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Rising to the moment: a challenge to all of us
Alberto Ibarguen [web@knightfoundation.org]

Sent: Monday, June 01, 2020 2:45 PM
To: Steve Johnston

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Dear Sarah:

The killing of George Floyd is challenging all of us to rise to the moment; a moment of justice and a moment of change.

To do that, let's first acknowledge that this isn't about a single incident. It's about a long line of Black Americans like George Floyd killed by police, and of criminal justice responding only after, as in the case of Ahmaud Arbery, video evidence broke open what in the past was hidden.

The cumulative weight of perceived, consistent injustice makes any community explode. That righteous anger leaves any demonstration easy prey for incitement to violence, including by those whose goal is to disrupt and divide us.

To rise to the moment, we need facts; we need light, not more heat. And that is where a free and independent press shows how essential it is to a functioning democracy. The combination of people with smartphones and journalists amplifying the story and giving context, using digital technology to disseminate the information in real-time, have put an end to that silence. The roar we hear now is the sound of an engaged community making itself heard.

Journalists must be free to inform community about what is happening, to hold power accountable and to help tell the story of a community's pain. To rise to the moment, any attack on journalists, by police, by demonstrators or by public officials must be opposed. What happened in Minneapolis has become a touchstone for frustration, anger and pain felt in communities across the country. We stand with [every community](#) that wants a more equitable future. And we will continue to work on behalf of this value in the 26 communities where Knight Foundation operates.

Informed, equitable, inclusive and participatory communities are as essential to a strong democracy as an informed citizenry. The killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis is a terrible affront to that ideal – and this

weekend is a reminder of how tough it will be to rise to the moment. But our democracy depends on our willingness to try.

Sincerely,

Alberto Ibarguen
President, Knight Foundation
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John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
200 S. Biscayne Blvd, Suite 3300
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