



OFFICE OF
CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT, MUSCOGEE COUNTY

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June 8, 2020

Dear Muscogee County Citizens:

I, like many of you, was horrified by the death of George Floyd. Falsified reports to police and other attempts to unfairly charge and lock up people of color, particularly males, along with the loss of life due to institutionalized violence has been spotlighted more than I can remember in my lifetime. For me, this string of racially charged incidents has been too much to bear. As an African American it triggers hopelessness, anger, and despair.

I, too, have been scarred by racism, having experienced it personally, and understand and feel the pain, trauma, and frustration of the disregarded and disenfranchised that unfortunately remains in our country. Too many times I have had to have intentional, painful conversations about racism, violence, and death with my teenage daughter. I like many other mothers and fathers of color share this dark reality.

As a public servant I will continue to meet my obligation and responsibility to implement policies and procedures for the betterment of our society and future. I owe this to my country, my community, family and most importantly my ancestors on whose shoulders I stand.

As I continue to serve as your Clerk, I feel compelled to not only speak out but address the current state of our country and community by governing my actions and instructions to my staff with purposeful intention, deliberate action and positive results to ensure accurate and efficient service to our community. As Clerk, I will continue to develop events to educate and meet the needs of my constituents and demand fairness in policies and procedures that impact the community. I will continue events like the criminal history summit our office sponsored in November 2019. Unfortunately, a follow-up event was derailed due to COVID 19. However, we are working with the Mayor, state organizations, and other local elected officials for a summit slated for later this year. Our hope is that we can safely proceed.

I feel the need to speak directly to you, my beloved community and hometown, to express my position and response to the recent protests and re-assert my commitment of service to you:

- Now more than ever, my staff and I are committed to treating every person we serve with fairness and respect.
- Now more than ever, my staff and I are committed to letting every person we serve know they are valued by treating them with courtesy and kindness.
- Now more than ever, my staff and I are committed to treating every person we serve with excellent professional service.

My father's military service instilled in me a love of country and my mother's community service instilled a love of Columbus, my hometown. My father and others fought for our right to exercise and enjoy the promises and rights guaranteed by our Constitution. Those rights and promises are guaranteed to EVERY human being and citizen of this country. As the daughter of a proud veteran and as a public servant, I must stand up, speak out, and act when there is injustice. Now more than ever!

I know we can emerge from this together - better, stronger, united. I hope and pray that we will. Thank you all for the continued privilege and honor of serving as Clerk of Superior and State Courts.

Sincerely,

Danielle Forté

Clerk of State and Superior Courts