

June 1, 2020

Dear Fellow Members of the Capital University Law School Community:

Like many of you, I have watched in horror and sadness images of the events that are unfolding nationally and here in Columbus. The recent killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and too many other African Americans are heartbreaking. The image of police pepper spraying Congresswoman Joyce Beatty and other peaceful protestors only a year after the Law School honored Congresswoman Beatty for her efforts to promote civility in public discourse is disturbing. I pray for the victims of these acts of racial injustice and violence as well as their families.

These events illustrate that systemic racism is pervasive not only in our criminal justice system but many other institutions. Our African American classmates, colleagues, neighbors, and friends experience the dehumanization of this discrimination regularly as a result. I pray for them and all of the members of our community who suffer from the pain and trauma of racial injustice.

Capital University Law School is committed to the principle of equal justice under the law. As concerned citizens, we have a responsibility to acknowledge and hold institutions accountable when they fail to uphold this ideal. As lawyers and law students, we have a responsibility and a unique opportunity to better ensure that the system works fairly not only for those who work within the system but also for those upon whom the system works. We must work to condemn racism wherever we encounter it. We must commit ourselves to continuing the unending work of eradicating systemic racism in our institutions and striving to help us achieve the ideal of equality under the law.

Dean Braxton and Jasmine Marks, Associate Director Diversity and Inclusion, have compiled an extensive list of community resources. You can access it at the link below:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/16n7cgyj_jgGpi_rtBDjlhVZRIOw9ZG3drEmyE02ypbc/edit?usp=sharing

If you are experiencing pain or trauma or looking for constructive ways to advance systemic change, I encourage you to get in contact with Dean Braxton and Director Marks so that they can connect you to the resources you need or to reach out to any member of the faculty and staff. As always, faculty and staff remain committed to supporting students. Many of you may be struggling to process the images you have seen over the past days. Others of you may be looking for an opportunity to give voice to your experience. I encourage you to participate in community conversations facilitated by Dean Braxton and Director Marks on **June 3rd at 5pm and/or June 5th at Noon**. You can register for these meetings at the links below:

June 3: <https://capital.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcvdemuqTMuHdx7VZRMYiqEioNmwwwJowkZ>

June 5: <https://capital.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJrcuuvrzkiE9xh1TX4KCsnLo7v7FUVjlu>

Like many of my fellow Roman Catholic parishioners, I returned to mass yesterday for the first time since March to hear the words from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, extolling the diversity of humankind as a gift from God:

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit;
there are different forms of service but the same Lord;
there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.
To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

Paul's message is made more poignant when juxtaposed against the acts of divisiveness and violence taking place outside the church doors. Whether you derive your spiritual center from the teachings of Christ or elsewhere, I hope you will join me in endeavoring to realize Paul's universal message: We are derived from a common origin. Let us celebrate the gift of our diversity while recognizing our common humanity.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel M. Janutis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent initial 'R'.

Rachel M. Janutis
Dean and Professor of Law