

From the Editor.

Democracy has always been more than a system of government. It is a promise that power derives from the people, that rights are shared rather than bestowed, and that each generation will renew the compact of freedom and responsibility. Alarming, in today's climate of disinformation, political polarization, and institutional distrust, that promise is under extraordinary strain. More than ever, democracy needs its apologists — not in the sense of apologizing, but in the original meaning of the word: those who make a reasoned defense.

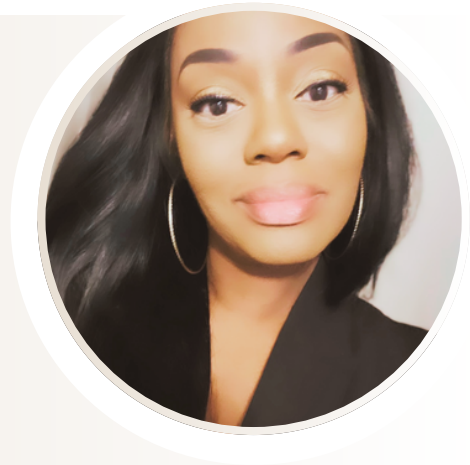
The term “apologetics” comes from the Greek *apologia*, meaning “a reasoned speech in defense.” In classical Athens, an *apologia* was a public defense of one’s actions or beliefs. Apologetics combines clarity, reason, and persuasion to secure the legitimacy of an idea under scrutiny. That same intellectual tradition is urgently needed for democracy today. The great democratic movements of the past were sustained not just by voting or legislation but by voices willing to explain, persuade, and inspire — often by those facing the most injustice. In times of upheaval, the case for democracy must be made again and again.

The framers of our Constitution understood this, as did leaders of the civil rights movement, who argued in town halls, pulpits, and newspapers that the democratic ideal must be extended to all Americans. The viral spread of conspiracy theories, the erosion of civic education, and the normalization of authoritarian rhetoric have left many Americans questioning whether democracy can indeed solve problems or even worth preserving. Simply assuming democracy will endure is naive. It survives only when people understand its value and defend it. That means journalists, educators, community leaders, and ordinary citizens must step forward as apologists for democracy — crafting clear arguments, countering misinformation, and showing how democratic processes, though imperfect, remain the best means of achieving fairness, equity, and accountability.

Defending democracy isn’t just about opposing our enemies. It is about rekindling faith in the promise of democracy. Without dedicated advocates, democratic norms become fragile traditions instead of living commitments. The time to speak, write, and act on democracy’s behalf is now — before silence becomes complicity and complacency erodes the freedoms we take for granted.

In Black,

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