



Washington Women Lawyers

June 5, 2019

We watched in horror as George Floyd was killed, begging for help and his mother. But the racism that enables this gross abuse of power is not new. For too long, silence has enabled repeated killings and assaults in Black communities. The list of Black names in the social lexicon is heartbreakingly long, and there are countless more that never trended on social media.

The Washington Women Lawyers stand with and for our communities of color, especially the Black community today, to unequivocally denounce the systemic legal injustices that allowed George Floyd to be killed by police officers who many believe will likely escape justice; for Ahmaud Arbery to be hunted and his killers to walk free for weeks; for Breonna Taylor to be senselessly killed while sleeping in her own home; for Christian Cooper to be threatened with the police by a white woman weaponizing her privilege; for Manuel Ellis to become yet another Black man crying out, “I can’t breathe” before he died in police custody. Because Black lives do matter, because Black names shouldn’t be the next trending hashtag, because Black parents shouldn’t worry about their children leaving their homes, and because the Black community shouldn’t stand alone.

As lawyers, we are uniquely placed to recognize and fight against the systemic injustices that have taken the lives of so many people of color. Through communication, advocacy, and action, the WWL recognizes that it can and must call out and fight the shameful legacy of oppression that slavery and racism continues to have on the legal system. The WWL exists to advocate for the full integration of women into the legal profession, and to promote equal rights and opportunities for all women. So long as our Black members are made to confront racism in the communities, organizations, and institutions in which they live and work, and to feel unsafe and unheard while pursuing their lives and vocations, our goal is not met.

Now is the time to truly listen, to be vulnerable, to sit uncomfortably in painful truths, and to be an ally for change.

Black lives matter.

George Floyd.

Breonna Taylor.

Ahmaud Arbery.

Manuel Ellis.

Say their names.

The WWL is committed to doing more than issue a statement. We encourage members of the legal community to consider taking the following steps:

- Donate to or volunteer with an organization that helps fight systemic racism and making a difference in our communities, including:



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- [The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund](#): Through litigation, advocacy, and public education, the LDF seeks structural changes to expand democracy, eliminate disparities, and achieve racial justice in a society that fulfills the promise of equality for all Americans.
- [Campaign Zero](#): A data-informed platform that presents comprehensive solutions to end police violence in America. Campaign Zero's 8 Can't Wait initiative has identified eight policies to curtail police violence.
- [The ACLU of Washington](#): The Racial Justice Program, in particular, "brings impact lawsuits in state and federal courts throughout the country, taking on cases designed to have a significant and wide-reaching effect on communities of color."
- [Community Passageways](#): A Seattle-based nonprofit with a felony diversion and prevention program. They aim to prevent the youth from going down the wrong path, keep them out of prison, support those who are already in prison, and ensure a smooth and successful integration from prison to the community.
- [Register to vote](#): As part of the 100 year celebration of the 19th Amendment, the WWL recognizes that equal access and the right to vote has been denied to communities of color, and the struggle has continued for many decades following 1920 to ensure all women have the legal right to vote. Register to vote and ensure that your vote counts.
- [Make your voices heard](#) by contacting your federal, state, and local representatives.
- Join Community Passageways' "We Want to Live" march on Sunday, June 7, at 2:00 p.m. at Othello Park in Seattle.
- Educate yourself about the privileges and systemic barriers that pervade our society, such as through one of the following books, while supporting bookstores owned by people of color, such as L.E.M.S Bookstore in Seattle or those found [here](#):
  - *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo
  - *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander
  - *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram X. Kendi
  - *On the Other Side of Freedom: The Case for Hope* by DeRay Mckesson
  - *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo
- Keep the conversation going and join us in developing additional action items so this moment does not stop with a statement.

### **Chrystina Solum**

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