



June 9, 2020

Dear Friends,

During my time here at the University of Richmond, I have rarely used my platform as dean to comment on events occurring outside the law school. But in the wake of the appalling murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, I believe that all of us connected with our legal system have an obligation to speak up. These murders are a stark reminder that racism is not an abstract concept; it is a reality with life and death consequences. The murders demonstrate why it is important to declare publicly that Black Lives Matter.

In the wake of these horrific murders, we are seeing a growing demand that we fulfill our national promise of equal justice. Justice is at the heart of our legal system. The Preamble to the Constitution declares that the Constitution's first two goals are "to form a more perfect union" and "to establish Justice." Justice is central to our enterprise as lawyers, and the events of the last several weeks have been a reminder of the unique obligation and opportunity that we as lawyers have to establish justice for all.

In a sermon delivered shortly before he was assassinated, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. declared, "If you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter." Justice. Peace. Righteousness. We have our work cut out for us.

Over the coming months we will be examining what concrete steps the law school can take to help to assure that we are part of the solution as we all recommit ourselves to the promise of equal justice for all.

In closing, I commend to you [a podcast](#) by Richmond Law alumnus and University of Richmond Trustee, Wendell Taylor, L'98. It offers an eloquent call to action for all of us.

Sincerely,

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Dean and Professor of Law

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