



Roy B. Evans | The Genie is Out

Racial justice and civil rights movements have all along been simply telling America that, “Black Lives Matter, but we can’t breathe with your knee on our necks.”

In the wake of recent police killings of innocent Black people the festering need for fundamental change in American society has come to the surface. Unlike movements in the past, history cannot be ignored this time and has risen to the surface of our collective consciousness.

In other words, the genie will no longer fit in the bottle.

The impetus of the current Black Lives movement is rooted in the confluence of three critical events. First, the current political climate spearheaded by a leader who has stoked the legitimacy of violence in the discussion of race that cannot be ignored. Elections have consequences and our heightened sensitivity to our country’s contradictions are an obvious result therefrom.

Second, the worldwide coronavirus pandemic has stripped us of our individual humanity and forced us to recognize our collective vulnerability as human beings. “We the people” takes on a new meaning and forces us to recognize our common humanity.

Third, with the advent of smartphones and video cameras, “my word versus your word” no longer applies. Now it is, “I can see it with my own eyes, from many angles, and view it many times.”

The new normal has created a world where every event has the potential of going “viral.” It took slaves in Galveston, Texas, on a day we now call Juneteenth Day, to discover that slavery had been officially abolished two years earlier.

Justice denied is an elusive genie that I hope will never return to the bottle.

Roy B. Evans, U.W. 1979, focuses his practice on contracts, municipal law, and probate. He currently chairs the City of Milwaukee Board of Review and is on the board of directors of the Federal Defender Services of Wisconsin. He is the 2019 recipient of the Frank P. Zeidler Public Service Award for his contributions and community advocacy. WL

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Anu Chudasama | The Power to Transform

“My skin was not the right tone. In the absence of equality, I longed for it.”

I was born to east-Indian parents in Bahrain, an island in the Middle East, where I attended British schools. I had a fortunate upbringing. Even then, inequality was no stranger. I recall some friends would frequent a private beach reserved only for the fair-skinned. My skin was not the right tone. In the absence of equality, I longed for it.

My family immigrated to Toronto, Canada, a stunningly diverse city, but not devoid of prejudice. I went to law school in Madison and lived in Eau Claire before landing in Minneapolis. In my experiences, including living in or visiting nearly 30 countries, I find that we continuously distance ourselves from those who are unlike us. Yet, we share a lot of the same core values and desires. Family. Love. Friendship. Joy. Prosperity. We want to be respected and treated as equals. We want the same rights and opportunities to improve our circumstances.

I imagine George Floyd and countless others wanted the same. After the video of Mr. Floyd’s last breaths surfaced, Minneapolis mourned. Injustice is painful. Streets were rife with armored officers and vehicles, cracking gunshots, fires with far-reaching plumes, and looting, but also harmonious protests, food drives for impacted neighborhoods, and vibrant murals championing Black Lives Matter/equality. These actions sparked discussions worldwide about race, equality, and the need for change.

I am hopeful. We cannot change the past, but we have the power to transform our future, and I hope it includes beaches where everyone is welcome.

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