



Montefiore

From the OFFICE OF THE DEAN



Dear Einstein Community:

For the past two-and-a-half weeks, the trial of former Minnesota police officer Derek Chauvin for the killing of George Floyd has occupied the nation. For many of us, the anticipation that justice might finally be served left us hopeful. While yesterday's guilty verdict is not a cause for celebration, as it will not bring back George Floyd, perhaps it is a watershed moment. It raises our hopes to the possibility of reforms that will hold police who violate their power accountable. It demonstrates that no one has the right to needlessly take a life, and no one is above the law. It reinforces the idea that in our criminal justice system the role of a police officer is to serve and protect the lives and rights of all citizens in their custody—regardless of race or skin color.

During the past year, we've seen many more defenseless individuals killed during encounters with police—among them are 13-year-old Adam Toledo, as well as Rayshard Brooks, Casey Goodson, Jr., Andre Hill, and Duante Wright. We also learned that police officers in our nation kill, on average, three Americans daily in the line of duty. What that statistic doesn't tell us is how many resulted from a true need for self-defense, the result of racial profiling or of implicit bias. Tragically, we also don't know how many of those deaths could have been avoided altogether.

While today's verdict is a step in the right direction, we have much work to do. We need our justice system to scrutinize these killings and to punish those who abuse their powers. We need our legislators at every level of government to review and reform laws that allow officers to believe they are above the law, especially when it comes to taking human life. And we need to dismantle the social structures that continue to permit racism to be a guiding principle in the miscarriage of justice. At Einstein, we will continue to look at our own structures to ensure barriers and biases are not a factor for any individual who is part of our

community.

Now, I hope, is a time for those directly involved in this case to begin to heal. Also, for the nation to heal. For all of us to heal. It will take time, and during this process we must continue to fight hard for justice and the rights for everyone under the law.

If we do that, working together—both individually and as a nation—perhaps we can make important progress toward facing down and rooting out racism which, while embedded in our past, must not represent our future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Tomaselli', with a stylized, flowing script.

Gordon F. Tomaselli, M.D.

The Marilyn and Stanley M. Katz Dean

Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer