

An Open Letter to UK Rosenberg College of Law Students: Past, Present & Future

Your law professors see your hurt, your pain and your fear. We have also witnessed your anger and frustration confronting the systemic social injustice fostered by unjust laws, policies, and politicians. But this is a golden moment; a moment when the whole world is watching. We know that you aspire to be the embodiment of what is right in this country. You still believe in the “possibilities born from hope.” You still want to change the world, and hopefully, you are asking yourselves how can I help my community, my country, our legal system? How can I live my life utilizing my legal skills to unify this nation? What can I do to make this country “more perfect?” The answer is to give back.

We support you. We are proud of you, and we applaud the peaceful multi-racial protests occurring in our community and across this country against institutionalized racism, abusive police power and pervasive inequality. It is a tipping point for America; a moment in time where real change is possible.

As legal educators, we seek to prepare lawyers who have the courage and skill to seek a more just world; to make a difference in the lives of their fellow human beings.

You --- current and former law students--- know that the law can be a powerful tool for change. You know how to stand up and say “I object;” to say “Black lives matter;” to say “injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere.” Your voices and those of future law students will be heard in courtrooms and boardrooms and community halls across this country. All of you make us proud when you stand up to bullies and object for what you believe in, even if your beliefs differ from those around you; that is the very definition of courage.

Out of protest comes change. Out of protest can come unity. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall faced racial discrimination and segregation his entire life, but he acted. As counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Marshall acted as an advocate in the courts for equal justice for African Americans. After the acquittal in the shooting death of African-American teen Trayvon Martin, three black women acted by co-founding **#BlackLivesMatter** on social media that has become a world-wide movement.

Now it is your time to act. Your generation is called to take a stand for principles larger than yourself. You can breathe new life into the ideal of equal justice for all by working to make it real for all people. Vote. Run for office. Turn your dreams and hopes into real policies. It is now up to you to help unite our country; “to be the change you want to see in the world.” You can overcome your hurt, your pain, and your fear. Turn your anger and frustration into action and do it from the moral high ground of justice, love and compassion for your fellow human beings.

Professor Allison Connelly, Interim Dean Mary Davis, Professors Emeriti Carolyn Bratt, Robert G. Lawson, and Alvin Goldman; Professors Josh Douglas, Charlie Amiot, Jennifer Bird- Pollan, Blanche Bong Cook, Cortney Lollar, Zachary Bray, Tina Brooks, Chris Bradley, Melynda Price, Melissa Henke, Kathryn Moore, Beau Steenken, Kristin Hazelwood, Chris Frost, Michael Healy, Scott Bauries and Brian Frye.