

On the night of June 29, 2018, Jason Erik Washington's life tragically ended when he was shot by PSU police officers responding to a call near SW College Street. His death occurred after four years of robust campus protest against arming campus security officers and concerns over racial profiling. Activism by PSU students and alums, by #DisarmPSU, and by Don't Shoot PDX reached another crest after the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis in 2020. Responding to this activism and with the support of President Percy, PSU's Chief of Campus Public Safety, Willie Halliburton, took the unprecedented step of adopting a policy that university police would no longer be armed during routine patrols. Informed by fresh anti-racism goals and commitments by the university, important work was undertaken by the [Reimaging Campus Safety Task Force, which issued an excellent report in early 2022](#). At the same time, President Percy convened a committee to fulfill one aspect of the settlement with the Washington family: to create a memorial of Jason Erik Washington on campus. That [report of the Jason Erik Washington Art Committee was recently published](#) and [endorsed by President Percy](#).

During 2021-22, the committee took a restorative justice approach to the idea of memorializing Jason Erik Washington. A restorative justice approach means placing the needs and interests of the Washington family at the center of the memorialization process. Kayla Washington, eldest daughter of Jason Erik Washington, graciously served on the committee along with PSU faculty, staff, and a student representative. In outline, the committee agreed that at least three elements were needed to enable an authentically restorative process and adequate memorial. First, a clear narrative of accountability needs to be placed prominently and permanently near the site of the tragedy. Second, a humane and detailed memorialization of Jason Erik Washington as a human being who loved and was loved by many people is absolutely required. Finally, some linking elements that connect the shooting of Jason Erik Washington with the larger context of racist policing and the histories of racism in the city, state, and nation are critically necessary as well.

If you walk around campus you will see plaques, murals, benches and other markers of people, places, and events connected to the university, some local and others global. These markers go stale very quickly, despite the best of intentions by planners. Without active integration into the life of PSU—the everyday teaching, research, and service—Jason Erik Washington's memorial will suffer the same fate. So, in this next phase of memorializing Jason Erik Washington, the committee seeks active input and collaboration with the broader campus. This collaboration can take many forms, and we welcome ideas for how you or your unit or organization want to engage. We want to avoid having just a plaque that people just walk by, thoughtlessly.

How can the memorialization of Jason Erik Washington intersect with classroom teaching, with internship and research, and with community service? How can it be a living memorial and not just an inert piece of art? One idea is that the memorial include a "story circle" component, which can capture individual narratives that intersect with the themes of Jason Erik Washington's life and death. In this way, active connections with this recent history are kept alive. In addition, we at PSU build a practice of connection and accountability as part of "what we do" and "how we live" together on campus. How do we ensure that people charged with our

“public safety” do not engage in racial profiling and avoid responding with deadly force? How do we collectively create and maintain safe and inclusive spaces on campus and in our community?

Please consider attending one of the planned in-person or zoom forums on the memorialization process during fall and winter terms. There is also a campus-wide survey in the works for respondents to offer ideas, feedback, and comments. You can also email your thoughts and suggestions to info@pdx.edu. Together we can transform this tragedy into a living commitment to anti-racism and to a more peaceful and just campus for all members of the PSU community.