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Prologue

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Prologue

After the murder of George Floyd by former Minneapolis Police Department Officer Derek Chauvin and three other MPD officers, the *Minnesota Journal of Law & Inequality (JLI)*, like various institutions across this nation, was forced to reckon with the stark racial inequality that had been present among us long before this nation was created. *JLI* released a statement¹ on the murder, acknowledging its own role in perpetuating racial inequality by not having Black voices in positions of power within the Journal.

In addition, as a response to both George Floyd's murder and the subsequent racial justice protests, law journals across the three law schools in Minnesota planned to publish a special issue with articles covering various racial justice issues plaguing this nation. Unfortunately, those plans did not materialize. But, *JLI* persisted with its plan and published several articles stemming from this initiative on *Inequality Inquiry*, *JLI's* blog, that would have been a part of the original special issue.

In the first article, *JLI's* editors analyzed what it means to "Defund the Police." The article (1) traced the history of policing in the United States since its colonial days; (2) outlined the decades of failure to achieve meaningful progress in Minneapolis; and (3) advocated for the redirection of MPD funding to violence prevention and alternative responses, along with the decriminalization of certain low-level non-violent offenses. *JLI* also published an article by Ramsey County Public Defender Greg Egan. The article—a work of empirical research that looked at second-degree felony murder convictions sentenced from 2012 through 2018 in Hennepin and Ramsey counties—detailed the racial inequities in Minnesota's felony-murder doctrine. This article would not have been possible without the tireless research and keen analytical insights of Volume 39 Staff Members Anne Bolgert, Abbie Maier, and Andrew Selva. The final article by Professor David Schultz is a methodological exploration of what it would take to reform the institution of policing in the United States, which also includes the civil settlements select cities have paid as a result of police misconduct in the past decade. This article materialized thanks to the selfless

1. *JLI's Statement of Solidarity*, MINN. J. OF LAW & INEQUALITY (June 2, 2020), <https://lawandinequality.org/2020/06/02/jlis-statement-of-solidarity/> [perma.cc/7SBF-GGVA].

work and research of Caroline Headrick and Chase Lindemann, both Volume 39 Staff Members.

JLI has decided to publish these articles as its own special issue, Issue 3 of Volume 39. This Special Issue came to fruition thanks to the exceptional dedication of Abigail Rauls, Executive Editor, and the hard work of the Volume 39 Online Editorial Team—Sam Brower (Lead Editor), Adam Johnson and Chris Lund. Thanks are also due to the authors, editors, and staff members of Volume 39. *JLI* is proud to continue its mission to demonstrate how the law perpetuates systemic oppression, exploitation, and discrimination in this country and beyond.

With Gratitude & In Solidarity,

Navin Ramalingam

Editor-in-Chief

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