



June 5, 2020

It is time the police stop killing Black people. George Floyd is the most recent name in a growing and shamefully long list of African Americans killed by law enforcement. His death was unacceptable and preventable. State-sanctioned violence on Black bodies enabled by white silence must end now.

And let us be honest. The deaths of African Americans at the hands of those meant to protect and serve are only the most tangible, violent manifestations of a much more entrenched system of racist policies. Policies that threaten Black lives and their ability to thrive in our country.

It should not have to take the recent, senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery to incite people to abolish our centuries-old system of white privilege and white supremacy. But it is my hope that the outrage many of us are feeling and the unity expressed through the protests erupting nation-wide is just the beginning of a wave of social justice reform.

From protest must come organization and demands to dismantle the racist policies that perpetuate racial injustice. In Lawrence, we must do this at the local level through our city and county governments. We must continue that fight at the state and national level as well. We must elevate Black voices into positions of leadership where their firsthand knowledge and experience of anti-Blackness can fight racist policies from positions of power.

We are in the midst of multiple crises. The current destabilization of our world presents the perfect opportunity for us to be bold and creative about how we rebuild. It is our opportunity to institutionalize antiracist policies that create a more inclusive, equitable, and fair world.

I encourage you to use the library to read and learn. Become educated about how racist policies have perpetuated the racial inequities that exist in America. It's hard to know where to start, so our librarians have curated all-ages lists that focus specifically on antiracism and our path to creating a fair and just world for all. LPL staff continues to learn more and help our community internalize this education.

Our library's mission statement is simple: *Imagine more*. And right now I implore you to imagine *more* for Black lives in our community, in our country, and around the world. Imagine equity. Imagine inclusion. Imagine liberty and justice *for all*.

Our library pledges to be an antiracist institution. We are aware of the impact of the whiteness of our institution. We commit to hiring a more diverse staff, especially in our ranks of leadership. We commit to forming a task force to examine the policies and practices within our organizational structure, and we commit to being transparent about our process of being an antiracist institution.

Black Lives Matter is more than a slogan or a hashtag — it is a simple truth. And it is damn well time we do everything we can to make that a known and foregone conclusion.

In solidarity,

Brad Allen, Library Director