

“**B**lack and white and brown, all people, when he said ‘I can’t breathe,’ it was as though people took up that and said ‘*I know. I can’t either. We’re dying too.*’ Just like that cop had his knee on the neck of George, all these policies’ knees are on top of us.” \*

These were the words of the Rev. Dr. William Barber, when he saw the news about George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, dying in police custody in Minneapolis.

Another great American, Frederick Douglass, lamenting the post-Civil War body politic in 1870 said:

“Americans are by habit destitute of political memory.” \*\*

After a century and a half, the words of the Great Abolitionist resonate still with a lesson, a reminder for us all.

As part of its mission, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League always has and always will stand for environmental justice and racial equity, for Sisterhood and Brotherhood.

Therefore, we cannot ignore, we cannot forget injustice whenever and wherever it occurs. We must remember. And we must act.

“That’s what you see in the streets, it’s the democracy trying to breathe.” \*

Louis A. Zeller, Executive Director, 6/18/2020

\*“Rev. William Barber: George Floyd Protests Represent Call to Address Systemic Racism and Poverty in U.S.” *TIME 100 TALKS*, Madeleine Carlisle, June 4, 2020, <https://time.com/5846623/william-barber-floyd-protests-time100-talks/>

\*\**Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*, David W. Blight, 2018, Simon & Shuster, ISBN 978-1-4165-9031-6, p. 530