



The Life University Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) is grateful for the opportunity to announce its inaugural symposium series, *With Liberty and Justice for All*, a year-long virtual series of symposia exploring the evolution of the meaning of citizens' (and human) rights and responsibilities from the founding of the USA to the present.

This is an open series, with all members of the LIFE community and the public invited. The honor of your participation is requested.

### **October 2020**

The opening symposium will be *With Liberty and Justice for All: The Evolution of US Citizens' Rights*. This symposium, featuring Life U faculty, staff and student presenters, will provide an historic overview of the revolutionary thoughts and ideas that created the USA and continue to drive its evolutionary trajectory from monarchy to democracy. Afterward, based on participants' questions, topics could range from where free speech ends and hate speech begins, to how a nation that enshrined freedom could have also included slavery, to how the human rights movement caused us to reevaluate and reapply the term "all men are created equal, to how LIFE's values, philosophy and principles align with universal human rights. Please mark your calendar now for 5:30PM on Tuesday, October 13, 2020.

### **November 2020**

The second symposium, *With Liberty and Justice for All: The Erosion of Native Rights*, will focus on Native American Heritage Month. This symposium will feature a panel of LIFE community members who are descended from the native peoples of the Americas. Their presentations will provide background on

Southeastern Native American tribes, the impact of European colonization on Native American and Indigenous Caribbean peoples, and their exclusion from US citizenship, as well as the other rights and protections afforded to all US citizens under the Constitution. Please mark your calendar now for 5:30 on Tuesday, November 10, 2020.

## **December 2020**

The third symposium in the series, *With Liberty and Justice for All: Religious Freedom*, will explore the proper role of religion in a nation that acknowledged a Creator and rejected the establishment of a state/national religion, as well provide an inclusive look at multiple cultures' winter holidays and their origins and traditions. From the many Earth religions' celebrations of the Winter Solstice, to Hanukkah, to Christmas, to Kwanzaa (and more), LIFE community members will share their cultural experiences. In addition, this symposium will explore the history of the US as a secular nation that is separate from and respectful of citizens' right to religious freedom. Please mark your calendar now for Tuesday, December 1, 2020 at 5:30PM.

## **2021 Symposia**

The opening symposium for 2021 in the ODEI series, *With Liberty and Justice for All*, will focus on the events leading up to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, with emphasis on the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Hosea Williams, John Lewis, and other Atlanta area figures who played key roles in the Civil Rights Movement. We are fortunate and pleased to share that Hosea Williams's daughter, Dr. Barbara Williams Emerson, a hero of the Civil Rights Movement in her own right, has agreed to serve as the anchor. The event date for *With Liberty and Justice for All: Leading the Way* will take place on Tuesday, January 19, 2021, and will include an observance of Dr. King's birthday.

The next 2021 ODEI symposium in the series, "With Liberty and Justice for All: A Viral Bias Targeting Asian-Americans," will explore the impact on Asian-Americans and the intersection of COVID-19 and prejudice. From continued references to COVID-19 as the "Chinese Flu" and "Kung Flu" to the violence that bias has sparked against Asian-American people, LIFE community members will share the ways in which they have been impacted by these characterizations and references. Please join us for this conversation on Tuesday, January 26, 2021.

The February 2021 symposium in the yearlong ODEI series is *With Liberty and Justice for All: Walk a Mile in Black Men's Shoes*, which will feature Black men who are members of the LIFE community. If you have never walked (or driven or existed) in fear or anxiety over how you might be perceived and treated by law enforcement, you may be walking in the privilege of a different color skin. We hear so many people say, “Well, just do what the police say, and you won’t have any issues” – or – “Don’t break the law and you won’t have anything to worry about,” and unfortunately, that’s simply not the reality for many law-abiding Black men. Please join this “fishbowl” conversation centered on some of our Black male colleagues and students, with attendees serving as both the audience and as contributors to the conversation.

The March 2021 symposium, *With Liberty and Justice for All: On the Basis of Sex*, will be centered on Women’s History Month and will include an overview of women’s suffrage movement, the women’s liberation movement, and women’s rights in the US, including the ongoing call for equal pay, reproductive rights, the necessity and future of an equal rights amendment ensuring women’s recognition as equal citizens, and the impact of the “Me, Too” movement on women’s rights today.

April is National Arab-American Month and the 2021 symposium, *With Liberty and Justice for All: The Making of Perpetual Foreigners*, will concentrate on the experiences of Americans and US residents whose origins in Arab countries include Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Somalia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Many of these 1.7 million US citizens and residents have reported a heightened level of exclusion since September 11, 2001 and a sense that, as Arab-Americans (especially those who are Muslim), they will never truly belong. Join Arab-American members of the Life community to learn more about their experiences, struggles and triumphs in being welcomed and included in the American multicultural mosaic.

Our May 2021 symposium, *With Liberty and Justice for All: A Retrospective on Recovery and Resilience*, will focus on Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Asian American and Pacific Islanders faced particularly egregious assaults on their liberties during WWII in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor and to their safety in the aftermath of COVID-19, when some of their fellow Americans took out their frustration caused by a virus that is believed to have begun in China. This symposium will also include the biases and stereotypes that persist for Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders.

For June 2021, we will host two symposia, one in celebration of National Pride Month and another in celebration of National Caribbean-American Heritage Month. Taking place first, *With Liberty and Justice for All: Out and Proud*, will focus on advances in equity and inclusion made by people who represent gender and sexual diversity in US culture. This symposium will celebrate the contributions and challenges of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, asexual, gender non-conforming and other members of the gay community, from the founding of the US, to ongoing legal discrimination, to Stonewall, to Obergefell v. Hodges, to the recent Supreme Court decision guaranteeing civil rights protection for employees who are gender and sexually diverse.

Our second June 2021 symposium, *With Liberty and Justice for All: A History of Inequities and Indomitable Spirits* will highlight the richness of the many Caribbean cultures as well as the long history of inequitable and inhumane treatment, including genocide, that began with the colonization of the New World by European countries.

For July 2021, *With Liberty and Justice for All: Rights and Responsibilities* will focus on Declaration of Independence, the philosophical and social thought that contributed to its creation, and its subsequent impact on democratic and freedom movements around the world and across time. Exploration will include the Declaration's impact on the women's suffrage, civil rights, and the role of its language in the establishment of democratic governments around the world.

Our penultimate symposium in this series will take place in August 2021 and will be centered on considerations that are becoming increasingly important in discussions about mandated medical treatments and informed consent in response to communicable disease and public health. This offering, *With Liberty and Justice for All: Healthcare Civil Liberties*, will also include issues of reproductive choice, and touch on historic and even current practices that include forced sterilization. This symposium will be of particular interest to those whose understanding of the individual liberty granted citizens by the US Constitution include the right to bodily autonomy.

Our final symposium of the 2020-2021 series will focus on Hispanic and Latinx contributions to US culture and challenges to and from the US government. This offering, *With Liberty and Justice for All: Hispanic Heritage and History*, will take place in September, 2021 and explore the origins and impact of Hispanic influence

on native peoples in the New World, as well as celebrate the richness of Hispanic and Latin cultures.

Please be on the lookout in LIFE News and on the ODEI website (<https://www.life.edu/about-pages/office-of-diversity-equity-inclusion/about-the-office-of-diversity-equity-inclusion/>) for dates and additional details as these symposia are scheduled.

All of the *\_ With Liberty and Justice For All \_* symposia will take place at <https://life-edu.zoom.us/j/91778598678>