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### Cardozo Law and Yeshiva University Stand United in Combating Racism

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## **Cardozo Law and Yeshiva University Stand United in Combating Racism**

Last week's tragic death of George Floyd has forced us all to confront the realities of hate, discrimination, and racial violence as real and present dangers.

Yeshiva University and Cardozo School of Law offer our deepest condolences to the family of George Floyd and our unwavering support to the African American community. We stand with the victims of social injustice and with the families of all those who have been senselessly killed.

“The murder of George Floyd is a tragic reminder that the sacred American commitment to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is maddeningly out of reach for our fellow citizens of color. Let us mourn the injustices enabled by racism across our nation while we commit ourselves to the righteous struggle for social justice, grounded in an abiding respect for difference and a humbling recognition that this effort remains as yet unattainable for all Americans.”

—Dr. Selma Botman, Provost, YU

“Our community has been shaken by the racist killings of George Floyd in Minnesota, Breonna Taylor in Kentucky and so many others. We mourn these needless deaths and condemn police brutality. We recognize the pain, fear and trauma that people of color in our community, especially our black students, faculty members and staff, are experiencing. We are with you. I call on the Cardozo community to stand as one to condemn racism and reaffirm our commitment to the paramount value of equality under the law for all.”

- Melanie Leslie, Dean and Dr. Samuel Belkin Professor of Law, Cardozo School of Law

“As a nation, too many of our brothers and sisters have reached the horrific and inescapable moment where they simply can bear no more. No more harassment, no more fear, no more anxiety, no more degradation, no more suspicion, no more murder. This is the time when every citizen must say, we too have had enough. We too must hold Dr. King's vision of a unified nation in which the color of one's skin does not determine the outcome of one's life. We are all tasked with changing the face of our nation and the fate of our citizens.”

—Dr. Danielle Wozniak, Vice Provost and the Dorothy and David I. Schachne Dean of the Wurzweiler School of Social Work

## **From YU President Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman:**

Dear Students, Colleagues and Friends,

Today should have been the 27th birthday of Breonna Taylor, who was killed by police officers in Louisville on March 13. Yeshiva University stands united as we condemn her murder, alongside those of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and so many other victims of racial violence. We mourn their deaths and offer our sincere and heartfelt condolences to their loved ones. Racial violence by any member of society is horrific. It is especially horrific when those perpetuating it are the very same people who took an oath to serve and protect our communities.

We have all watched in horror and been shaken by these brutal deaths. Our hearts are heavy with sorrow and we understand the anger and fear being felt across the country, especially by Black Americans at this time. We join in the national outcry for justice and reforms that seek to prevent these tragic violent acts from continuing to occur.

The Rabbis of Antiquity taught that the most fundamental idea in all of Jewish thought is to be found in the Biblical verse, “in the divine image did God create humankind” (Genesis 5:1). For this verse introduced to human civilization the radical notion of the infinite worth of each individual as each and every human being shares a common sacredness.

Our university is built on this idea and is infused with the mission that we are called upon to heal the world. In our classrooms, in our scholarship, and in all areas of our community life we must oppose racial oppression and work towards a society of racial equity.

Elie Wiesel said, “Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe.”

The University is working on a number of upcoming programs that will provide opportunities for members of our community to build new avenues to advance racial justice. And we call on all members of our YU community—from our high schools, to our undergraduate and graduate populations, to our alumni and friends across the world—to use this time as an opportunity to think deeply about the tragic recent events and consider how we are to respond moving forward.

Yeshiva University’s mission and history demand we make a comprehensive and deep commitment to the betterment of all humanity. We dedicate ourselves to

advancing critical thinking, community discussion, intellectual capacity and to improving the world through vigilant activism for the good of all people.

Let us redeem this moment by turning it into a force for good.

Warmest wishes for a Shabbat of solidarity and peace.

Ari Berman