



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA
SCHOOL OF LAW

Like many of you, over the last several days I've watched the disturbing and dispiriting events unfolding on our televisions. I've seen the Minneapolis community I grew to love during law school torn apart. I've felt fear, anger, confusion, and pain in our USD Law community too.

As a member of the USD Law community you are welcomed, you are respected, and you are loved. Wherever members of our community are, we ALL are. And wherever we Coyotes go, we are called to live in community with everyone we encounter. Living in community begins with offering human dignity—truly seeing and listening to others without fear or agenda, speaking with respect and love, and helping those in pain or need. Wherever you are USD Lawyers, build your communities from the foundation of demanding and offering human dignity to everyone. But recognize that you can and must do something more.

Whatever challenge we face in America, law will have something to say about it. Our present and our future is built by the decisions made in our courtrooms, our corporate boardrooms, and our committee rooms of local, state, and national government. Law, and lawyers, are in every one of those rooms. The choices made there can make our community a little bit better or a little bit worse. We have the obligation as lawyers to make our world better and to stand up to those who would make it worse.

Injustice and racism didn't begin with the taking of George Floyd's life. They were enshrined in our Constitution when it preserved slavery and declared black men and women to be only three-fifths human--the original sin of our legal genesis. But that same Constitution prescribed our path to redemption; calling us to "form a more perfect union...promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty..." The work of that redemption is painful, halting, and incomplete. But it is the work we are called to as lawyers, as citizens, as humans possessed of dignity and capable of preserving and honoring the dignity of all others.

We have work to do and tools as lawyers to do it. Let's go to work USD Lawyers.

[Written by Dean Neil Fulton]