

**University Park Neighborhood Association, Inc.  
P. O. Box 12103  
Gainesville, FL 32604**

June 10, 2020

Alachua County School Board  
620 E. University Avenue  
Gainesville, FL 32601

Subject: Renaming of J. J. Finley Elementary School

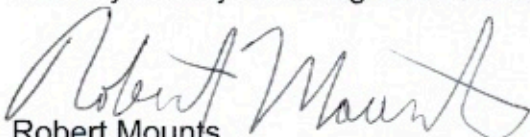
Dear Chairman and Members of the Alachua County School Board

On behalf of the University Park Neighborhood Association, Inc. (UPNA), a voluntary 501(3)(c) nonprofit neighborhood association representing the Northwest Gainesville neighborhood in which the J. J. Finley Elementary School has long served our community, I write to inform you that UPNA's Board of Directors voted unanimously to support renaming of the school at its monthly virtual meeting last evening on Zoom.

Former Western Judicial Circuit of Florida Circuit Judge J. J. Finley's reported decision to accept an involuntary confession to arson from an African-American slave that was obtained under threat of being released to a lynch mob, a decision that was reversed by the Supreme Court of Florida; his subsequent military service for the Confederacy as a Brigadier General in the Civil War; as well as his scant ties to Alachua County other than burial in Evergreen Cemetery, all justify removal of his name from the school.

We also look forward to participating in the process of selecting a new name for the school. For your additional information, on March 10, 2020, UPNA submitted a separate petition with 52 names to the Recreation Advisory Board and the Alachua County School Board, in turn, requesting that the new Wild Spaces Public Places-funded "pocket park" at J.J. Finley be renamed as the "University Park Playground". However, to our knowledge, no action has yet been taken on this request.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.



Robert Mounts  
President

Cc: Mrs. Karen Clarke, Superintendent of Schools, by email to [supt@gm.sbac.edu](mailto:supt@gm.sbac.edu)