
[FacultyStaff] Message from President Stephen H. Kolison, Jr., July 12, 2024

President's Office <President.Office@fredonia.edu>

Fri, Jul 12, 2024 at 4:43 PM

Reply-To: president.office@fredonia.edu

To: All Registered students <students@fredonia.edu>, Faculty/Staff group <facultystaff@fredonia.edu>



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

July 12, 2024

Dear Campus Community,

Good afternoon. I hope you are enjoying your summer. Some of you have likely heard by now about the close call we had Thursday evening, when a large section of the historic beech tree in front of Fenner House broke away and fell to the ground.

First and foremost, we are very grateful that no one was walking on the sidewalk or driving on Central Avenue when it happened. We immediately called a local tree service to remove the large branch from the road, and they removed enough of other sections to ensure short-term safety.

When the piece of tree broke away, it exposed a large section of the inside of the trunk of the tree, which shows obvious signs of extensive decay, most likely caused by fungal infection over the years. This is very concerning. Thus, we asked an arborist to come to campus on Friday to examine the tree and give us a recommendation on whether the rest of the tree can be saved. When we get those recommendations, we will share those with campus.



The tree is considered to be one of the oldest in the village of Fredonia. Local environmental advocate Jim Wilmoth wrote in his 2012 paper *Big Trees of Fredonia* that “this particular specimen probably started growing in the 1700s.”

I am very aware of the tree’s importance to this community. You may know that my undergraduate degree is in general forestry and my master’s and doctorate’s degrees are in Forest Economics. Therefore I can appreciate the significance of this historical tree. Thus, should it become necessary to remove this tree for the safety of the public and to protect the Fenner House, we will find ways to acknowledge it as a piece of our local history. We will also find ways to use portions of the tree for educational and commemorative purposes.

I will get back to you with updates when we have more information. In the meantime, enjoy the rest of your summer and have a wonderful weekend.

Very truly yours,

Dr. K
Stephen H. Kolison, Jr., Ph.D.
President and Professor