



Dear LexArts Community,

The LexArts Community, its staff and board of directors, stand for racial equity and justice. We affirm what many voices across our nation are saying and have been saying, Black Lives Matter. There is no place in our community for hate or prejudice. As an arts organization committed to helping the people of Fayette County and the Bluegrass Region better tell their stories, we are committed to working against systemic racism.

We stand with our brothers and sisters who have died in unjust circumstances. Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. Ahmaud Arbery and Philando Castille. Atatiana Jefferson and Botham James. Aiyana Stanley-Jones and Sandra Bland. We name these names and know that this list is not complete. We know that Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, David McAtee and many, many others still need to be named and remembered. We also remember Judeah Reynolds, the nine-year-old girl who witnessed the death of George Floyd and hoped the adults would do something to stop it. These are not easy stories to tell. But these names and these stories must be remembered.

We affirm what Frank X Walker wrote in his 2014 poem, "Love Letter to the World," that the world weeps "over our continued ignorance, / our epic failures and petty squabbles."

We are an arts organization in a nation made up of many peoples. As such, we help members of our community tell their story in image, in word, in music, in dance, and in all the other art forms. We understand that their story is also our story; that our story, composed of many, many voices, needs to be told in all its fullness. We recognize that the privileging of certain voices and the silencing of others is part of the problem.

In 2019 LexArts helped install a stainless-steel halo sculpture by Kurt and Kremena in downtown Lexington. The halo is stamped with the phrase, "Unlearn Fear + Hate." The words come from the already mentioned poem by Frank X Walker. We affirm the entire stanza. It reads, "We can't pass the course on humanity / if we keep failing the lessons / on harmony / and until we unlearn fear and hate."

In saying this, we understand that these are difficult times. We recognize the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities of our nation and we understand that this heightened effect is due to the compounding factors created by the inequalities of systemic racism. We recognize also that authorities and vigilantes profile BIPOC communities in ways that the members of our white communities rarely experience or understand.

LexArts leadership stands with its staff, with the artists, the arts organizations with which it partners, and all those that form a part of the wider LexArts community. We are committed to equity and justice. We are committed to telling the stories of this region. We stand for love not hate, for equity and justice not exclusion.