

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW

Dear MSU Law Students:

I am writing to check in on you. The past week and weekend have been particularly brutal: George Floyd's murder, the protests in Minnesota, Lansing, and around the country, the explicit use of white privilege against Christopher Cooper, and continued coverage of the Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor murders weigh heavily on my mind. Each week seems to bring new horrors. It is 2020 and we are witnessing what historians and scholars regard as the modern lynching and murder of Black people right on video! How is this our world? Added to the rage, frustration, angst, and sadness are the racial, health, and socio-economic disparities leading to the deaths of too many Black, Brown and Indigenous people from COVID-19. These disparate health outcomes are unacceptable.

I became a law professor to educate the next generation of leaders. As attorneys in training, you are developing a unique skill set to advocate for change: to dismantle the social abomination of racism (and sexism and homophobia). Lawyers are viewed as leaders in their communities and we occupy a unique space to call out racism and bigotry. More than that, we have the tools to change the laws and policies that continue to oppress too many in our society. And for those like me who benefit from white privilege, we can and must actively and aggressively work to dismantle the legal structures that oppress, demean, discriminate and, sometimes, even kill our Black, Brown and Indigenous colleagues.

My words are inadequate to truly express the profound frustration and sadness I feel; but I also feel remiss not to reach out to you and let you know you are all in my thoughts and that, like you, I am having a hard time processing the news. But I pledge to find renewed purpose to work with all of you and campus leaders to identify effective measures to make our law college community a place where we all feel safe, valued, and respected.

Be well.



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