June 3, 2020

It is with great disappointment that we make this statement regarding the continuous mistreatment of Black people by the police. We are outraged after seeing the murders of unarmed, innocent Black men and women including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Sean Reed. These police officers took the lives of the very people they were pledged to protect under a corrupt system in which being Black is often a crime.

Our country has been built on a system in which the fears and biases of an individual can result in tragic consequences; where the color of an individual's skin is seen as a reason to be threatened, where the voices of minorities have been silenced for generations and masked by the voices of those in power, where citizens have been fooled into believing there is no longer a problem with bigotry.

The sole purpose of creating the *Diversity Series* is to tell the stories of people whose experiences are unheard and misunderstood. We, the committee, are dedicated to telling the stories of all people including good and bad chapters. We cannot ignore the recent displays of injustice in our country and seek to aid in healing through art. Through our work, we seek to provide a safe, thoughtful, diverse organization where all of God's people are welcomed and represented.

 We lift in prayer those who have been directly affected by systemic racism and police brutality. We pray for those who lack understanding of their own biases. We pray for our country at large during this time, understanding that this is an ongoing issue of pain across generations. The time for change is now. We must come together across nationalities, ethnicities, genders, and generations to speak out against the continuous mistreatment of people of color. We cannot back down until there is justice for all people and a system in which we are all treated fairly.

With heavy heart,

The Samford School of the Arts Diversity Series Committee

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