

May 19, 2011

Dear Mr. Haulman:

I am writing to express my support for the Jonestown memorial, funded by the Jonestown Memorial Fund and recently installed at Evergreen Cemetery. I am a contributor to JMF and personally feel that this memorial is as it should be. It includes the names of *all* who died in Jonestown, Port Kaituma, and Georgetown on 11/18/78. No one is given more or less recognition than another. Because most of those who perished were members of a community which sought to eliminate racism, sexism, and ageism, it only seems fitting that a memorial to them would be all inclusive.

This memorial is long overdue and represents a chance to recognize and respect all those who died that day. In the immediate aftermath of Jonestown, only those who died in the shootings at the Port Kaituma airstrip were truly treated with respect. Many of those who died of poison in Jonestown were seen as crazy and were not recognized as our fellow American citizens or even as human beings. This is our opportunity to correct that. This is our opportunity to let the names of anonymous victims be known and honored.

How one personally feels about Jim Jones is irrelevant with regard to the inclusion of his name on the memorial stone. To be a fair and accurate representation of the Jonestown tragedy, Jones' name must be included because he died there with his people. Even if one feels that Jones denied his followers dignity and compassion in their final moments, it would not make it morally right to disrespect him by excluding his name. I do not condone the deaths at Jonestown, but I am also not in a position to judge or condemn Jim Jones or others who helped him orchestrate the events on 11/18/78. Regardless of what one feels about Jones' actions, it is humane to be respectful of his death. In order to find peace with what happened in Jonestown, one must find some forgiveness of Jim Jones. Healing will not be accomplished by disrespecting Jones, and omitting Jones' name from the memorial would be disrespectful—to Jones himself as well as to his surviving children.

I will conclude by saying that I feel the memorial is appropriate on both moral and historical grounds. It respects all those who died and insures that their names will not be forgotten. The memorial itself is important not only to Peoples Temple survivors and family members of those lost, but also to many other people such as myself who have no connection to the victims. Jonestown was an American tragedy on catastrophic proportions, and the memorial insures that those lost will be remembered by future generations. Finally, it is my great hope that this memorial promotes healing for all those who were touched by the Jonestown tragedy.

Sincerely,



Katherine Grace Hill