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Welcome to the University of Michigan's Juneteenth Symposium 2024!

We're so grateful to the Office of Academic and Multicultural Initiatives for sponsoring this important event, and it is such an honor to join with you in this celebration of black activism and progress – in honoring the great day of freedom that was proclaimed more than 150 years ago, and recommitting ourselves to the promise of inclusion, of respect, of harmony.

This symposium dedicated as it is, to Black Activism and Progress Through Art, is so vital in that respect. For the arts still our souls, even as they call us to action, to activism, to justice.

It is for that reason that we have placed such a high value on the arts at U-M. For they infuse all aspects of our lives, provoking thought and meaning, deepening our understanding and lifting our eyes.

Our support for the arts is founded in our shared values – values of integrity and innovation, respect, inclusion, equity and diversity – values that sustain us as a community and must be at the heart of everything we do as a university.

These are the values, this is the spirit of Juneteenth. For on that day in 1865 Major General Gordon Granger proclaimed that the last enslaved people in the reunited United States were free.

Yet this great work of liberty remains a work in progress. And in times of hate and divisiveness, it is so important to rediscover how to engage in impactful and productive activism.

We come together again, renewing our commitment to engage with one another in humility and honesty, and joining together in seeking justice, respect, and harmony.

Welcome to our annual symposium, and Happy Juneteenth!



Santa J. Ono

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