

At The Heart Of Healing – A Message To Our Barnes & Thornburg Friends, Clients And Family

June 5, 2020 | [Southeast Michigan](#) | [Atlanta](#) | [Chicago](#) | [Columbus](#) | [Dallas](#) | [Delaware](#) | [Elkhart](#) | [Fort Wayne](#) | [Grand Rapids](#) | [Indianapolis](#) | [Los Angeles](#) | [Minneapolis](#) | [New York](#) | [Raleigh](#) | [Salt Lake City](#) | [San Diego](#) | [South Bend](#) | [Washington, D.C.](#)

Our country has been hurting and reacting since the death of George Floyd at the hands of police, which was followed by acts of protest and anger in Minneapolis and across the country. We continue to reflect on the death of Mr. Floyd and our need to remember all those who face injustice: to understand how it occurs and what can be done to prevent it. The family of Mr. Floyd are in our thoughts and prayers.

None of us can escape the impact of this event, and others in recent months, and what it means in our lives. Though why we are affected may vary given our different backgrounds, we all share one feeling in common: pain. So many growing up African American in this country have experienced racial discrimination that has caused anger, numbness or more.

If you have not suffered the hurt of racial discrimination, what happened in Minneapolis may have shocked and saddened you, and sparked a well-founded desire for change.

We at Barnes & Thornburg wholly denounce racism in any form and seek to play a part, in whatever way we can, to address the burdens the events in Minneapolis have brought and the larger social forces that led to them. We are here to listen to all ideas on how we, as the Barnes & Thornburg family, can assist in healing, whether locally or on a larger stage. Bottom line, we are here for you.

Action For Racial Justice

The firm will strive for collaboration, humility, inclusion and transparency. But talk is cheap, and our focus is on meaningful action. We are not standing idly by. The issue of racial and social justice is too important. The Barnes & Thornburg team is vocal, caring, creative and passionate. Here's just a glimpse of how we have activated our commitment to date:

- We established a nonprofit foundation to combat racism and social injustice with \$75,000 in personal commitments from firm leadership. Its focus and operating protocols will be announced soon.
- We have formed a committee to combat racism and social injustice, which is already working to identify internal reforms to further develop and promote our Black talent and ensure people of color are present at the decision-making table. This committee will also identify the most significant actions we can take on our own and with others to combat racism and promote social justice in our communities and nationally.

- We have used our internal communications channels across our 19 offices to generate broad support for action, and to promote understanding of the Black experience, empathy and mindful discussions about race. These have included town halls, small-group discussions, webinars, e-newsletters such as The Download that focuses on our team's diversity and inclusion initiatives, and a new ["Diversity Matters" podcast](#).
- To support our Black talent specifically during the current events, we have broadened and diversified our mentoring, coaching and mental health support of our Black talent, and have engaged speakers and other professionals to promote education and wellness.
- We are joining forces with clients, bar associations and other law firms to provide more effective pro bono legal services that target systemic racism, including but not limited to, becoming a signatory to the [Law Firm Antiracism Alliance \(LFAA\)](#), a coalition of law firms working collaboratively to address systemic racism by dedicating substantial pro bono resources to initiatives that address systemic racism and acknowledge their ongoing responsibility to increase diversity, equitable access to opportunities and inclusion of people of color within their ranks.

This moment presents an opportunity for all of us to declare who we are and what we stand for. It presents an opportunity for education, reflection and action.

We are proud of the work we do together and the spirit in which we conduct that work. Please stay safe, stay proud, and stay involved.

"Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced."

- James Baldwin
