



QUEENS LIBRARY GUILD



Bookshelf



LOCAL 1321
DISTRICT COUNCIL 37
AFSCME, AFL-CIO

Sept. 2020

**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**



JOHN HYSLOP

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

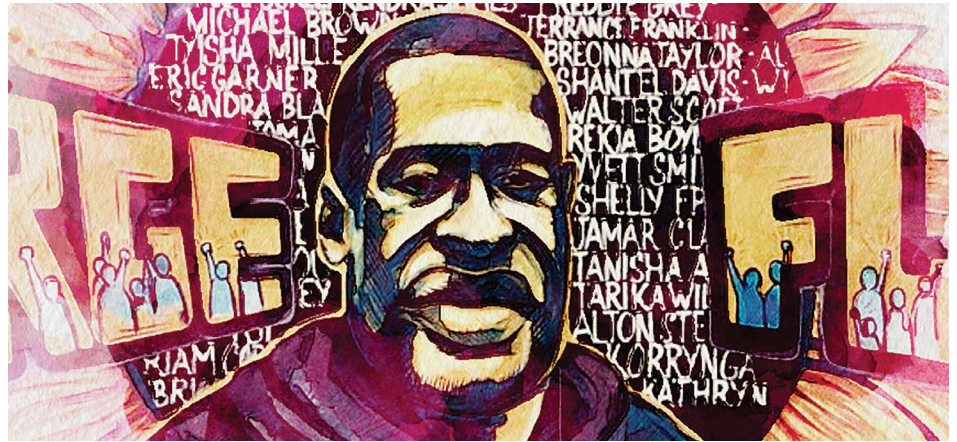
Queens Library Guild, Local 1321 condemns the murder of George Floyd and all other acts of racial violence.

On March 13, 2020, Breonna Taylor was murdered just being in her own home by police officers. On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin. Everything about this fills me with dread, sadness, confusion, and anger. Ms. Taylor died for being in her home. Mr. Floyd died for \$20. These murders are two of the most recent acts of violence perpetrated by police officers in a long and tragic list of police brutality and violence against people whose skin color is not white. This does not need to happen.

Our condemnation for this act, and all the other racists acts, however, should not be a blanket condemnation of all police officers. We have some excellent caring, supportive, compassionate police officers who do an excellent job apprehending criminals and bringing them to justice. Many of us know them professionally and personally, and are aware that there are many police officers with good intentions who are trying to do the right thing. We need more of those types of police officers.

What we must condemn are the police officers who are racist, belligerent, arrogant, confrontational, and aggressive, who treat their fellow human beings as "others" who do not deserve to live.

As many of you know, I am a 50-year-old, white, straight, male from a comfortable middle-class background. I have had all the privileges most of this world affords people such as me. All my interactions with the police — speeding tickets, reporting a crime, asking for directions — have been what all of us would consider normal. Heartbreakingly,



for many Black and brown people, their experiences with law enforcement is starkly different.

I spoke with our Executive Vice President Margaret Gibson and our Blue Collar Vice President Thomas Wynn about what Queens Library Guild, Local 1321 can do. We agreed that we could be a conduit of understanding and dialogue. With that said, we decided to ask our colleagues if they would share their experiences and interactions with, and working for, law enforcement. Our hope is that after reading first-hand accounts from your friends and colleagues, we will have more of an understanding of Black and brown people's experiences with law enforcement that would hopefully help us understand and know that the negative treatment they receive by police officers is wrong.

For more than 50 years, Queens Library Guild, Local 1321 has fought to uplift **all** Queens Library workers, regardless of skin color, gender identity, or sexual identity, to ensure all of us have the benefits and salaries to sustain each member's livelihood.

Local 1321 does that collectively with one voice. Local 1321's Executive Board pledges

from now on that Queens Library Guild, Local 1321 will use our voices to decry any forms of injustice, hate, and racism, especially in the Queens Public Library. We will not stand by in silence, but will shout for justice, peace, acceptance, and understanding for all people.

Addendum: I finished writing this June 4 and waited for people to submit their contributions. Since then, Rayshard Brooks was killed by police, and peaceful protesters were tear gassed and beaten.

Addendum II: This newsletter was supposed to be published back in June, but because of retirements in DC 37's Communications Department, we were not able to get our newsletter created. In early August, we finally found a new firm to put together and publish this newsletter.

Tragically and horrifyingly, yet unsurprisingly, another innocent black man, Jacob Blake, was shot by police in front of his children. Until this country recognizes the racist beliefs that demonize Black and brown people, these hate crimes will continue. They must stop, and your union will work toward that end.



DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO UNTO YOU



Kindness in these Trying Times

These are trying times for all of us with the COVID-19 pandemic and the tragic death of Mr. Floyd. Let me give you a little background on myself.

I worked as a police officer with the Boynton Beach Police Department in Florida, and the NYPD for 20 years. I worked at the 75 Pct. in East New York, Brooklyn North Narcotics Major Case, and the Organized Crime Bureau. I was promoted to be a Sergeant and worked in the 112 and 102 Pcts, and Brooklyn North Narcotics again. In all my time in policing, I never heard officers say they wanted to go out on the street to hurt or kill anyone. They just wanted to help the communities that they worked in.

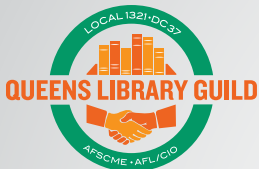
Mr. Floyd's death was tragic. I cannot begin to understand the loss his family and friends are feeling. My deepest sympathies go out to his family and friends, and I hope that some good will come out of his unfortunate loss. I still have contacts in law enforcement, both local and federal, who have said the treatment of Mr. Floyd was uncalled for, and was unnecessary. You have an individual who is already in handcuffs, his hands are behind his back, you have a total of four officers on the

scene, and they cannot control one person? Where was their patrol supervisor? Why wasn't the alleged arrest verified? If they truly felt "in danger," why not request more help? There was no need for the officer to use excessive force to cause Mr. Floyd to lose his life.

As a police officer, we were always taught to treat people with respect and to treat others, regardless of the situation, as I would want my family and myself to be treated. Unfortunately, there are bad seeds who do not treat others in their community with the proper attentiveness they wish to have bestowed upon themselves. It is a sad day when those who are meant to protect our communities are the center of a despicable crime.



Paul Zakshevsky
Field Service Manager




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Being Black & Educated Doesn't Mean Anything to Racist Police Officers

Why? Why in the year 2020 are we still crying for the need to treat Blacks as human beings? May 25, 2020, George Floyd, another Black man, was murdered by police officers in Minnesota. This time, the crime was a bit more blatant by police officers, because Officer Chauvin, with one hand in his pocket, patiently and forcefully knelt on the neck of George Floyd until life was sucked from his body.

Year after year, Black families suffer from the pain and affliction of similar incidents, as police officers are killing our loved ones, harassing us, and creating false police reports against us. Why? That word is very prevalent throughout the Black community. The only answer to that word is the color of their skin.

As a mother of a Black man, I am terrified and the only thing I know to do is pray for, and caution, my son because being Black and educated doesn't mean anything to racist police officers, or racist individuals, in this nation. It was probably in either the year 2000 or 2001, while my son was attending Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, he experienced being harassed for the first time by police officers. My son informed me that he boarded the 7 train at Junction Blvd. in Corona. As soon as he got on the train, two police officers came and told him to get out of the train. The officers accused him of jumping the turnstile, and took him downstairs to the token booth clerk. After having his MetroCard checked, and after

repeatedly telling the officers he swiped his card, it turned out that he had actually swiped his card. He doesn't remember anyone apologizing, but with that delay, he ended up reporting to school late.

Fast forward to 2005. My son was attending Pace University and had his second encounter with police officers. He stepped out of his East Elmhurst home, and as he recalled, he was one house away when a police car pulled up next to him and two officers jumped out of the car. Unexpectedly, one of the officers tried to pat down his pockets. Being caught by surprise, he grew angry and pushed the officer's hands off of him and asked the officer "what's the problem"? The officer informed him that someone was robbed in the neighborhood by a Black man.

My son asked the officers what it had to do with him and the officer informed him that the suspect fit his description. Then they proceeded to ask my son where he lived and where he was going. Unfortunately it was the Black officer who was the aggressor, and the white officer had to intervene after he recognized how extremely angry my son became as a result of the treatment.

As a nation, there is so much for each one of us to have candid discussions. What happened to George Floyd, and many other Blacks before him, continues to recur throughout this nation simply because of skin color. This problem is systemic in the United States because the issue is much larger than crimes against Blacks by police officers — it extends to education, employment, sports, entertainment, and many other industries.

My son is currently a New York City high school teacher where the school's teaching and student bodies are predominately white. There are occasions when he has to assist students who share with him the manner in which they are treated by white teachers because they clearly understand it is as a result of their skin color.

During George Floyd's memorials, Al Sharpton shed light on the treatment of Blacks beyond police brutality when he stated, "George Floyd's story has been the story of Black folks, because ever since 401 years ago, the reason we could never be who we wanted and dreamed of being, is you kept your knee on our necks." This treatment is heartbreaking, and a total disregard by racist individuals who don't believe "Black Lives Matter".

It is time to celebrate our diverse skin colors and address the disparities that have plagued Blacks for years. Let's unite in love as brothers and sisters, because we have so much work to do in order to confront the injustices and racism in this nation.

"Black Lives Matter."



Margaret Gibson
Local 1321 Executive
Vice President
& CLM, East Elmhurst



America the Ugly

I am appreciative to see that most Americans are disgusted and appalled at the outrageous behavior of the Minnesota police officer. Mr. Floyd was in handcuffs; he did not pose a threat. It was an inhumane act committed against another human being.

These injustices have been going on for hundreds of years. The only difference between the past and the present is cameras, video, and social media. The acts of violence are being publicized now more than ever, brought to the forefront for everyone to view.

This is not just a Black American issue; for most Americans, this is a human issue. There is a small percentage of the population here in America that is filled with so much hatred that it makes AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL, AMERICA THE UGLY.



Deborah Wynn
Library Custodian, Flushing



STAND TALL..... Black Lives Matter

I am a 49-year-old, African-American male with two African-American sons who are 28 and 30 years of age. I pray for them every time they leave the house due to the lack of respect for human life in today's society, which is very disturbing.

I was disgusted with what transpired with the Minneapolis police officer with the actions (knee on his neck) he took against Mr. George Floyd, which led to his death.

The officer committed a criminal act and he displayed no regard for human life. He should be stripped of his badge, terminated, and sentenced to time in jail.

Police all over the world have been getting away with murdering African-American people, especially males, for too long. It's time to end this injustice against Black Americans and all Americans.

My deepest sympathy goes out to the families that have lost a loved one to an unjustifiable killing by a police officer or officers.



Marvin Rivers
Senior Building Manager, Flushing
(I AM GEORGE FLOYD)

Knee of Injustice on the Necks of Black Communities for Decades

As a retired Second Grade Detective of the NYPD, I found it alarming to have read and seen what happened to George Floyd. As an African-American, it is beyond heartbreaking and brings tears to my eyes to witness the injustice that occurred pertaining to Mr. Floyd. During my 26 years with the NYPD, I was on the frontline of multiple demonstrations (Eric Garner, Sean Bell, etc.) where a peaceful protest turned violent due to frustration and agony.

As a young black man in my 20s, I had a disliking and distrust for police officers. They were always pulling over me and my friends and harassing us. A good friend of mine convinced me to take the NYPD test. I saw this as an opportunity to infiltrate and make change from the inside. I always felt that being a law enforcement officer was a privilege not to abuse. I recognize that I was in a position where I was lucky enough to serve and protect South Jamaica, a community I spent the majority of my childhood in. I was able to change lives, one person at a time.

I made it a priority in my career to lead with professionalism along with compassion and respect toward my fellow New York citizens. As a first responder, your job is to act/provide assistance at the scene of an emergency. Hearing Mr. Floyd scream "I can't breathe" and Officer Derek Chauvin ignore his cry for help is truly disgusting and cavalier. As for the other officers involved, I am deeply disappointed that they stood there allowing Officer Chauvin to press his knee against Mr. Floyd's neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. My deepest condolences to the friends and family members who are suffering from the loss of their loved ones during these trying times.

It is clear that this is not just an emotional issue, but also a political and social issue that has kept the knee of injustice on the necks of the Black community for decades. Although I don't condone the violence and looting, it warms my heart to see so many people come together and protest. Seeing white, Latinx, and Asian people marching side by side with their African-American brothers and sisters gives me hope that we are reaching a better tomorrow.

I am proud of my old command and the other law enforcement officers who have joined the protesters while in uniform to take a knee, hold signs, shake hands, give hugs, and promote solidarity. These are the good officers to look to for change. But to really change you must infiltrate, take the police test, run for political office, and most importantly, register to vote. This is deeper than you and I. If you want to make a change, VOTE!

Richard Lowe
Senior Investigator



Feeling Unprotected & Disrespected

In all my 29 years of sojourning in this land nicknamed "Land of Opportunities," "One Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," I have never felt so frustrated and exhausted listening to news and watching video footages of crimes committed by some members of the United States Police, people who have sworn to respect, protect, and enforce the laws of the land.

As a Black person in the United States of America and a mother of a Black young man, I have felt so unprotected and so disrespected due to the recent murdering of Black men and women by some white policemen and some white civilians. Doesn't the Pledge of Allegiance say "liberty and justice for all?" So where is the liberty and justice for Breonna Taylor, murdered in her sleep, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and so many, many more? May their souls rest in peace.

This cannot go on, Black Lives Matter, and I am asking for "Liberty and Justice for ALL".

There needs to be change, and changes need to happen now, now, now.



Pat Eshun
Local 1321 Librarian Representative
& CLM, Rosedale



This Country Founded on Equality It is Anything But

I was pulled over once by an officer in a mostly white town in upstate New York for going 90 mph on my motorcycle. The white officer said that he was chasing me for two-three miles and he told me he was wondering if I had been trying to escape. I said I was just trying to get on time for a library conference. The officer gave me a speeding ticket. I thought it was so annoying at the time – six points!

I am white, btw, but now I realize, if I had a different skin color, I might have been handcuffed, charged with resisting arrest, or even worse. As we all know, America was never great, and this country, founded on equality, is anything but! Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of Independence, owned 200 slaves. But despite this awful history, America is blessed to have some wonderful people.

Being an immigrant, I often felt alienated growing up, and that's why my cat was my best friend. In high school, I often wondered if I would ever fit in anywhere. While studying for my MLS, I worked at Medgar Evers College part time as a Professor's Assistant. The professor was a Black woman who was implementing a new curriculum for Social Work at the school. She took a chance on me; she gave me a great, part-time job that helped pay for my studies. I loved working with her! My first library job was at Queens Public Library at Windsor Park. The managers there are Asian-American, and they were super supportive to me, like no one ever before. They gave me the confidence to move up the librarian ranks.

Then I went to Long Island City, a library with a large Black community. I was told how "bad and dangerous" it was, but I liked it very much, and I spent the most years working there than at any other library so far. I learned a lot from my manager, and I also became close friends with Andrew Barfield (now on the Local 1321 Executive Board), who went out of his way to be nice to me, and even took me on a road trip to Washington, DC (we've gone on more trips since then). At Seaside Library, when my library got destroyed by Superstorm Sandy, it was the Japanese Ambassador who came to visit us, saying that Japan has our backs. I have also worked at South Hollis Library, and Cambria Heights Library – libraries with large Black communities.

Again, I was warned that they were "bad" places; but again, they are in fact, wonderful places with a great community. I also made a great friend in Kane Noel (RIP) while at South Hollis. He is one of the best people I have ever met!

I like to go for walks or ride my motorcycle to visit local politicians and businesses in the communities where I work. At Cambria Heights, I was walking back to the library from doing outreach and Clyde Vanel, our local NY State Assembly Member who is Black, stopped his car and gave me a ride back to the library. If this is supposed to be a bad neighborhood, then I wonder what a good one looks like? And of course, Local 1321 has always been a fountain of support – and I believe its diversity is its greatest strength – especially under the great leadership of John Hyslop and Margaret Gibson.

As a white person having worked with primarily communities of color for more than a decade, I am so grateful! I have always been treated with love and respect. And I want to say thank you! Thank you for being so good to me. I am deeply, deeply sorry for my brothers and sisters in the Black community (as well as other communities of color) for the systemic racism and disrespect they must face time and time and time (and on and on) for no reason.

What does it say about our society, about America, when its best people are treated in the worst way? Like Superman said, "I just wish you could all see the Earth the way that I see it. Because when you really look at it, it's just one world." Superman IV: The Quest for Peace



By Kacper Jarecki
Local 1321 Delegate
& CLM, Cambria Heights



Queens Library Guild, LOCAL 1321

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We Need to Do Better As a Country

Our country was built on racist policies, which have tragic repercussions to this day.

The most upfront, immediate example of this are the murders by police officers of African-Americans Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Rayshard Brooks. Sadly, police brutality against Black and brown people is just one example. Red-lining by the real estate industry, defunding of public education, racist language and cultural references, racist hiring practices, and healthcare inequities are other examples of our 21st century racist policies.

The main tenet of a union is to fight for members' rights and bring as much fairness and equality to the workplace as possible. In practice, a union's actions are only as good as its leadership. That leadership brings their own beliefs, personalities, and biases. Those are exemplified in what a union does.

Local 1321's leadership is recommitting to a union's tenet and will ensure every member is treated fairly and equally. We will continue the tradition begun with the former DC 37 Executive Director and AFSCME President Jerry Wurf who worked with Martin Luther King, Jr. to unionize the African-American sanitation men in Memphis. We will continue to support the work DC 37 started in the 1950s when they forced the city to eliminate rampant cronyism and adopt civil service rules, and collectively bargain wages, health care, pensions, and other benefits. We will continue to support DC 37's free legal, housing, counseling, and education services. We will continue to break down racist policies and beliefs that create barriers and ensure fairness and equality in the workplace. AFSCME, DC 37, Local 1321 have done this for decades, uplifting everyone in our workplace, City, and Library.

Sadly, it took George Floyd's murder to awaken many Americans to these racist policies and beliefs. We need to do better as a country and your union's leadership is committing to that.

