



AARO'S MARCH TOWARD RACIAL TRANSFORMATION

The Austin Area Research Organization (AARO) stands with the Black community — and all communities of color — to demand justice, and pledges to more effectively engage in the ongoing dismantling of institutional racism and systemic inequities throughout Central Texas. We commit to use our time, energy, finances, skills and influence to embed the principles of racial justice and social equity into each of our priority policy areas of education, health care, social equity, transportation and water and throughout our spheres of influence.

Our country is in a painful and fragile time. For hundreds of years, Black, Hispanic, Asian and Indigenous peoples, have negotiated, talked, complained, yelled, marched, rebelled, and advocated against racism, police brutality and other systemic issues. And yet, for too long, too many of those in power or with authority have failed to effectively address or even acknowledge these traumas.

The recent killings of George Floyd in Minnesota, Ahmaud Arbery and Rayshard Brooks in Georgia, Breonna Taylor in Kentucky, and Michael Ramos, Javier Ambler and David Joseph in Central Texas, have only compounded the deep pain and frustration among people who have, since the inception of this nation, been marginalized and oppressed.

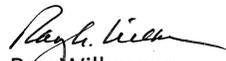
The outcry against the insidious cruelty and dehumanization of racism has repeatedly fallen on deaf ears and dulled hearts. The repeated pleas to reform our systems — criminal and civil justice, education, economic, and health care — reverberate throughout our country's history and yet have been effectively and conveniently ignored. Do we hear them now? Yes, we do.

AARO envisions Central Texas as an exemplary region: dynamic, thriving and sustainable for all; however, our vision is meaningless without appropriate action. To achieve that vision, we must fully engage in the ongoing work to end the institutional racism and systemic inequities that plague our society. As we embark on our 40th year of service to this region:

- We will not run from the uncomfortable conversations. In fact, we will become comfortable being uncomfortable.
- We will honor, believe and elevate those with lived experience with racism and inequities.
- We will seek out, support and engage organizations that promote social justice and racial equity across our priority areas.
- We will stand up, speak up and act up when we see injustice.
- We will review the recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Institutional Racism and Systemic Inequities and other sources relating to our priority areas.
- We will shift from shaking our heads in disbelief, to lifting our voices in opposition.
- We will shift from avoiding racism to confronting it.
- We will shift from simply being non-racist to being anti-racist.

This is a unique and strategic moment in which to engage the collective consciousness of our region. For our region to be transformed from the oppressive state of systemic inequities, we all must commit ourselves to a consistent and persistent march toward radical transformation requiring hard work — and heart work.

It is no longer acceptable, however, that some of us both benefit from historic systems of inequity and not shoulder the burden of dismantling it. Central Texas will never be all that it can be until all in this region have the resources and readied systems of justice to be all we can be. In AARO's view, what affects one directly, affects all indirectly.


Ray Wilkerson
President


Trish Young Brown
President-Elect


Scott Flack
Social Equity Chair

Scott Alarcon
Stacy Armijo
Tamara Atkinson
Joe Beal
Kyndel Bennett
Fayruz Benyousef
Bryan Bracewell
Rob Bridges
Tony C. Budet
Edward Burger
Amber Carden
C. Brian Cassidy
Elizabeth Christian
Don Christian
Randy Clarke
Will Conley
Wade Cooper
Shaun Cranston
Spencer Cronk
Tim Crowley
Paul Cruz
Ashton Cumberbatch, Jr.
Susan Dawson
Sandy Dochen
Betty Dunkerley
Michelle Earley
Mark Estrada
Simone Talma Flowers
Tom Forbes
Jay Fox
Karen Friese

Steve Goldsmith
Alexander J. Gonzales
Sanford Gottesman
Nikki Graham
Jeff Hahn
Jay Hailey
Adam I. Hauser
Tam Hawkins
Clarke Heidrick
Paul Hilgers
John Howard
Laura Huffman
Peter Inman
Keith B. Jackson
Bobby Jenkins
Ashby Johnson
Amy J. Jones
Ronald Kessler
Ali Khataw
Donna Klaeger
Steven W. Knebel
Matt Kouri
Frank L. Leffingwell
Perry Lorenz
Pamela Madere
Judy Maggio
Missy Mandell
Kristin Marcum
Charles R. Martinez, Jr.
Mark Mayfield
Darrick McGill

Nikelle Meade
Thomas Miranda
Janet M. Mitchell
Amy Wong Mok
David Morgan
Catherine Q. Morse
Rhonda Mundhenk
Dewitt Peart
Richard Rhodes
Jeffrey Richard
Marc Rodriguez
Geronimo M. Rodriguez, Jr.
Regina Rogoff
Miguel Romano
Jacqueline Sargent
Ed Sharpe
Denise Smart
Amy Shaw Thomas
Tim Timmerman
Denise Trauth
Jeff Trigger
Tyson Tuttle
Doyle Valdez
Madge Vasquez
Sharon Watkins
Michael J. Whellan
Kenneth Ray Williams
Mark Williams
Pete Winstead
Ellen Wood