

Detroit's Leading Law Firms Speak Out Against Racial Injustice

June 9, 2020

Trauma. Grief. Anger.

The appalling deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, among many others, have conjured up all of these emotions, once again. Their deaths, along with police brutality and unequal access to opportunity suffered by many African American people and other people of color, must be a catalyst for change in our communities.

As leaders of metropolitan Detroit's largest law firms, we are strongly committed to doing our part to encourage and ensure equal voice, opportunity and legal representation for African American people and other people of color. Taking this stand, together, means valuing and insisting on diversity, inclusion and racial equity at our firms and in our communities.

Bias and racial injustice not only exist, but also permeate every level of our society. Members of the African American community, as well as other people of color, have been oppressed since this country's earliest days, and it must end. Regardless of background, we must all examine how to best utilize our talents, networks and resources to combat the institutionalized racism that plagues us as a society.

We must learn, reflect and reset. We must do better and we will.

As legal community leaders, we are committed to the following:

- Continue to advocate for equality, equity and justice for all and institute additional policies and practices at our firms to further those goals.
- Create regular and supportive forums for our attorneys and staff to have open and constructive dialogues about structural racism and racial justice.
- Re-double our efforts to increase the diversity and representation of African American people and other people of color within our partnership ranks and leadership teams.
- Continue to partner with organizations focused on racial justice by providing pro bono services, personnel resources and funding support.

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- Dedicate pro bono legal support and other resources for African American people and other minority entrepreneurs and small business owners.
- Advocate for appropriate policing reforms that include unconscious bias, de-escalation and other progressive training techniques, improved diversity in law enforcement hiring and promotion decisions and legislation that mandates zero-tolerance for police officers who injure or kill unarmed, non-violent, and non-resisting individuals.

We will begin immediately collaborating to implement these critical action items. We also commit to providing external annual updates on these initiatives. We invite all law firms to join us in these efforts.

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