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### Letter to BLSA Alumni

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Black Law Students Association, Fordham University School of Law

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BLACK LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (BLSA)

November 19, 1988

Dear Alumni:

Greetings from Fordham BLSA! This year will hopefully be a record one for both the Black law students at Fordham and Fordham's Black alumni. It is my hope that together we can be instrumental in effecting some long awaited, much needed change at Fordham Law School.

When many of you attended Fordham, you were the only Black person in your class, or you were one of a very small number. Fortunately, no Black law student at Fordham in 1988 can say that she or he is the only Black in her or his class. We have over fifty Black law students at Fordham this year. However, that number is painfully low for a school that has a total student population of 1,300. Also, there continues to be a problem with the attrition of Black law students at Fordham. These are problems that can only be adequately addressed and ultimately conquered with your help.

In addition, there is a problem with overt racism within the Fordham community. Fordham does not exist in a vacuum, and this blatant racism is merely reflective of the heightened racial tension that exists in society at large.

Enclosed is a clip from a column that appeared in the October issue of The Advocate, Fordham Law School's student newspaper. The column is called "Letters to Mr. X". It is a fictitious column written in the same style as "Dear Abbey". We were outraged by these patently racist, offensive letters. What adds insult to injury is the fact that there were two examples within the same publication, of the blatant disregard for the Black students, professors and alumni of Fordham. It is also offensive and insulting to those other members of the Fordham Law School community who in no way condone the perpetuation of racism.

Of course, BLSA has taken a strong stand on this issue; and for your information, I am enclosing a copy of the letter forwarded to Dean Feerick addressing this issue. I urge each and everyone of you to help us have a greater impact. Please write letters, make phone calls and make personal appearances to Dean Feerick, to The Advocate and to anyone else you think appropriate, expressing your indignation over this incident. We must send out a message -- strong and clear -- we will tolerate nothing less than being treated with dignity and respect!

In addition to The Advocate issue, there was a problem with one of the Spring semester finals; specifically, Professor Magnetti's torts final. BLSA's letter to Dean Feerick details our concerns regarding the exam; and I encourage each of you to also express your concerns to the Dean. Copies of the exam are available upon request.

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There is much work to be done. Together we can do more than we ever dreamed possible. We need to communicate and come together more than once a year. We would like to help organize a Fordham BLSA Alumni Association. I know that this will be time consuming, but I also know that it will be rewarding and it is imperative that we do it.

Please feel free to contact me or John Johnson, Chairperson of the Alumni Affairs Committee with any ideas, questions or comments you have.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation and participation.

With sincerity and respect,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. Thurmond".

Marcia Thurmond, Chairperson  
Fordham BLSA

MT:jks  
Enclosures