

I am writing to you on the eve of the beginning of Black History Month 2023. To our Appalachia Studies Community, to acknowledge the pain, hopelessness, and rage being experienced yet again, following the violence many have since witnessed and or heard about, inflicted upon Tyre Nichols, a human being, Black.

Be assured that as an Association of Scholars and Practitioners, ASA rejects violence and all forms of hatred. These events—including the deep sorrow we feel as a nation and community over the death—are a constant reminder that many communities across the country remain challenged by injustice, and we are experiencing the tragic consequences again.

Our humanity compels us to express empathy to the family and friends of Tyre Nichols and all associated either directly or indirectly with this incident. Our hearts rightfully ache for our friends who may have or are experiencing intense emotional distress over Mr. Nichols' death.

Black History Month was established to fill a gap in the historical narrative of our nation, thus creating an opportunity for people of all ethnic and social backgrounds to discuss the Black experience. ASA is committed to advancing the discussion around the Black experience. We welcome scholarship, presentations and other forms of practical and intellectual inquiry. The 2023 national theme designated by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History is, 'Black Resistance.'

I look forward to engaging in critical discussions that will offer us a greater understanding of our society. I hope that each member of our community leverages the full scope of their discipline to bring forward debate, learning, and the recognition that there are ways of communicating a point of view that maintain relationships, respect differences, and move communities closer together instead of further apart.

So, I encourage us all to take the time to engage with friends, colleagues, and others as we mark the 97th national observance of Black History Month.

Sincerely,

Ricardo Nazario-Colón Ed.D.
President
Appalachian Studies Association