



# HSM [News]

## **We Stand in Solidarity With Those Seeking Justice**

Now, more than ever, we must look through the lens of history to understand the racial injustice that has coursed through our nation's life and sparked the current turmoil. Only a full understanding of a past that includes slavery, segregation, and intolerance will enable us to move forward to a better future. The issues now under debate have threaded through our national dialogue since before our founding. Although they have sometimes divided America, it remains within our power to overcome the tragedies of our past.

At the Historical Society of Michigan (HSM), we believe there are many things all Americans can agree on, including the fact that George Floyd died tragically at the hands of law enforcement and that he was not the first African American to suffer this unfair fate. The centuries-old American tradition of peaceful protest was a natural outcome, highlighting this tragedy and what have too often been unheard voices. This right of free speech should never be muzzled. Further, it is abhorrent that more people have died and been injured in the ensuing senseless violence and destruction of property.

For our nation's people of color to enjoy a more equal footing and a greater

sense of justice, we must all hear and understand their stories. When these legitimate voices are ignored, frustration and outrage is inevitable. HSM has made telling the historical stories of all of Michigan's people and their communities a priority with a strong emphasis on the stories told through the eyes of groups often overlooked. Our statewide organization has a booming megaphone for this purpose, including two popular history magazines (Michigan History and Chronicle), three annual history conferences, the yearlong Michigan History Day® academic competition for students, a history lecture series, a workshop series, and much more. We will continue to do our part, as we hope you will.

Mr. Floyd's death, and too many others like his, cannot be erased from our history. We wish it had not happened, but it did. We must now learn from this tragedy, understand it through the perspective of history, and redouble our efforts to make our nation better than before in all the ways that we can. Each of us must take up the struggle for true justice for all.

The only president from Michigan, Gerald R. Ford, put it this way in a speech in Grand Rapids in 1968, another year of violence and upheaval: "America now is stumbling through the darkness of hatred and divisiveness. Our values, our principles, and our determination to succeed as a free and democratic people will give us a torch to light the way. And we will survive and become the stronger—not only because of a patriotism that stands for love of country, but a patriotism that stands for love of people."