



Dear Students:

I write to you as a lawyer, a scholar, an educator, and your Dean.

As your Dean, I know that all students seek the answer to the continuing question – how do we serve the interests of justice? This question has become razor-sharp in the current moment with case after case reporting targeted racial violence. We are bombarded with images and reports of grotesque tragedies. I wish I could cite for you the perfect statute and precise case law that would undo these harms and soothe our societal unrest. But it is much more complicated than that. What is clear in all these situations is that “indifference is not an option.” Impunity is not acceptable under the rule of law. In the words of Bishop Fabre, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism: “People of good conscience should never turn a blind eye when citizens are being deprived of their human dignity. Indifference is not an option.”

As lawyers and lawyers-in-training, our calling is to study the law and eradicate its unfairness where it exists. The strength of our collective voice emerges when we speak up about our expertise -- the law and its related procedure. I encourage all students to engage with me, our law faculty, and our University community in this critical imperative for dialogue and proposals for legal reform.

As thought leaders in legal education, STU LAW announces its Lecture Series and Symposia addressing the “We Can’t Breathe” Movement, co-sponsored by our Intercultural Human Rights Law Review and St. Thomas Law Review. These issues are national and international, and STU LAW is a vital contributor consistent with the Catholic intellectual tradition. Our law reviews will be sending out an official call for papers, including the opportunity for publication of student work.

The first in the lecture series will be held next week:

- STU’s Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure Law Faculty Expert Panel: Professors Garcia, Lawson, Silver, and Tibbs. (Tuesday, June 9th at 12:00 p.m. via Zoom)

The series of lectures, panels, and interviews will include the following topics:

- Human Rights and the “We Can’t Breathe Movement” (Ambassador Admed Amin Fathalla of Egypt, Chair of the United Nations Human Rights Committee, confirmed).
- Police Decision-Makers (police chiefs and police officer trainers).
- Federal Judges, A Discussion of the Nuts and Bolts of Section 1983 cases (magistrate and district court judges).

- The Lawyers in the Recent Cases (Lonita Baker, attorney for Breonna Taylor, has already confirmed; other lawyers are being gathered and invited).
- Charging Decisions, An Analysis from the Prosecutors and Federal Public Defenders.
- Victim's Rights.

Please join us in this important conversation. We need your voice.

Sincerely,

Tamara F. Lawson

Dean and Professor of Law

St. Thomas University School of Law