

## A Note from the Editor

The racial justice of 2020 has spurred thousands of Americans to examine how racism pervades nearly all institutions. One insidious and often invisible form of institutionalized racism is the environmental racism by which unfair legal codes and poor environmental conditions have disproportionately disadvantaged poor, BIPOC communities for generations. Many white allies first became aware of this phenomenon during the 2014 Flint water crisis, but it is a fact of long standing that ecologically-damaging events most burden the communities that have the least money, access, and influence to fight back. As the keynote speaker for the *Environmental Justice, Climate Change & Racial Justice Symposium* that took place at Purdue in Spring 2021, Dr. Carlton Waterhouse explored the connection between structurally racist policies and their disastrous effects on health and income.

Dr. Carlton Waterhouse is the director of the Environmental Justice Center at Howard University School of Law. He is an expert on environmental law and environmental justice, as well as the author of nearly ten books. His legal career began in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), where his stringent enforcement of various environmental statutes and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 earned him three of the agency's highest awards. He is a frequent speaker on the global stage and has had pieces published in the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*. Dr. Waterhouse is a board member of the Environmental Law Institute. Currently, he is in the process of publishing a new book with Cambridge University Press about the relationship between the U.S. Supreme Court and structural racism. Dr. Waterhouse has also recently returned to the EPA as the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Land and Emergency Management for the Office of Land and Emergency Management.

The remedy to environmental racism is environmental justice, an organized movement to correct past injustices through redistributive policy. These actions represent a commitment to break from the routine of the past. Afflicted communities historically have no way to escape their suffering, as children are immediately disadvantaged simply by the location at which they are born. If they start off behind, what hope do they have of catching up? While it is sometimes argued that legal equality between races means that racism no longer exists, such arguments are based on a superficial understanding of equal access that mistakes the ability to run the race as the ability to compete from the same starting point. Addressing environmental racism will not eliminate inequity, but it will be a necessary part in the movement to ensure that no child is held back by the circumstances of their birth.

## About the Editor

Jannine Huby is an undergraduate student at Purdue University, where she is dual majoring in Political Science and Global Studies with a minor in Professional Writing. She is an active member of Purdue's Honors College and a representative for the College of Liberal Arts on the Honors Leadership Council (HLC). Around campus, Jannine can also be seen performing her duties as a Resident Assistant and as a member of Student English Association (SEA).