

LEGACY OF THE GU₂₇₂ ALLIANCE

April 5, 2018

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SOCIETY OF JESUS and GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

We, the undersigned academic, social justice, professional, faith and community organizations and individuals, were pleased to learn that in April 2017 The Society of Jesus and Georgetown apologized for the sale of 272 enslaved Africans in 1838 to benefit Georgetown University. It is our understanding that Georgetown issued a report in the summer of 2016, identifying some projects it was considering to make amends for the use of the funds from the sale of Africans enslaved by the Jesuits to help Georgetown become the financially and academically strong university it is today.

We urge The Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) and Georgetown to finalize and implement a process for amends with the descendants of the 272 people who were sold (GU₂₇₂). Georgetown University avoided bankruptcy after receiving the funds from the sale of the GU₂₇₂, enabling it to become a robust university. The benefit received by the Jesuits and Georgetown University was to the decided detriment of those men, women and children who were sold. The sale tore them from the land that, although enslaved, they had called home. They were sent on a cruel and dangerous journey from Maryland to Louisiana during which a number of them became ill and some died. The Jesuits, with callous disregard for the well-being of the GU₂₇₂, sold them to the state that was known as one of the cruelest places for enslaved Africans in the country. Many of their descendants remain in Louisiana, some living in poverty and are in various states of ill-health. Many others currently live throughout the United States. Most, upon learning in 2015 and 2016 of the fate of their ancestors experienced wrenching sadness and anger and are reaching out to Georgetown and the Jesuits to “do the right thing.”

It is critical that the Jesuits and Georgetown University make amends for their conduct by developing, with the descendants, a reparatory justice package. Their conduct through today violates universal spiritual principles as well as the conditions of sale. This will honor the lives of those sold, and provide the descendants of the GU₂₇₂ with forms of reparatory justice that have multi-generational significance.

You have an historic opportunity to demonstrate how engagement with the descendants of those who have been injured can lead to true racial healing – a healing that takes place among equals – rather than racial subordination that led to the enslavement of the GU₂₇₂ and other African peoples.

We look forward to learning of the positive steps you take with the descendants as it is absolutely necessary to respectfully and sincerely close this sordid chapter in your history.

Legacy of the GU272 Alliance Legal Team

Carlton Waterhouse, J.D., Ph.D., Lead Counsel

Adjoa A. Aiyetoro, J.D.

Adrienne Davis, J.D.

Justin Hansford, J.D.

Kevin Judd, J.D.

Nkechi Taifa, J.D.

Robert Westley, J.D.

Enola Aird, J.D.

Community Healing Network, Inc.

Ana Lucia Araujo, Ph.D.

Howard University

International Scientific Committee of the Slave Route Project of UNESCO

Barbara Arnwine, J.D., President and Founder

Transformative Justice Coalition

Monifa Bandele

Denise Rolark Barnes

Publisher, Washington Informer

John C. Brittain, J.D.

Former President, National Lawyers Guild

Professor, University of the District of Columbia

David Clarke College of Law

Iva Carruthers, General Secretary

Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference

Benjamin Chavis, Ph.D.

President, National Newspaper Association (NNPA)

Deyna Chisolm

Georgia State University Student

Tuneen Chisolm, J.D.

Assistant Professor of Law

Campbell University School of Law

Thomas Craemer, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
University of Connecticut

Barry Crumbley
Intact Community Development Corporation

Ron Daniels, Ph.D., President
Institute of the Black World 21st Century

Jonathan Davis, Board Member
National Conference of Black Lawyers

Leonard Dunston, M.S.W.
Black Family Summit

National Lawyers Guild

National Lawyers Guild DC Chapter

Jill Soffiyah Elijah, J.D.

Annette Ensley, Lifetime Member
National Conference of Black Lawyers

Gary Grant

Ronald Hampton
Blacks in Law Enforcement in America

Kenniss Ondelia Henry
NCOBRA Legislative Commissioner

Kamm Howard, Co-Chair
Mashariki Jywanza, Co-Chair
National Coalition of Blacks for
Reparations in America (NCOBRA)

Ron Isaac, Board Member
National Conference of Black Lawyers

Huberta Jackson-Lowman, Ph.D., President
National Association of Black Psychologists

Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, President
Rainbow Push Coalition

Timothy L. Jenkins, J.D., Life Member
Association for the Study of African American Life & History

Law 4 Black Lives, DC

Michigan Chapter, National Conference of Black Lawyers

DeWayne R. Boyd, Esquire
Zanita M. Clipper, Esquire
Jeffrey L. Edison, Esquire
Gerald K. Evelyn, Esquire
Desiree Ferguson, Esquire
Sherrie Guess, Esquire
Regina D. Jemison, Esquire
Linda Johnson, Esquire
Aaron P. Ogletree, Esquire
Walter C. Pookrum, Esquire
Brandy Robinson, Esquire
Sarida Scott, Esquire
Maya Watson, Esquire
Barbara Wynder, Esquire

Cheik Ahmadou Ban Mbacke
Afrikan Jegna Collective

Joseph Muhammad, Past President
International Association of Black
Professional Fire Fighters

Samuel Okpaku, M.D., Ph.D., President
Patricia Newton, M.D., MPH, MA, CEO & Medical Director
Black Psychiatrists of America

Toni Oliver, M.S.W., President
National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW)

Eva Paterson, J.D., President
Equal Justice Society

Annelle Primm, M.D., MPH
All Healers Mental Health Alliance

Divine Pryor, Executive Director
Center for Nuleadership on Urban Solutions

Natsu Taylor Saito, J.D.

Professor of Law

Ajamu Sankofa, Member
NY Chapter, National Conference of Black Lawyers

Hilary O. Shelton
Director, NAACP Washington Bureau
Senior Vice President for Policy and Advocacy

Juan Thomas, J.D., President
National Bar Association

Mark Thompson
SiriusXM

Shirley Traylor, J.D., President
National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL)

Raymond Winbush, Ph.D., Director
Institute for Urban Research
Morgan State University

Kunihiko Yoshida
Professor of Law
Hokkaido University
Japan