



TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Thurgood Marshall School of Law

June 1, 2020

Dear TMSL Community:

In 1963, while sitting in a Birmingham jail, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. penned:

I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly....

You deplore the demonstrations that are presently taking place in Birmingham. But I am sorry that your statement did not express a similar concern for the conditions that brought the demonstrations into being. I am sure that each of you would want to go beyond the superficial social analyst who looks merely at effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. I would not hesitate to say that it is unfortunate that so-called demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham at this time, but I would say in more emphatic terms that it is even more unfortunate that the white power structure of this city left the Negro community with no other alternative.

King's words more than echo with us today. They resonate in a pounding alarm of urgency. From the days of slavery when Blacks were required to show papers to any white person inquiring who they were, where they were going, and for what purpose; the legislative characterization of the black skin as a mark of servitude and less than; the subjugation of black bodies to the whims of whites, even to the point of death; to today, where Blacks are harassed, threatened, and vilified by the Beckys, Karens, and Pattys; where the many instances of daily living in which structural racism result in Blacks suffering pneumonia while the rest of the country has merely a cold; and where the black color of one's skin still means lives that don't matter.

We must do better; we must be better as a country. As the moral conscience of this country, Blacks represent the uncomfortable truth that America has yet to reckon with the content of its character.



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The protests place the character of this nation again at the forefront. Will it reckon with the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and most recently, George Floyd? Our hearts and condolences go out to their families. Surely, our sympathy is but small comfort. These protests cannot bring back the lives of these loved ones and yet, they are signs of hope—hope of an awakening to what this nation can be as a true democracy, where the “we” in “We the people” represent the full diversity of the citizenry and able to live in freedom and in truth.

The Thurgood Marshall School of Law stands in solidarity for equal justice of the law concerning George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the so many others who have suffered senseless, untimely deaths. The Law School’s Legal Clinic has initiated a pro bono referral service, with the end of compiling a robust list of volunteer Texas-area attorneys willing to provide legal assistance to arrested protesters.

The Thurgood Marshall School of Law stands in support of the TMSL community members who, during these times of challenge, demonstrate resilience, determination, and focus on doing and being their best. We support our students because you are the future that can assist this country in its determination of the content of its character. The University also stands with you and provides resources during this difficult time. The [Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) and the University Counseling Center (713.313.7804) are there for you. We support our employees, who put the personal touch in all they do. If desired, counseling is available through the [Employee Assistance Program](#).

As always, my (virtual) door is open and I welcome your thoughts and concerns.

Be safe. Stay well. All in.



Joan R. M. Bullock
Dean and Professor of Law





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