

Blackcott Jeff Bezos and his Amazon corporate policies

by Nina Joudeh | IRISH STAR



(PEOPLE) - Amazon has recently made several major internal changes, including removing statements advocating for LGBTQ rights and racial equity from its public listing of corporate policies. This is a bold move for the second-largest employer in the world, which also just announced a documentary with First Lady Melania Trump.

The deletion of previous statements pledging to commit to “equity for Black people” and “LGBTQ+ rights” were removed from a page on the company’s website in December, as were any mentions of the word “transgender,” according to The Washington Post.

Amazon’s website previously stated the company stood “in solidarity” with Black employees and customers and supported “legislation to combat misconduct and racial bias in policing, efforts to protect and expand voting rights, and initiatives that provide better health and educational outcomes for Black people.” This section has since been deleted.

Black lives matter
Amazon stands in solidarity
with the Black community

References to federal and state laws that safeguard transgender individuals, along with mentions of the company’s health benefits for transgender employees, were also omitted.

Amazon’s decision to eliminate the section on gender-affirming healthcare benefits has sparked concerns that employees may lose insurance coverage for gender-affirming treatments. Other statements regarding pro-diversity efforts, initiatives, or pro-LGBTQ public policy positions, such as support for federal legislation like the Equality Act, are gone. Instead, the major retailer has opted for a more generic statement opposing discrimination.

“We also believe that inequitable treatment of anyone — including Black people, LGBTQ+ people, Asians, women, and others — is unacceptable, and we advocate for policies designed to remove barriers to equity and create an inclusive environment for all employees,” the website reads.

A once-champion of “diversity, equity, and inclusion” now says: “We appreciate that our 1.4 million team members reflect the world’s diversity.”

Amazon’s modifications mirror similar actions taken by other major companies after Trump’s election victory, including Meta, McDonald’s, and Walmart.



The University of Texas at Austin
WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD

UT Architecture Library Named for Texas’ First Black Architect

by University of Texas Media Relations



John Chase enrolls at UT in 1950. Credit The University of Texas in Austin.

(AUSTIN, TX) — Two days after the U.S. Supreme Court integrated American higher education with its 1950 Sweatt v. Painter decision, John Chase, a Black student, enrolled in the School of Architecture at The University of Texas. Now, the library at the heart of that school will be named the John S. Chase Architecture and Planning Library, thanks to a generous gift and pledge from Chase’s son, Tony Chase, and daughter-in-law Dina Al-Sowayel.

John Chase was a pioneering Longhorn and leader on several fronts. He was the first Black person to become a:

- Graduate of the School of Architecture.
- Licensed architect in the South.
- Member of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts.
- President of the UT alumni association, the Texas Exes (1998-1999).

“John Chase was an exceptional UT student and graduate who paved the way for progress and change as one of the University’s first Black students,” said UT President Jay Hartzell. “He then utilized his considerable talents, creativity and education to design special places that brought people together. It is fitting that his name will now grace a special place on our campus and will help provide opportunities for future architects to attend and excel at UT. We are honored by the close bonds that UT has formed with the Chase family through the years, and we are inspired by their generosity — just as we are also inspired by John Chase’s story.”

John Chase, M. Ar. 1952, received the Texas Exes’ highest honor, the Distinguished Alumnus Award, in 1992. While at UT, he met and married Drucie Rucker in a union that lasted 60 years. He died in 2012. This year marks his centenary.

Tony Chase and Al-Sowayel have pledged a \$5 million gift to support the UT School of Architecture and the Architecture & Planning Library. The gift includes a \$1 million pledge made in 2022 that created two new endowments in the School of Architecture. The UT Libraries space being named for Chase comprises the majority of the space within Battle Hall, the 1911 Cass Gilbert-designed library to the immediate southwest of the UT Tower, considered by many the architectural crown jewel of the campus.

The Architecture and Planning Library and the Alexander Architectural Archives are among the most significant architectural collections in the world.

Filled with stacks of books, journals, rare publications and special collections, the library serves academic research needs and is an important resource for architecture, art history, design and planning.

John Chase was an active volunteer at the University, serving as a member of UT’s Development Board and Commission of 125. He led an architectural practice with studios in Houston, Dallas and Washington, D.C., and he co-founded the National Organization of Minority Architects. His earliest works include churches, single-family residences and small office buildings for the Black community, some in East Austin. In 1952, he designed the headquarters for the Colored Teachers State Association

of Texas. In 2018, the building was acquired by UT, restored, updated and dedicated as the John S. and Drucie R. Chase Building.

Chase was tapped to design 21 buildings and performed at least 15 renovations for Texas Southern University, where he also taught, in addition to helping devise the campus master plan. Other notable projects include the George R. Brown Convention Center and Harris County Astrodome Renovation in Houston, as well as the Washington Technical Institute, Links Inc. National Headquarters, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. National Headquarters, all in Washington, D.C. All told, almost 300 known buildings or renovation projects can be attributed to John Chase’s firm.

“This is a monumental moment for the Librar-



John and Drucie Chase in front of the San Antonio Garage that he designed. Photo circa early 1990s

ies and the University,” said Lorraine Haricombe, vice provost and director of UT Libraries. “John Chase’s vision and talent have left an indelible mark on the world of architecture and design. This milestone gift not only represents a lasting tribute to a historical figure but will further elevate the renowned Architecture and Planning Library on the Forty Acres, where students dream of drawing and creating structures for the benefit of us all.”

“My father always said, ‘A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives,’” Tony Chase said. “Our hope is that having my father’s name and story of perseverance and positive change affixed to this library will inspire future generations of students to broaden their awareness of what is possible.”

Tony Chase is the chairman and CEO of Chase Source LP — a staffing, facilities management and construction firm he founded. He presently sits on the board of directors of Lyondell Basell, Cullen/Frost Bankers Inc. and Nabors Industries. He also is a founder of Cricket Wireless, a former vice chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas and an Eagle Scout. He is a life member of the UT School of Architecture’s Advisory Council. Al-Sowayel was a professor and associate director of women’s studies at the University of Houston, where her husband is a law professor emeritus. John Chase’s daughter, Saundria Chase Gray, is a graduate of the UT School of Law and serves on the UT Libraries Advisory Council.