



**Louisville**  
Urban League

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

Lyndon Pryor  
Louisville Urban League  
(502) 585-4622  
lpryor@lul.org

**NEWS RELEASE**

**Statement on Charlottesville & Monuments**

**Louisville, KY, August 16, 2017**— “There is no place for you here. There is no place for you in America.” This was Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe's message to the white supremacists and terrorists who descended on Charlottesville, Virginia this past weekend.

The brutal assaults, which ultimately resulted in the murder of Heather Heyer and the death of two law enforcement officers, are a burden that we all carry. We have been, and remain, in a fight for the soul of our country. I am grateful for the National Urban League, our Urban League affiliates around the country, and partner organizations who are in the trenches daily combating inequity and injustice from every angle. We cannot afford for good people to sit on the sidelines and do nothing. Neutrality is not an option. It is time for us all to use our platforms, our resources, our spheres of influence, and our privilege to root out the very foundations of hatred and division on which we stand.

To honor members of the Confederacy is to honor the fight for the continuation of slavery and oppression at all costs. Their vision for our country was corrupt. It was defeated in war, and it is our duty to dismantle any public honor associated with it. Memorials that showcase individuals who espoused ideals and values of hate, discrimination, ignorance, injustice, and racism serve no defensible purpose.

Simply put, there is no place for them in Louisville, in the state of Kentucky, or in America.

We all have a responsibility to tell the truth about this segment of American history. Furthermore, this history should be taught in classrooms and museums across the country where the people and events can be put into proper context.

At the Louisville Urban League, we use a platform of jobs, justice, education, health, and housing to move marginalized people into more equitable situations, promoting generational wealth and wellness for families and communities. Our work is not partisan; it is about people. It is not divisive; rather, it is collaborative. It is not prejudiced; instead, it is tolerant. For most of us, the work extends beyond the workday because it is deeply personal. This moment in our country is critical to those we love and to those we serve. If it is not already, we hope that moving forward from this day, the work will become critical to you too.

At some point, you will be asked what action you took while hate assaulted and terrorized your neighbors. You will be asked where you stood when apathy and collusion reigned down from the highest offices in government. Did you object? Did you turn a blind eye?

When it is all said and done, how will history record your effort?



***Sadiqa N. Reynolds, Esq.***

***President and CEO***

Louisville Urban League

1535 W Broadway, Louisville, KY

(502) 585-4622

[information@lul.org](mailto:information@lul.org)

Attached: [Transcript] Remarks by Sadiqa N. Reynolds, Esq. at Unity Rally held in the Kentucky State Capitol (August 16, 2017)

[Video] Remarks by Sadiqa N. Reynolds, Esq. at Unity Rally held in the Kentucky State Capitol (August 16, 2017) <https://lul.org/2017/08/16/president-louisville-urban-league-speaks-frankfort-ky/>

### **About the Louisville Urban League**

As an active partner, leader, and catalyst, the Louisville Urban League assists African Americans, other marginalized populations, and the disadvantaged attain social and economic equality and stability through direct services and advocacy. The Louisville Urban League is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. For more information, go to [www.lul.org](http://www.lul.org).

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**Remarks by Sadiqa N. Reynolds, Esq. at Unity Rally held in the Kentucky State Capitol  
Frankfort, Kentucky  
August 16, 2017**

SADIQA REYNOLDS: I am here today representing the Louisville Urban League and many others who feel oppressed in this state and in this country.

Some questioned my judgement in being here today and participating in this event but I will never pass up the opportunity to represent my people when I know that there are people who are listening and have the power to make change.

My sincere condolences to the families of those whose lives were lost in Charlottesville, Virginia.

We are not today in a post racial society. We have overcome a little but we have reached no mountaintop.

I am pleased that there are white people who would stand up and ask for the removal of symbols designed to continually remind us of a time when people fought to own slaves. My heart is full of questions when I hear the slogan "make America great again."

What does that look like for the people being served by the Urban League? I do wonder when is it that America was so great? And great for who?

Was she great when it was legal to own another human being?

Was she great when a slave named Nat Turner rebelled and was slaughtered?

Was she great when the Chief Justice said to Dred Scott that a black man has no rights that a white man is bound to respect?

When John Brown, a white man, said of slavery, "I have a system to destroy and I have no time to waste."

Was she great when she made education illegal for black people?

Was she great in 1860 when rather than accept blacks as equals - American citizens decided to secede from America?

Was she great after the civil war when terrorist groups like the KKK were founded to keep her former slaves in a state of subservience and fear? Groups that our leaders are now empowering. Groups that we saw active in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Was America great in the 20th century when lynchings, terror and inequality were so pervasive that they mandated the founding of organizations like the National Urban League. What about 1954 when southern states responded to the Brown v. board decision by reincorporating confederate symbols into their state flags - Georgia changed its state flag in 1957 in direct response to Brown v. Board of Education. Do not ever tell me that Confederate symbols have no meaning!

When was America great for Black people?

Was she great when black veterans of World War II came home and couldn't get jobs. When German prisoners of war were treated better than the black veterans. The Germans thought it amusing that black soldiers who'd fought for this country were not treated as well as them. Was she great when she allowed and encouraged redlining of our communities, creating the urban challenges we now all live with in Urban America?

Ladies and gentleman, it is not a sustainable model to devalue a human being to the point where they have nothing and nothing to lose. When America is cut we all bleed.

The blood, sweat, and tears of Black people helped to build this country. We have fought in America's wars, we have nursed your children, we have prayed for your souls and still when we walk through our country and see the symbols of hate, that we endured, being flown, raised and honored, we are told to "get over it, we will not sanitize history."

I will submit to you that WE have never been guilty of sanitizing history.

But there is no benefit to staying stuck on blame, but I do want to be clear, there is no group in this country less responsible for its existence or condition in this country.

We can not claim unity when you only stand with us on days like today. We cannot claim unity when you see injustice and you do nothing! We cannot pretend to be unified when good people are silent in the face of hate.

The indifference being shown by our leaders is sickening.

I am proud to represent the Louisville Urban League and I am proud to be a civil rights activist at a time when our presence is needed now more than ever. And I am thankful to see great numbers of diversity in the crowds supporting the removal of monuments, like Jefferson Davis, here at the capitol. I'm pleased to have even been invited to speak today. I did not know the organizer, I do not know the group, but I will never turn down the opportunity to represent my people.

Unity requires more than a rally, more than a conversation. Unity requires you to stand with us everywhere that justice demands.

If we all are one - act like it. . . beyond today.

To quote Abraham Joshua Heschel . . . morally speaking, there is no limit to the concern one must feel for the suffering of human beings, that indifference to evil is worse than evil itself, that in a free society, some are guilty, but all are responsible.

Thank you for the invitation.