In 1975, a Black woman graduated from Pomona in 1975, I am not troubled by the song’s lyrics. I continue to do the movements of the song, and I believe that the context of the song is also important. Many, many of the songs and lyrics we sing are not offensive to our alma maters. The song’s context is also important. Let’s not change what we have done in the past, and let’s be mindful of the present.

—Glenda Armorey Stepp

Just as I had feared, political correctness is threatening to destroy a cherished memory and a wonderful college tradition. For many of us, over 50 years removed from gradua- tion, it is a wonderful memory. I was wondering if we could see our alma mater in a new light.

—Richard Noone ’68

A college with which I am affiliated discovered that its alma mater was written for a blackface minstrel show in the 1930s. Although the lyrics are innocuous, the school banned the song from the year’s graduation and formed a group to discuss its future use, part of a campaign to make sure everyone was aware of things that they look for grants for. Is that a responsibility, or should the school focus on more important issues? Is it unethical to sing the song?

—Julie DeToro (MC ’79), Philadelphia

It is unfortunate that there is a time when minstrel show humor was an acceptable form of entertainment on the Pomona College campus. As I understand it, however, the song was not written to be offensive to any group. I have studied the song and believe that it is not problematic —nor are they interesting. Context is the problem. The song’s connection to the past and the present is what we need to consider.

—Deborah Neidt ’90

For the past 27 years, I have taught music history at Manhattan College in New York City. Every other year, I teach a course on American music.

—Eleanor McDermid Hinde Plymouth ’52

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