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SCHOOL OF LAW

Every one of us must share outrage at the killing of George Floyd. This is not an isolated incident. This comes on the heels of similar killings, of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade and so many others. We know more about these names because smart phones captured the truth. But this is a tradition of evil that goes back through lynchings, through slavery, for 400 years.

As lawyers and lawyers-to-be, we are responsible for the law. By choosing this profession we pledge our belief in the rule of law as a means of bringing safety and fairness to society. But our system of laws has failed, again and again. And we know the reason: it is a system built around the elevation and protection of whiteness. That element of our system is perpetuated by acts of violence against people of color.

Every person associated with this law school, and associated with our profession, owes a solemn duty to dismantle this system of injustice and oppression. We find it in many places. Throughout our criminal justice system and our prison system. Also, in housing policy, health care, and education. We see it in the disparate impact of Covid 19 on the loss of both life and livelihood. And in the treatment people of color get when walking down the street, or even in the classroom.

Those of us who have not been targeted by police or others by our skin color must examine that fact. We must engage in the hard conversations about race and privilege. We must look at injustices committed against racial and ethnic minorities, women, LGBTQ+, disabled, and other marginalized communities. We must identify the parts of that system that allow continued acts of violence and discrimination to go uncorrected. We must dedicate ourselves to using the power and privilege of our careers to bring about change, and working toward making America a just country.

Yours, Tim Fisher

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