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FOREWORD

“It’s because being American is more than a pride we inherit, it’s the past we step into and how we repair it.”

Amanda Gorman, “The Hill We Climb” (delivered at the 46th Presidential Inauguration, Jan. 20, 2021).

Amanda Gorman’s inaugural poem, delivered brilliantly at the presidential inauguration of the 46th President of the United States, reminded the listener that being an American comes with the weight of the nation’s history and a duty to repair and account for that history.

The past may not be repairable. But recognizing and reconfiguring the legal systems and structures that continue to inflict harms upon people of color is both possible and necessary. Those of us in the legal profession (or hoping to enter it after we pass an entrance exam created in part to limit the admission of “immigrant and mixed-race applicants”) bear a unique responsibility to recognize where racism is embedded within our system, to act knowing that our complacency can further entrench racial injustice, and to work constantly to create equity all the spaces that we occupy and in the communities we live in.

This Special Issue calls attention to the brilliant work of legal scholars writing on the racism that permeates the law. Each Journal at the University of Michigan Law School has selected and edited a piece for this collection. In doing so, we as editors have a chance to recognize the past we step into and our role in repairing it. We have an opportunity to promote work that teaches us to radically imagine a more just nation and how we can work to create it.

We dedicate this issue to that work and encourage our institution—and all legal institutions—to dedicate more space to Critical Race Theory in the curriculum. We ask the academy to join these authors in recognizing the past we step into and in working to change our future.

Sincerely,

Courtney Liss, Editor-in-Chief, 
*Michigan Journal of Race & Law*

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*Michigan Business & Entrepreneurial Law Review*

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