



## **A Statement to the GGU Law Community**

June 1, 2020

I write today to express my solidarity with those who are grieving the tragic killing of George Floyd and offer my unreserved support for those working to bring an end to racial injustice and violence. This Spring has quickly turned from a period of illness and concern to a period of grieving and anger. Even amid the sickness, fear, and uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am heartbroken and outraged by the recent spate of race-based violence. I recognize the pain, fear, anger, and hopelessness that so many in this community are feeling. I hold each of you, your families, and loved ones in my heart during these tumultuous times.

As a community we express our solidarity in grief for the killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor. We recognize first that this is an insurmountable human tragedy for their families and friends. Also, we express our common pain and anger that these are not isolated incidents but recent examples of an epidemic of state violence against people and communities of color. And thus we express our full-hearted rejection of the systemic injustice that makes these atrocious acts possible and even inevitable.

The times require, as the mayor of St. Paul has said, “peace, but not patience.” It is especially incumbent upon us, as a legal community, to recognize that the law cannot remain a casual tool of injustice. It cannot equip and then turn a blind eye to police violence; it cannot shield racist action by the state through overbroad legal immunity; and it cannot structurally reinforce existing patterns of economic and racial inequality. We are seeing the result of the law at its worst in the damage to our communities—especially to African-American communities—and the recent violence in our cities.

But we reject the despair of the present moment as well. As a legal learning community we believe that law can be an active part of the solution to the linked problems of inequality, oppression, and violence. We believe, that by educating future leaders like each of you, we will build a more inclusive tomorrow.

This hope speaks to us at GGU Law directly. GGU was created more than a century ago based on the radical belief that legal institutions must be open to all and they are enriched when they

reflect the broad diversity of the communities they serve. Our founding was a promise, that tangible action can open the hallways of power to people previously excluded by their race, sex, religion, or the disfavor of the majority. Diversity and inclusion were not the by-words they are today, but in 1901 GGU opened to invite working-class people and women into the profession. Today, we proudly remain one of the most racially diverse law schools in the country and an institution with one of the highest proportions of first generation college graduates and law students. It is our priority and our privilege to enrich the profession and advance justice by whom we educate and—even more evidently—by the living legacy of our diverse alumni in courtrooms, legal service organizations, and law firms throughout this country.

In sorrow, but in solidarity with all who seek a more just America, we re-commit ourselves to this work.

*Our conversation and action in this area is just beginning. At Wednesday's Law Town Hall (details in Law School News) I will update you on projects for social and legal reform that members of our community are engaged in. I encourage you to check in on each other and stay connected; remember all student groups have Zoom accounts and Student Affairs can support your connection in other ways. I implore you to care for one another and stay safe; do not forget that these protests and actions are unfolding in the midst of an ongoing public health crisis.*

*For resources related to counseling or emotional support for students: <https://www.ggu.edu/experience/student-services/wellness-resources/> For anti-racist educational/informational resources: [bit.ly/antiracismresources](https://bit.ly/antiracismresources) For information on your rights at protests or actions: <https://www.aclu.org/know-yourrights/protesters-rights/>*



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