

Letter from the Chairman

The Board of Directors of the Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas universally condemns racism, prejudice, and racially motivated violence in all its forms. We stand in solidarity with the Black community against racial injustice and support calls for reform.

With great humility we commit to listening, learning, advocating and acting for change in our industry and our communities. We resolve to support initiatives for inclusion and diversity in the hospitality industry and to support organizations that create opportunities for the Black community and people of color to thrive as sommeliers, winemakers, distributors, retailers and beverage industry leaders. We pledge to do more within our organization to inspire and support those seeking to become Master Sommeliers.

In January we made a small but significant first step to encouraging more diversity in our industry by supporting the efforts of Wine Empowered (www.wine-empowered.com), a New York based non-profit committed to empowering women and people of color through tuition-free wine education. Organizationally, we are committed to seeking out more opportunities like this and others.

As a result of ongoing dialogue with our members, the Board has taken several initial steps to promote greater inclusion and diversity within the wine industry and our organization:

- The Board established a Diversity Committee to engage in conversations and pursue paths to increase diversity in our industry, candidates for our credentials and within our organization.
- The Board has tasked the Diversity Committee to source and recommend an implicit bias training for the organization, beginning with the Board of Directors and extending to all Master Sommeliers teaching or examining at all levels of the organization. This is essential and we believe will have the most immediate impact on both the current and future members of our organization.
- Our Executive Director has continued meeting with Wine Empowered to explore deeper involvement in their programming.
- We have been actively exploring multiple avenues for additional scholarship opportunities and other creative ways to increase the diversity of those who take our courses and examinations.

Additionally, another small step we can all take is to seek out and support Black-owned wine businesses. GuildSomm (www.guildsomm.com) has published a list available [HERE](#).

We recognize these are only initial steps in a much longer journey as we chart the course for current and future Master Sommeliers. It is important to us that the above commitments are followed up with sincere action over the weeks, months, and years ahead. Your help, insight, feedback, and hard work are both welcome and necessary. We have been encouraged to see the many individual members who have spoken out for justice and racial equality. Now, it is time we all stand united to promote diversity and inclusivity within our organization, the hospitality industry, and the world.

Part of what brought us all to the hospitality industry and to the Court of Master Sommeliers is a deeply ingrained desire to serve others. That desire we know was a crucial guiding light on our journey to becoming Master Sommeliers. Let us use that light now to do our part to effect the change we know is possible and necessary.

With Gratitude,



Devon Broglie, MS
Chairman of the Board
Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas



The Court of Master Sommeliers sets the global standard of excellence for beverage service within the hospitality industry with integrity, exemplary knowledge, and humility.

An earlier version of this letter included a mention of an organization that did not express interest in being included. We have removed the mention and reached out to the organization to express our apologies. This letter has been updated to include specific actions taken by the Board of Directors to promote diversity and inclusion within the organization and our industry.