



NEW ORLEANS -- The recent and senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, along with other countless African-American men and women, have sparked a movement around the country that we, as Americans, cannot once again tolerate. We cannot accept the systemic racism that plagues this country and that has plagued this country since its founding. For far too long blackness has been weaponized against black Americans. From Amy Cooper in Central Park to the murder of George Floyd, we have seen the consequences of that weaponization which has gone unrecognized and unanswered.

For the second time, this country has heard the words “I can’t breathe” on a national scale. This time, however, those words have sparked a revolution for change – change that is long overdue. In order to be heard, many fellow Americans, as well as others across the globe, have exercised their fundamental right to peacefully protest and speak out against the injustices that directly and continuously affect the African-American community. While many, including certain federal leaders, try to divide us, our community is standing up for justice and speaking out against police brutality. Together we are stronger.

As we reflect on the past few weeks, we must not only examine our role in the fight for justice and equality, but we must also get to work. The Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society (“Martinet”) is committed to offering support and resources from pro bono legal assistance, to offering training on voter suppression and election protection, and to organizing community forums with elected officials.

Two of the founding principles of Martinet is to encourage the interchange of ideas and promote the administration of justice. With these ideals in mind, we want to encourage our members and the entire community to have those difficult and uncomfortable conversations with others, for we cannot change what others do not understand. We also want to encourage our members to act, whether that is continued discourse on these issues, or donation of time and money to various causes designed to combat systemic racism.

Lastly, to continue the groundwork for change that we all desire, everyone must get out and vote! Voting is the backbone to effecting change. Not only must we elect leaders that will continue the fight against inequalities, we must also groom future leaders committed to enact real change to criminal justice and police reform, and fight for a more equitable future.

Martinet sends our condolences to the Floyd, Taylor, and Arbery families and stands with them in solidarity. There is nothing that can be said to resurrect Mr. Floyd, Ms. Taylor, and Mr. Arbery from the dead. However, what we can do is honor them by remembering their names, remembering their sacrifice, and remembering to act.

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## **ABOUT THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS MARTINET LEGAL SOCIETY**

The objective of the Louis A. Martinet Society is to encourage the interchange of ideas, promote legal scholarship, advance the science of jurisprudence, promote the administration of justice, uphold the order and ethics of the courts and the profession of law, and promote the welfare of the legal profession in Louisiana. The Louis A. Martinet Society was founded in 1957 by—Earl J. Amedee; Israel M. Augustine; Louis Berry; Lionel Collins; Robert F. Collins; Niles R. Douglas; Norman C. Francis; Benjamin J. Johnson; Alvin Jones; Vanue B. LaCour; Ernest N. Morial; Justice Revius Ortique, Jr.; J. T. Powell; James Smith; A. P. Tureaud; Freddie Warren and Lawrence Wheeler. These African-American lawyers, committed themselves, just as Martinet Society members do today, to combating racial injustices and inequalities in and outside of Louisiana's courtrooms. The Martinet Society has chapters throughout the state of Louisiana.