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Fixing history

I was a history major in college, focusing on the 1960s civil rights movement, so this week's cover story on controversial monuments piqued my interest.

Who do we honor from our past shapes how we understand our nation today. And those choices can change over time.

Living in North Carolina, I was always uncomfortable around all the memorials to Confederate generals. As far as I could tell, racism was alive and well, since I was still covering KKK marches and cross-burnings well into the 1980s.

When I moved to Boston, I felt much better about the many statues of American Revolution patriots. I particularly liked the memorial to the first all-black regiment to fight for the Union during the Civil War, a story brilliantly told in the movie *Glory*.

Now that I'm rooted in Sacramento, it's fascinating that the capital of proudly progressive California seems behind the times in coming to terms with monuments to flawed figures, even as more than 100 Confederate memorials and symbols have been removed across the nation since 2015.

Taking down these shrines is not so much rewriting history—or being politically correct—as making it more accurate and socially conscious. By honoring those who don't deserve it, we dishonor those who do.

—FOON RHEE
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