



TOURO COLLEGE
JACOB D. FUCHSBERG LAW CENTER

Where Knowledge and Values Meet

Timely messages from our leadership:

Dr. Alan Kadish

President, Touro College & University System

&

Elena B. Langan

Dean, Touro Law Center

To the Touro College and University System Community:

Be Part of the Solution.

The situation in America was already dire these last few months. The pandemic that has shattered lives and put a frightening number of Americans out of work had already taken more than 100,000 lives. But then we turned on the news and watched a man beg for breath; watched in horror as his life was casually taken.

The tragic death of George Floyd was not an isolated incident. Racism and disturbing police clashes are all too familiar throughout U.S. history and unfortunately, still continue in 2020. Touro stands in solidarity with our communities of color against all forms of discrimination, and with all those who experience marginalization and injustice as a result of institutionalized and systemic racism. There is no excuse for the blatant disregard for humanity that was shown to George Floyd. Acts of racism and violence contradict our nation's core commitment to social

justice and underscore the need for all of us to join together in addressing matters of institutionalized racism and injustice.

And now the fires rage. The elements for this perfect storm were all there. As vital as social distancing has been these last three months, people paid an inestimable price for the loss of human contact. Healthy human beings are, after all, social beings. As hard as the destruction of jobs and ravages of illness can be, together, we Americans have always proven resilient. By way of example, speak with any veteran of World War II and you'll more likely hear stories of camaraderie than of heroics. It wasn't randomly that psychologist Abraham Maslow included the essential requisites of love, support and belonging in his famous hierarchy of human needs. People need people.

But all relationships between human beings are doomed to fail when the requisite respect is removed from the equation.

A vital lesson from the current pandemic is how important a single individual can be. It only takes one to infect dozens...or to nurture many. Each individual's impact can be profound. The policeman should have considered this as a helpless man lay prone on the ground. The consequences of his callous lack of respect did not end with the tragic death of George Floyd. Just as respect begets respect, contempt begets contempt. We see that contempt erupting into flames with the destruction of property and the taking of additional innocent lives.

We have no control over the forces of nature, we can only control our responses. When a virus, flood, earthquake or hurricane arrives to disrupt our lives, we know what to do. The first responders and front-line healthcare workers that everyone has come to admire are heroic not because they face danger but rather because of the reasons they are willing to do so. People need people. The cultivation of respect and human dignity is the highest aspiration for which we can strive.

No one can breathe easily while watching the video of George Floyd or recalling his parting words. But the tragedy grows exponentially when catapulted as the basis for violent mobs to burn and loot—to vent frustrations on other innocent people. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. aptly pointed out, "Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars." Instead, as the tragic assassination of Medgar Evers helped inspire the important civil rights movement, we must allow George's tragic death to inspire greater compassion, not only in police business but in all matters.

At Touro, respect and compassion are values with which we imbue all of our programs. Working constantly for human rights and dignity is part of our proud tradition—indeed, I cannot imagine our schools without these essential human components, which stand at the core of our mission. In a world that clearly needs healing, may our individual and collective efforts continue to be part of the solution.

Touro students and faculty, let us be the people others turn to in this time of crisis and need. Let us model tolerance, justice and compassion. Let us reach out to our friends, neighbors and communities with messages of peace and understanding for all.

Dr. Alan Kadish
President, Touro College & University System

A Message from Touro Law Dean, Elena B. Langan:

Dear Members of the Touro Law Community,

I join President Kadish in denouncing the senseless killing of George Floyd. As a country built on a system of justice that is founded on the rule of law, we rely on impartial processes to ensure that justice is served. We cannot tolerate selective protection of rights that are constitutionally afforded to all, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. As Martin Luther King, Jr. stated, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." The Law Center supports the call for justice everywhere and stands behind BLSA, LALSA, and all students, faculty, and staff who value and seek social justice for all. We support their calls for action and the end to violence against members of our communities, but when the actions of a few seek to disrupt and discredit the voices of the many who gather in peaceful protest, those actions must also be condemned.

All members of our law school community are entitled to live safely and without fear that they or their relatives or friends may become the victims of racial targeting. It is apparent that much work still needs to be done throughout our nation to eradicate the forces of racism that prevent justice for all to be a reality. Together with Dr. Kadish, I encourage us to become part of the solution and model tolerance, justice, and compassion, while we assure our colleagues that all are a welcome part of our community and we share in their grief, sadness, and anger over ongoing events. Through our diversity we enjoy a vibrant, inclusive, and respectful educational experience and workplace for all. The diversity that racism abhors is the diversity that the Law Center embraces.

Stay well and be safe,

Elena B. Langan
Dean and Professor of Law