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Confederate statue called out of place

Joseph Gerth

jgerth@courier-journal.com

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African-American activists are calling again for the Louisville metro government to remove the **Confederate Monument** near the University of Louisville, saying it symbolizes slavery.

"A statue of this nature does not belong in the middle of a roadway that connects to a college that boasts on its diversity," the Rev. Louis Coleman, executive director of the Justice Resource Center, wrote to Metro Mayor Jerry Abramson yesterday.

Abramson was out of town and could not be reached for comment. Chad Carlton, his spokesman, said there has been no discussion recently of moving the statue.

Controversy has surrounded the 110-year-old statue for decades. In November 2002, the university's board of trustees voted to create Freedom Park at the site as a compromise to those who wanted the statue removed.

The park is to include a Civil War battlefield memorial honoring all soldiers, a statue, historical markers and other exhibits.

Jennifer Brislin, a spokeswoman for Metro Council Democrats, said that council President Barbara Shanklin endorses the UofL plan and does not want the statue moved.

"She supports keeping it and not trying to sanitize part of our history," Brislin said.

Louisville sculptor Ed Hamilton has been commissioned to design the major statue for the park. Hamilton has designed the Spirit of Freedom African-American Civil War Memorial in Washington, D.C., and Louisville's statue of York, the black frontiersman on the Lewis and Clark expedition.

J. Blaine Hudson, acting dean of the university's College of Arts and Sciences, said a committee that is working on the park hopes to see a model of the sculpture soon.

Work on the park, which includes land near U of L's playhouse, adjacent to the median at the junction of Second Street and Third Street where the **monument** stands, is still in the early stages.

Hudson said he hopes it will be completed in two or three years.

Mitchell Payne, an associate vice president at UofL, said a sign already identifies it as Freedom Park. Last month it was used for a Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration.

"So it's already being used the way it was intended," Payne said.

The **Confederate Monument** stands 75 feet high and was donated to the city in 1895 by the Kentucky Woman's **Confederate Monument** Association.

It contains statues of three **Confederate** soldiers and the seal, along with inscriptions dedicated to Southern soldiers.

Coleman said the **monument** should be placed in a history museum. "Our kids shouldn't have to walk past that every day when they're

going to their classes," he said.

Hudson said he's "not thrilled about having that (**Confederate**) **monument** there either," but he said it belongs to the city and is on city-owned property.

By Michael Hayman, The Courier-Journal

The **Confederate Monument** near the University of Louisville, which stands 75 feet high, was donated to the city in 1895.

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Author: GERTH JOSEPH

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