



January 18, 2021

Dear Richmond Law Community,

As we prepare for the start of a new semester and to return to class tomorrow, I hope everyone will take time today to reflect on the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Looking back over the past year, it is easy to feel that we are further away than ever from becoming what Dr. King called “the Beloved Community” – one based in justice, equality, fairness, and human decency. The Beloved Community would not have witnessed the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, or Ahmaud Arbery. It would not have witnessed a violent and hate-filled attack on the Capitol, with rioters waving the battle flag of the confederacy. Nor would it have witnessed communities of color be disproportionately ravaged by COVID. The last year stands as a stark reminder that more than 50 years after Dr. King’s assassination, we have much work to do if we are to move closer to the world that he envisioned.

Dr. King was both optimistic about the possibility of change and realistic about the work that would be required. He reminded us, “human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable,” and that it requires “the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.” So as we head into this new year, I hope we too can combine Dr. King’s optimism with his realism and commitment to do the hard work of change.

Dean Perdue

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