



MILWAUKEE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Juan Miguel Martinez - District 12 • Priscilla E. Coggs-Jones - District 13
Sheldon A. Wasserman - District 3

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Supervisors Martinez, Coggs-Jones, and Wasserman Condemn Local Antiques Store Selling Racist Items

MILWAUKEE – Today County Board Supervisors Juan Miguel Martinez, Priscilla Coggs-Jones, and Sheldon Wasserman released statements condemning Antiques on Pierce for selling racist, anti-Semitic, and xenophobic items.

“As a Latino representative to one of two majority Hispanic districts in Milwaukee County, it is important that I stand with my Black brothers and sisters, especially those who reside in District 12. My office unequivocally disavows this disgusting mockery of the Black community and their culture. These artifacts belong in a museum and should not be sold for profit.” said Supervisor Martinez. “As a society, we should be striving for equality and inclusivity. The sale of these caricatures serves to divide and ostracize Black individuals and is unacceptable. The items for sale are a symbol of a dark time in our history, and their sale only serves to perpetuate the wounds of racism that we are trying to heal.”

“This is our story that should be told and shared amongst all different nationalities. We should be able to educate not only the youth but also the inexperienced adults who don't see the importance of being able to properly display antique pieces,” said Supervisor Coggs-Jones. “When I meditate on situations such as this, I remember a quote from the Rev. Al Shaptrton which says, ‘We have defeated Jim Crow, but now we have to deal with his son, James Crow, Jr.’”

“All Nazi artifacts should either be in a holocaust museum dedicated to the memory of its Jewish and non-Jewish victims or they should be destroyed,” said Supervisor Wasserman.

“The historical significance of the racist and anti-Semitic items on sale in Antiques on Pierce cannot be denied, but we must center the experiences of People of Color and the impact of insulting and mocking groups of people based on race,” said Chloe Longmire. “History has shown us that Black bodies are for sale and Antiques on Pierce is one of the many systems that profit from our pain and our trauma, and we will no longer be ignored or dismissed. There have been complaints made stretching back to 2011 and there needs to be accountability and reparations made to this community.

“While we acknowledge that these objects promote hatred and perpetuate harmful narratives that should be condemned, they are also powerful teaching tools when presented with context that can allow us to transcend their original purpose of demeaning, degrading, and dehumanizing. Our dedicated group is committed to seeing that these objects are donated to the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. The museum has already been contacted and they are on board and awaiting the arrival of the objects.

“This brings to light the larger discussion of how issues like this should be handled in the future. We are asking for policies to be drafted that prohibit vendors from selling racist and anti-Semitic items moving forward and are working with antique stores in the area that pledge their support for our cause. We will continue to reach out to others in the hopes of creating safe and inclusive spaces where all feel welcome and safe.”

Pierce Street Antiques has operated on 1512 W Pierce Street since 2015 and has been in business since 2010. According to the Better Business Bureau, the owners of the store are Brian and Cheryl Belli.

Some local antique dealers have since removed their booths from Antiques on Pierce, upset with the lack of response from the owners.

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