

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Partnership Formed to Research Unequal Justice in Delaware**

**Wilmington, DE** – A project to unearth the forgotten and unknown instances of unequal justice in the First State is underway through the Delaware Historical Society’s Jane and Littleton Mitchell Center for African American Heritage, the University of Delaware, Delaware State University, and the Delaware Social Justice Remembrance Coalition.

The project, “Unequal Justice in Delaware – Rewriting the Narrative,” will explore the history of racial violence, remembrance, and social justice throughout Delaware’s history and across all three counties. The project will merge rigorous academic research from various higher education departments with grassroots community engagement and activism.

“The University of Delaware is extremely excited to be a partner in this important project,” said James Jones, Director of the University’s Center for the Study of Diversity, which is coordinating UD’s participation. “The talent, dedication and expertise of our community is a natural and important source of support for this valuable effort to better understand Delaware’s racial history and to raise awareness and implement reforms to guide us toward a more just society for all Delawareans.”

Support for the project at UD, said Jones, will include the Provost, and broad engagement from faculty, students and staff in the Morris Library, Africana Studies, History Department, Department of Sociology, Office of Community Engagement, School of Education, and the School for Public Policy and Administration.

The stories revealed through research and public engagement events will be brought to light through oral and digital histories, as well as curriculum development. The project will also explore how research and public engagement can inform policy. It is inspired by Bryan Stevenson’s groundbreaking work with the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, AL.

Wide participation is also planned at Delaware State University (DSU), said Dr. Akwasi Osei, Associate Dean of the College of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences and Director of the Global Societies. “This joint effort on Delaware History will bring together faculty, staff, students, and others to contribute to the further edification of all of Delaware and the nation,” said Dr. Osei. “It will go to show that despite our current ‘tribalism,’ we have always been in this together, and will continue to be.”

Dr. Osei said the project will help tell the American story. “That magic moment, well over two hundred years ago, when we declared the basic humanity of all is perhaps the greatest moment in that history,” he said. “That we have to ‘rewrite’ the narrative of the actual unfolding of that story is indicative of how rocky the journey has been.”

The partnership also includes the Delaware Social Justice Remembrance Coalition. “The Delaware Social Justice Coalition (DSJC) is thrilled to be a part of this collaborative that will continue the work of illuminating and memorializing past incidents of racial terror in the state of Delaware,” said Amy Shepherd, an officer of DSJC. “We appreciate our state’s willingness to understand how such incidents have impacted life as we know it today and we look forward to Delaware’s propulsion toward becoming a leader in changing the narrative around race and poverty, as Bryan Stevenson urges.”

A website for the project is currently under development, which will be essential for the progress of the historical initiative and dissemination of the narratives it yields.

For questions about the project, contact Stephanie Lampkin, Director of the Jane and Littleton Mitchell Center for African American Heritage, at [slampkin@dehistory.org](mailto:slampkin@dehistory.org).

### **About the Delaware Historical Society**

The Delaware Historical Society owns and operates the Delaware History Museum; the Jane and Littleton Mitchell Center for African American Heritage; a nationally recognized Research Library; Old Town Hall; Willingtown Square, four 18th-century houses surrounding a picturesque urban courtyard located in downtown Wilmington; and the National Historic Landmark Read House & Gardens located in New Castle. For more information, call (302) 655-7161, email [deinfo@dehistory.org](mailto:deinfo@dehistory.org), or visit [www.dehistory.org](http://www.dehistory.org).

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