



HOLWELL SHUSTER & GOLDBERG ON THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM

06.16.2020

The killing of George Floyd, and prior and subsequent acts of violence against Black Americans, are a stark and painful reminder that systemic racism is all too alive in America. Our hearts ache for those, at HSG and elsewhere, who have experienced firsthand the injustices and fears that Black Americans and other people of color live with every day in this country. We, like so many millions of others, deplore these abuses.

We formed HSG around a handful of core principles, one of which was to create a firm that is truly diverse and inclusive and to do our part to advance social justice. We have tried to remain true to these principles every day of our eight-plus years of existence. But we know we need to do more. While we have a long way to go to understand the pain of Black Americans and to try to find the most impactful way to help effect change, we want to take concrete steps now to underscore our commitment and to try to make a small contribution to the ongoing and, we hope, lasting effort to combat race-based violence and discrimination. We have arrived at these measures via a collaborative process and frank discussions with a diverse group of people throughout the firm over the past weeks.

- First, we have decided to contribute at least \$250,000 over the next three years to this effort. This year, we will commit \$100,000, first to match donations from our HSG colleagues to organizations devoted to fighting racial discrimination against Black Americans, and the balance to The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. Additionally, for the next two years, we will contribute at least \$75,000 a year to The Lawyers' Committee.
- Second, we are redoubling our efforts to find, and perform, pro bono work to protect and advance the rights of Black Americans and persons of color. Our co-founding partner, Judge Holwell, will lead these efforts, working with the many attorneys, paralegals and staff who already are heavily engaged in pro bono work on behalf of workers suffering under discriminatory employment practices, immigrants, asylum seekers and others who urgently need legal services for which they cannot pay.
- Third, we know there is work to be done internally to make our firm even more diverse and inclusive. We are committed to promoting diversity, in all its forms, within our ranks—including by hiring, mentoring and promoting diverse candidates. As a start, we have expanded the composition of our Diversity and Inclusiveness Committee. Indeed, the members of that Committee—associates, staff attorneys, paralegals, staff and partners—were directly involved in identifying The Lawyers' Committee as the organization to which the firm will commit funds.
- Fourth, this Friday is Juneteenth, which commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. To encourage our employees to take the day to reflect, educate and serve, we are declaring Juneteenth a paid firm holiday. We will also help identify educational and service opportunities for those at our firm who wish to participate.

We have a duty to do whatever we can to meet the needs of those who, solely by virtue of their skin color, suffer disadvantages and worse. We will work to reinforce the message that Black lives matter and to ensure that people of color are afforded the same respect, dignity and legal protections as others. We are grateful that our entire firm is united in this effort.

Rick, Mike and Dan