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LDF Partners with BIPOC Artists to Launch “They Can’t. We Can.” Voting Campaign Honoring Victims of Police Violence

Today, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) launched the “They Can’t. We Can.” voting campaign honoring victims of police violence and others whose lives were senselessly taken in racially-motivated crimes. The campaign features commissioned artwork by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) artists honoring many of the Black men and women whose deaths have pushed issues of police violence to the forefront in recent years. Each artist created their own interpretation of a campaign-style poster that depicts one of the victims to encourage voters to vote in their honor. The “They Can’t. We Can.” launch video can be seen [here](#).

[VoteInTheirHonor.com](#) hosts the campaign posters for these victims and provides a way for voters to view the artwork, select a poster that speaks to them, and share it on their social media channels with #TheyCantWeCan. Voters can create their own poster on the site using the names of people in their lives they would like to honor. The website also includes vital information to make sure people are prepared to vote.

“For years across our nation, tens of thousands have marched and protested in honor of victims of police violence. We have said their names and demanded justice and accountability from law enforcement and elected leaders. Through these powerful works of art, we hope to give voters an opportunity to dedicate their vote this fall to those who were taken from their families and communities all too soon,” said LDF President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill. “LDF would like to thank the families of the victims for giving us permission to use the likeness of their loved ones to help further inspire voters. We would also like to express our appreciation to the artists who have brought their talents to this project.”

In the United States, people of color are significantly disproportionately impacted by police violence. Since 2015, police have fatally shot nearly 250 Black women across the country. Based on confirmed cases, 164 Black people were killed by police in the first eight months of 2020 – nearly one Black person every week. This summer’s killings of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd sparked an intense wave of peaceful protests against police violence in all 50 states. In some areas, like Philadelphia and Louisville – where LDF has filed lawsuits – those peaceful protesters were met with the very same police violence they were speaking out against.

The artists involved in “They Can’t. We Can.” created original artwork honoring the following individuals:

- Korryn Gaines and Botham Jean – by Rachele Baker

- Sandra Bland and Oscar Grant – by Laura Freeman
- George Floyd and Walter Scott – by Gabe Gault
- Trayvon Martin – by Stephanie Jones
- Eric Garner and Atatiana Jefferson – by Dave McClinton
- Terence Crutcher and Breonna Taylor – by Lisa Whittington
- Emmett Till – by Mer Young
- “Create Your Own” generator – by Adrian Meadows

Artist Profiles:

Rachelle Baker is a multi-disciplinary artist from Detroit, MI with a background in Relief Printing, Illustration, Comic Art, and Music. Her work is focused on bringing voices and faces usually pushed to the background to center stage. Rachelle has illustrated “Making Our Way Home: The Great Migration and the Black American Dream” by Blair Imani, “Shirley Chisholm is a Verb” by Veronica Chambers, and the upcoming “Motherlode: 100+ Women Who Made Hip-Hop” by Clover Hope.

Laura Freeman is a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honoree. Her work has been recognized with an NAACP Image Award, reached the New York Times bestsellers list, been honored by the Society of Illustrators, the Georgia Center for the Book, and in the Annuals for Communication Arts and American Illustration.

Gabe Gault is a Southern California native who spent his formative years in Venice Beach, where creativity, popular culture, and its colorful residents made a lasting impression. His reading disability caused him to turn his full attention to art to express himself and explore his identity as a Black American. His current work employs classical painting techniques with modern subjects, particularly individuals dedicated to making a positive difference in our culture.

Stephanie Jones is a lawyer, law professor, writer, and civil rights activist who recently began painting after a long career devoted to “bridging the gaps” that separate people, communities, and ideas, and fostering diversity, public engagement and cross-cultural understanding. She served in the administrations of Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton and was executive director of the National Urban League Policy Institute. She is now president of The Call to Justice Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering a new generation of civil rights lawyers and activists.

Dave McClinton has worked in the design industry for 25+ years, gaining experience in print, digital, and brand design. As an accomplished senior designer, he is passionate about advancing the strategic value of smart design. That knowledge and drive has been earned within the publishing world, tech startups, and design studios.

Lisa Whittington describes herself as “a New York City girl practicing art in the civil rights capital, Atlanta, Georgia. I love history and I live the skin I’m in.” Her work narrates the history, attitude, spirit, and mood of Black people in America. “Black people have been through so much and with all that I know how to do, I feel a sense of duty to be a historian for my culture.” She received her doctorate in Art Education from the University of Georgia and is a member of the Black Artists and Designers Guild.

Mer Young, from Long Beach, California, focuses her mixed-media aesthetic on images that tell stories of marginalized communities, like migrants, indigenous people, women of color,

and Brown and Black lives. Her public works can be found in Long Beach, Glendale, South Pasadena, South Bay, and the downtown Los Angeles Arts District.

Adrian Meadows is a graphic designer, hand-lettering artist, and muralist based in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Since completing #Project365, in which he created a lettering piece every day for a year, lettering has become his main outlet to express himself creatively. He believes that art is the most impactful language we have and that even though we all may not be visual artists, everyone has a gift that can be used in an artistic way to encourage positivity and promote change.

Visit the campaign [website](#) for more.

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.