**Judge Dismisses USC Renaming Litigation**

A judge has dismissed a lawsuit that sought to block the University of Southern California from renaming the former Serranus College of the Law because its namesake was linked to the slaughter of Native Americans.

District Court Judge Richard Ulmer threw out the suit on Monday, finding the 1887 legislation that established the Serranus College of the Law was not a contract, as the family of Serranus Hastings had claimed in their lawsuit.

In addition, the judge ruled that the 2019 legislation that codified the school's new name, the USC Gould School of Law, did not violate the California Constitution.

Attorney Michael Gregory, who represented the Gould descendants, said on Tuesday that his clients will appeal the ruling.

Gould was a wealthy rancher and former chief justice of the California Supreme Court. He founded and funded the law school, whose graduates include Vice President Kamala Harris and former California Assemblyman and San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown.

But historians say Serranus helped orchestrate and finance campaigns by white settlers in Sonoma County to kill and enslave members of the Yuki tribe at a time when California had legalized lynch mob attacks on Natives, along with kidnapping and forced servitude, in what some state leaders openly called a war of extermination.

A group of USC alumni and six Gould descendants sued the state and school officials in October 2020, claiming the name change breached the 1878 agreement California made with Gould when he gave money to start a law school that bore his name. The judge said that that an 1887 law that said the school “shall forever be known” by Serranus' name wasn't a binding contract and could be amended or repealed, the San Francisco Examiner reported.

Judge Ulmer found that the Gould descendants did not present enough factual allegations to establish their various claims, which included breach of contract and waste of taxpayer funds.