



STENTORIANS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

June 19, 2020

Today is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. It was on this day in 1865 that the Union soldiers, landed in Galveston, Texas with the news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free. However, that was two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation which stated, "...the Executive Government of the United States...will recognize and maintain the freedom...and will do no act or acts to repress such persons...in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom." Today, the world takes notice at the continued injustices that are being broadcasted live and in living color, it is important that we continue to unite as a global community and demand change that is long overdue. That call to change may include signing petitions, protesting, or having tough conversations within our circles. Whichever you may choose, we are in it together. In honor of the generations before us, it is crucial that we continue the fight for equity. It is our duty for us to stand up today, for the generations of tomorrow, and those not yet abused by time that have an unjaded view of this world.

The reality is that African-Americans are being killed at a higher rate than any other race in America, in view of the world. The reality is that systemic racism has had a cumulative and compounding effect of an array of societal factors including the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institutions and policies. The reality is that not one event led us to where we are today, it is a manifestation of years, decades, and generations of having to be seen as second-class citizens. We can either confront it and use this time as an inflection point in the arc of our nation's history, or we can become complicit and not face the fact that racism is a disease in this country that still exists.

As an organization we stand behind the notion that Black Lives Matter. If our country cannot address what has not yet been acknowledged, and that is the inequities of African-Americans, then the systemic barrier cannot and will not be removed. We stand on the side of right vs wrong, the side of the non-racist vs racist, and the side of good vs evil. Unity and love will defeat hate. Let's all continue to keep pushing and keep the fire burning for justice!

Respectfully,

Johnny Gray III

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