

January 10, 2021

Dear Fellow Smitties,

As we return to campus following the horrific events of last week in our nation's Capital, I seek your support in assuring that our Paul Smith's community will continue to follow the same principles of open debate, respect for others, and adherence to the rule of law that have guided our great Nation since its founding almost 250 years ago. This unfolding situation in Washington, requires our collegial community to be thoughtful and respectful of each other as we commence our Spring semester.

Many have drawn parallels between last week's attack on our nation's Capitol, the enduring symbol of the oldest and most successful representative democracy in the world, and other past attacks on U.S. soil from foreign powers. Those past attacks differ from January 6th, however, in that they were not perpetrated by Americans. Others have also compared Wednesday's events to the Black Lives Matter protests that galvanized our nation last summer. But that nationwide movement was a largely peaceful protest of the 400 years of subjugation experienced by a large segment of our population.

What transpired last week in Washington was markedly different. The storming of our Capitol while Congress was in session performing its Constitutional duty was a mob attacking the very democracy they claimed to be protecting. It is worth noting that a significant fraction of those involved carried flags that bore not the symbol of our country, but the name of one man. Those individuals chose violence and intimidation to express their frustrations, not the open and reasoned debate that lies at the heart of our democracy and our institutions of higher learning.

I am very proud to serve as your President during these troubling times. I renounce, in the strongest way I know how, the violence and mob rule that occurred and those who incited it. Further, I am committed to work with our campus community achieve our full potential as self-governed institution of higher learning in this amazingly resilient country we all love.

As we convene together in the coming weeks, I urge all of us to find ways to discuss and reflect upon what we have learned from this recent unrest and to strive to move forward in the best traditions of our American Democracy. Moreover, until the new vaccines help bring the COVID Pandemic under control, please continue to practice the safety precautions that have held us in such good stead this past fall in protecting ourselves, of course, but even more importantly, our fellow Smitties.

Thank you.

Jon

Jon C Strauss
Interim President