



NEWS RELEASE

Coming Together on a Day that Tore Us Apart

5/25/2021

NOTE: This originally appeared as a **LinkedIn article** by our Chief Executive Officer, Gina Drosos.

Today marks a very sad and dark day in American history. It is the first anniversary of the death of George Floyd. We all witnessed the horrific events that unfolded on that Minneapolis street corner. The injustice drew outrage and sparked violence. It prompted demonstrations not just in the U.S. but around the world. And it ripped open the wounds of a society that had been trying to stem overt racism and oppression for decades — even centuries.

This anniversary is a painful day to relive, but it's also a day of coming together in memory of a tragedy that tore us apart. It's a time of remembrance of a man whose passing served as a catalyst for our country moving forward.

At Signet, in the wake of the event, we looked to each other for comfort. We didn't have answers — no one did — but we had newfound determination to really understand who we were as a community and colleagues. Signet is a company resolute in a set of core values, one of which promotes diversity, acceptance and inclusiveness, and we used this moment in time — painful as it was — to learn and better ourselves.

Not long after that May afternoon, Signet held a town hall titled, "Signet Speaks Out, Owning It: Let's Talk about Race/ism." It was raw and necessary, and unlike any event I've ever been a part of. The town hall brought tears and pent-up frustration, but it also brought us closer together as a family. From this virtual assembly, a new Signet business resource group was born: the Black Employee Network (B.E.N.). We also formed the Black Organizational Leadership Development (B.O.L.D.) group, an executive mentorship program founded to accelerate career paths for Black professionals. Since taking a hard, honest look at ourselves and realizing where we needed to do better, Signet has increased its Black and African American representation at the Director and above level by 44 percent. We have also welcomed two new dynamic, accomplished and inspiring members to our Board of Directors, so that 59 percent of our Board is now comprised of women or persons of color.

Signet's determination to be a voice for change was heard outside our four walls as well. We donated to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and continue to be advocates for social justice. We took a stand against all acts of hate speech by joining the #StopHateForProfit campaign boycotting Facebook, and joined Time to Vote, a non-partisan movement led by the business community ensuring all employees receive paid time off to exercise their constitutional right. And, this past January 18th, Signet honored the legacy of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by marking his birthday as a paid holiday in our Support Centers, affording our team members the opportunity to give back to their communities and help realize Dr. King's dream of unity and love.

In the year that has passed, justice is beginning to play out, but the grief and frustration over this tragedy continues. So does the work needed to heal our nation. This week, the Signet Love Inspires Foundation will be making a gift to the Equal Justice Initiative, a non-profit in Montgomery, Alabama, that provides legal representation to prisoners who may have been victims of injustice. We will also be gathering internally for our fourth Signet Speaks Out town hall on the eve of Juneteenth, when we will welcome renowned author and respected authority on leadership development, diversity, equality and inclusion, Trudy Bourgeois.

Today, George Floyd's death will be mourned, but his life will be honored. Amidst the sorrow that fills our hearts, perhaps a sliver can be filled with hope, because I believe there is hope. I will say a prayer for George Floyd, his family and our nation. And I will think about a fellow-Georgian, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose dream of love and peace for all of God's children is still very much alive today. There is hope today because there is resilience and determination today. And perhaps most of all, there is love.