



FUND FOR ADVANCEMENT OF MINORITIES THROUGH EDUCATION
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FAME Statement Against Systemic Racism

The last several weeks have brought the issues of racial inequality, social injustice, and police brutality experienced by the Black community to the collective humanity of not only the United States but the world. The video showing the outright murder of George Floyd while in a police chokehold prompted a mass response of protests and an urgent need for change to justice system practices and policies. We have already seen some quick responses like the elimination of “no-knock” warrants in Louisville, KY.

Change will not be easy, but we are convinced that it will come as we remain steadfast and united in taking a stance against the prejudices continuing to plague the Black community. The most recent horrific instances of police brutality against Black citizens have reignited a flame and inspired many to join together in speaking out. As we continue to speak up, we must remember the injustices that we protest against are the same ones that so many before us have been trying to change.

At FAME, our mission is to educate, empower, and embolden African American youth to become student ambassadors of today, leaders of tomorrow, and stewards of their communities. This message resonates even more amidst the current events that have brought the discussion of systemic racism back to the forefront.

Nearly forty years after the *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruling declared that separate schools were “inherently unequal,” Ron Gebhardt and Pat Getty, among others, founded FAME and set out on a mission to identify young African American children who would become leaders for the next generation here in Pittsburgh. Almost thirty years later, it is readily apparent that the mission is as critical as ever across our entire country. We must, as a society, continue to uplift our youth to become leaders for tomorrow as we seek to bring an end to the systemic racial injustices and inequalities that continue to exist in communities across our country.

It is imperative that we as a FAME family continue to take action to ensure the physical, social and emotional safety of our Scholars and communities through the work of our skilled, passionate, and committed CEO, staff, and Board of Trustees. Hopefully, our work inspires others to speak out against these injustices as we strive to define success for our students and drown out the negative rhetoric that continues to act as a roadblock on a path to equal opportunities for Black Scholars.

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr once said, “In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.” We must not become complacent with moderate progress, or we will succumb to the old adage of “one step forward, two steps back.” The time is now to make a quantifiable change on behalf of Black children in our country and positively impact future generations. We at FAME will continue to be a leader in the Pittsburgh region while continuing to also consider ways to impact change beyond our regional borders.

Onward & Upward,
Darryl T. Wiley, CEO & FAME Board of Trustees