



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

UHD President, Loren J. Blanchard

Dear UHD Community,

Many across the nation have been closely watching the legal proceedings surrounding the death of longtime Houstonian George Floyd. Yesterday, a jury found one of the Minneapolis police officers involved in Mr. Floyd's death guilty of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter.



It has been less than a year that our nation was turned upside down by this loss of life. Now, a chapter has closed in George Floyd's death, but this story is far from over.

Many are still haunted by the images of an officer kneeling on Floyd, and the words "I can't breathe" have become a cry for justice not only in Minneapolis but anywhere that individuals of color are targeted and victimized.

It has been a long journey to reach this verdict, and others will be prosecuted for their roles in this tragic event. While the jury's decision yesterday cannot truly erase the memory of this abhorrent moment in history, it does mark progress in the Floyd family's quest for justice.

Sadly, this is just one incident among so many that have affected us deeply. Floyd's name will be mentioned alongside Sandra Bland's, Breonna Taylor's, Daunte Wright's, Philando Castile's and so many others whose deaths could have been prevented.

As the region's most diverse university, we will continue to denounce acts of injustice and proactively apply our intellectual, scholarly and cultural capital to facilitating anti-racist change in our community. We also remain committed to supporting social justice and respecting the dignity and worth of people no matter their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin or any other defining characteristics or traits.

The efforts of UHD's Center for Critical Race Studies and Center for Diversity & Inclusion are part of the University's response to the violence and racial strife that are pervasive within our nation. These centers will moderate campus conversations on the outcome of this historic trial and develop a strategy on where we go from here. **The first of these conversations will be conducted tomorrow, April 22 at 6 p.m.**

This verdict will never erase what happened on that summer afternoon in Minneapolis, but we as a University ... and as a people ... must look ahead and focus our energies on creating a brighter tomorrow while always honoring the memory of George Floyd and so many others.

Sincerely,

Loren J. Blanchard, Ph.D.
President, University of Houston-Downtown