

Statement from the Last Two Tulsa Race Massacre Survivors
on the Dismissal by the Oklahoma Supreme Court

It is 2024 –103 years after the Tulsa Race Massacre – and our legal system continues to deny Black Americans an equal opportunity to seek justice under the law. The reality is as simple as it is chilling: we, the last two survivors of the Tulsa Race Massacre, have been forced to jump over higher legal bars than anyone else simply because we dare to seek justice for the atrocities committed upon us and our community. We are profoundly disappointed by the Oklahoma Supreme Court's decision to reject our lawsuit and are deeply saddened that we may not live long enough to see the state of Oklahoma, or the United States of America, honestly confront and right the wrongs of one of the darkest days of American history.

At 109 and 110-years-old we are weary and we know that we are living on borrowed time. Because of this, we have decided to use this statement to speak boldly and straightforwardly about the failures of the American justice system to all who will listen, for we have nothing left to lose. Oklahoma, and the United States of America, have failed its Black citizens – this failure is profound, systemic, and marred by lip-service and clever platitudes. With our own eyes, and burned deeply into our memories, we watched white Americans destroy, kill, and loot. And despite these obvious crimes against humanity, not one indictment was issued, most insurance claims remain unpaid or were paid for only pennies on the dollar, and Black Tulsans were forced to leave their homes and live in fear. This is the American reality no matter how much politicians seek to instill policies that hide our history, this is our collective truth. It seems that the only "justice" permitted for Black Americans are sympathetic words and supposed promises that white Americans, our government, and our justice system will "do better." But the lip-service continues and tangible justice is consistently denied.

Notwithstanding the obvious crimes committed upon Black Americans during the Tulsa Race Massacre, we are asked to continue to keep our faith in the American justice system and keep waiting for things to get better. We are tired.

Although our quest for justice in Oklahoma may be over, for as long as we remain in this lifetime, we will continue to shine a light on one of the darkest days of American history. But we know that there is more that can be done and we ask that the United States Department of Justice intervene and open an investigation into the Massacre and do what Oklahoma has never done. It is not too late to do the right thing. We want to deeply believe in the government's power to do right by Black Americans and to focus its power and attention on righting the wrongs inflicted upon our communities.

Although we are deeply disheartened with the Court's ruling, we remain women of deep faith and trust that one day this country will do the right thing for Greenwood and all Black Americans. We hope we are around to see it.