



June 29, 2023

Statement of the 23rd International Grand Polaris Dr. Sean D. Housen, Sr.

**Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. condemns the Supreme Court Ruling on Affirmative Action
The Court perpetuates the 'Color Blind' Myth**

Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. is appalled by the ruling by the United States Supreme Court that betrays almost five decades of jurisprudence that recognized the legitimate use of race in college admissions. The ruling denies the well-documented history of racism in America, rooted in the enslavement of Black people, that has resulted in centuries of discriminatory practices denying Black children and young adults' access to education. To suggest the consideration of race in college admissions is not a legitimate remedy in response to the effects of historic discrimination and present-day practices is counter to common sense.

Those who now claim our nation must be 'color-blind,' conveniently forget how racism was embedded in the original version of the United States Constitution. Racism is fundamental to the founding of the United States. It was only after the Reconstruction amendments were adopted, the 13th, 14th and 15th, all extraconstitutional measures, that some semblance of opportunity was afforded Black people. Today, the United States Supreme Court decided to turn the clock back to Reconstruction. For a Court, where dare we say only *three* Black people have served, this denial of history is a betrayal and feels intentional in its embrace of White supremacy.

For all the falsehoods about affirmative action and claims about 'reverse discrimination' and 'merit,' even with these policies in place Black representation in professional occupations is negligible. Data confirms that Blacks are only 5 percent of all lawyers, 5.7 percent of all doctors and 4 percent of all engineers in the nation, and less than 1 percent of all certified public

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accountants while Blacks comprise 13 percent of the nation's population. Affirmative action has never advanced the admission of 'unqualified' Blacks to colleges and universities, and 'qualified' White students have not been displaced by Black enrollees. What we have heard for five decades is White resentment over the *possibility* of Black achievement. Today, the United States Supreme Court, with a Black Justice complicit, has affirmed White entitlement.

This ruling will upend Black enrollment at predominantly White colleges and universities (PWI) at the undergraduate and graduate level. We wonder why any Black student would now feel safe or welcome on the campus of a PWI. At the same time, we hope Black student-athletes on these campuses will reconsider their status and not accept feigned admiration on campuses that our nation does not value them as students. Black bodies should not be used to entertain in white spaces where Black intellect is not respected. We are going to pay particular attention to how today's ruling impacts our Iota Brothers on college campuses across the country. Our priority is to see that these young men receive a quality education that will lead to a college degree.

In our 60th year, Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., founded in the revolutionary moment of the civil rights movement, stands firm in its commitment to fight the forces in this nation that seek to return us to 1963, or worse, 1863. This fraternity, through its social action agenda, will advocate for state legislatures to protect diversity efforts in higher education, and appeal to the federal government to vigorously enforce the nation's anti-discrimination laws. This is not the first instance when cowards in robes betrayed Black people and it will not be the last time when we must rise in defiance and claim our rights as citizens of the United States. Iotas will be present at the 60th anniversary March on Washington on August 26th to join in solidarity with voices for justice in America. We are an organization grounded in truth and the commitment to work until that day 'when justice rolls like a river and righteousness like a mighty stream.'

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Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., established on the campus of Morgan State University (nee College) in 1963 at the height of the civil rights movement, is a member organization of the National Pan-Hellenic Council. Inquiries may be directed to Walter Fields, Director of Communications, communicationsdirector@iotaphitheta.org.