

Scarlet and Black Marker Confronts Legacy of William Livingston and His Family

A plaque installed in 2021 on the Livingston campus confronts the legacy of William Livingston, namesake of the campus and the former Livingston College, and his family, as people who enslaved other human beings.



Photos courtesy of Stephen Yanick

The two-sided marker has been placed on a prominent walkway on campus, between the Lynton North and South Towers residence halls and the Livingston Student Center.

The plaque reads:

"Livingston Campus (site of former Livingston College) was named after William Livingston, the first governor of the state of New Jersey, whose family made a fortune trafficking human beings in the transatlantic slave trade. The campus opened in 1969 as an experimental, social-justice oriented campus at the site of Camp Kilmer, a World War II-era military camp. The Livingston family collectively enslaved hundreds of people and Williams' brothers, Philip and Robert, two of Rutgers' founding trustees, bought and sold hundreds more. When William Livingston moved to New Jersey, he enslaved at least two people, a woman named Bell and her son Lambert. Though he later advocated for gradual abolition, he continued to represent the legal interests of his slave-trading family's wealth throughout his career. This marker honors Bell, Lambert, and the other women, men, and children enslaved and sold by the Livingston family."