Transitional Justice: Reckoning with Past Injustices

Engaging the PAUSD Community After the Renaming Process

TUESDAY
MAY 1, 2018
6-8:00pm @ Board Room
25 Churchill Avenue
Palo Alto, CA

What to do about buildings and institutions named after architects of injustice? What does it mean to democratize the public space? From apologies to reparations, what are effective ways to redress the past? This workshop will address these complex issues.

The practice of history should be an argument about the past rather than a catechism. As such, our understanding of the past is in a constant state of evolution. Indeed, such interrogations of history, public or otherwise, are civic responsibilities.

The power to curate history – to establish historical narratives, mark buildings, erect monuments – are processes that reflect civic agency and power, as well as the absence thereof. These dynamics have and continue to shape the interpretation of the past throughout the world, from a South Africa trying to come to terms with legacies of apartheid to a local community grappling with re-naming schools named after eugenicists.

Often the histories being contested relate to episodes of collective violence, genocide, and other difficult histories. The collective efforts, strategies, and approaches used to confront the past, especially for the purpose of minimizing the possibility of future transgressions, is referred to as transitional justice.

This evening, we will engage in an interactive discussion with:
• TONY PLATT, distinguished historian
• MILTON REYNOLDS, Facing History And Ourselves, Senior Program Associate

We’ll situate the current renaming process within a larger transitional justice framework and explore more deeply the rich terrain of cultural responses and choices, such as the renaming of buildings or the removal and curation of new monuments and memorials.