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Cardozo's Response to Derek Chauvin Conviction

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Cardozo's Response to Derek Chauvin Conviction



Yesterday, former police officer Derek Chauvin was convicted of murdering George Floyd last summer. While this verdict brings closure to this particular case and offers necessary accountability for Mr. Floyd's senseless death, that verdict alone cannot deliver justice. In a just world, Mr. Floyd would still be alive. In a just world, Ma'Khia Bryant would not have been shot and killed yesterday.

This verdict points to the vital role the criminal justice system must play in holding our democracy together. No one guilty verdict can undo or put an end to the collective trauma and violence of decades of systemic racism. But it can—and hopefully will—be an important and galvanizing step toward dismantling structural racism in the criminal justice system and in our laws and our society at large. As lawyers and future lawyers, we have a critical, indeed, essential role to play. In the coming weeks, I will be announcing a series of measures, including curricular reforms, aimed at enabling all of us to better meet this moment.

I know how exhausting and draining it has been for so many members of our community, especially students, to live through this trial. All of us—your faculty; Dean Jenn Kim; our tremendous professionals in the Office of Student Services; our Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Bobby Codjoe; and myself—are here for you.

Melanie Leslie
Dean and Dr. Samuel Belkin Professor of Law