



January 9, 2021

Dear Brooks School Community Members,

As we look forward to welcoming students back to classrooms to begin the second semester, I wanted to be in touch in the aftermath of Wednesday's violent, lawless, and mob-led attack on the United States Capitol. To be writing to all of you on the other side of what was an unimaginable event is heartbreaking. Yet, one of the many tragedies we experienced this past Wednesday is the fact that what transpired was somehow not unimaginable. We bore witness to a brazen attempt, inspired by the President of the United States, to derail the transition of power to President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris. This has been described as an act of domestic terror by members of both political parties, and it is my hope that all of the perpetrators are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

It is hard to grasp the fact that this is where we are in the United States. I have struggled to determine what to say in the immediate wake of such an appalling and terrifying episode in American life. Yet, as I continue to ruminate over what has happened and may still happen over the weeks ahead, I would like to share the following:

We are living through a period of time where there is a need to be explicit and unequivocal in denouncing violence inspired by hate. It saddens me that we are in a place where we need to distance ourselves and denounce hate of any sort in order to be certain there is no doubt about where we stand. Let there be no doubt: In the strongest possible terms, Brooks School condemns what happened on Wednesday afternoon and evening and the sentiment that emboldened the perpetrators.

As we continue to process what we witnessed around and in the United States Capitol, we are acutely aware and sympathetic to the view expressed by many wondering how this attack would have been handled if the perpetrators were predominantly black or brown people. This sad chapter in American life has again reminded us of the pervasive and chronic racial inequity that plagues this country.

We are tasked each year with educating an extraordinary group of high school students in ways that extend well beyond the classroom. We pledge to take exceptional care of our students academically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. We endeavor to graduate students who become leaders and citizens of the highest order in communities they are a part of throughout their lives. This week's events are antithetical to who we are as a school and what we stand for. As we gather again and start a new semester,

we will do so determined to meet and support one another, wherever we may be, in processing what has transpired. There is no question in my mind that our school is and will be part of the solution to the ugliness that has shaken us this week.

Through what has been a tragic week by any measure, I am optimistic about what 2021 will yield. We have an opportunity to learn and grow as a community, with what we have witnessed serving as added inspiration to do so. In spite of Wednesday's depravity, the United States Congress fulfilled its duty to certify the electoral college results and ensure that a popularly supported transfer of power will occur on January 20. With each passing day, we inch closer to having access to a COVID-19 vaccine and an eventual return to being with one another in ways we have missed terribly. We have persevered through an extraordinarily difficult period of time and are poised to do our best to stay the course through the winter months. I continue to be as proud of our school as I have ever been.

It will be good to be together again in the coming week. Until then, take good care.

Sincerely,

John R. Packard
Head of School

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