal emission of greenhouse gases, the continent is one of the most vulnerable to climate variability.

Because of the gender division of labor, ecosystem degradation and complex natural disasters tend to affect women and children more than men because they bear the burden of household and agricultural labor. Women are more connected with their ecosystems and environments, which makes them not only more directly affected by changes but also more knowledgeable about issues and possible solutions.

Many women and children in the two-thirds world collect water and firewood for their households and provide up to 80 percent of labor in agriculture. Many Africans reside

in rural areas, but with the changing climate, these areas are experiencing drought, deforestation and contaminated water supplies.

This means women and children have to travel further, find new sources for water and firewood and create alternative ways to provide food for their families.

But because of unequal access to education, information and resources, women and children are more likely than men to become climate refugees because they are ill-prepared for changes in their environments.

Women in rural areas of Africa are the main custodians of environmental conservation and sustainability, yet they are often marginalized from the decision-making processes related to solving problems on climate change. Women

often have greater knowledge of indigenous plant and seed varieties and their important nutritional and medicinal values, but economic policies continue to negatively affect the environment and threaten the roles of women. Though agricultural and service policies affect mostly women, they are minimally involved in these new technologies and service discussions.

A critique of the global economy as a continuation of colonialism has risen as Western societies continue to extract resources from the two-thirds world. Western worlds and corporations reap the benefits while ecosystems are devastated by these extractions. These economic processes undeniably impoverish and disenfranchise women in the two-thirds world.

There is a need to link en-

vironmental issues with issues of gender, race and class. Integrating gender analysis into the study of environmental issues will better equip us to face the mess our global economy has created and find alternative solutions for local and global obstacles. Because the two-thirds world is currently experiencing the consequences of Western world greenhouse gas emissions, policy change and decision-making processes must not only incorporate two-thirds world experiences but also the knowledge and adaptations women are making to survive in their changing world.

With the information and knowledge these women can provide, policy makers will be able to make better decisions and changes that can truly have a positive impact on the environment.