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City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: Statements from Mayor Larson, Chief Tusken, and Human Rights Officer Carl Crawford on the Chauvin verdict and next steps

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

Statements from Mayor Larson, Chief Tusken, and Human Rights Officer Carl Crawford on the Chauvin verdict and next steps

[Duluth, MN] Mayor Emily Larson, Police Chief Mike Tusken, and Human Rights Officer Carl Crawford have issued the following statements on the verdict of the Chauvin trial and next steps for our community. Each of their statements can be found below.

Statement from Mayor Emily Larson:

"Yesterday, Carl (Crawford) and I listened to the verdict come in together. We sat, side by side, nervous in anticipation and then absolutely elated together by the outcome. We cheered. And then in silence, we watched the defendant be handcuffed and led out of the courtroom.

In the past year we have all seen more viscerally the hurt and pain of what it is to move, live and breathe in this world as a black or brown person. That a truth of our history as a country, as a city, has been to relocate, exploit, enslave, endanger, hold down and murder people who are black, indigenous, and people of color. Sometimes with our knees. Other times with a noose. Consistently through our policies.

I feel relief today for the accountability of the guilty verdicts. I feel hope that we can change systems and bend the arc towards greater justice. I feel grounded in a focus to lead this community with the value that our individual and collective humanity matters; that everybody gets to exist. And everybody deserves to be safe.

I understand the call this community and country are demanding for greater accountability in our policing, our policies, our practices. I am ready to do this work. What we saw yesterday wasn't full justice, and it wasn't full fairness. But it was critically important progress and I am committed to doing the work to achieve more.

As Carl and I parted ways after the verdict, we each went home to our sons – my white son, his black son. And it was not lost on me that we were going home to different conversations with them based on race. Yesterday re-rooted me to this work of equity and justice until both of our sons - and all of our community's children – believe and feel, see and know, that this city is a place where they can safely live, exist, belong and survive and thrive.

Rest in Power, Mr. Floyd. Amen."

Statement from Chief Mike Tusken:

"Nearly a year ago, we watched with outrage and sadness at the tragedy of George Floyd's death at the hands of officers who took an oath to protect his rights.

We watched as he begged for his next and last breath, only to have it denied.

As an organization, we condemned the actions and inactions we witnessed.

Yesterday's verdict was right and just.

We are committed to continuous improvement and innovation in policing that honors and cares for the people we took an oath to serve. We commit to working to build relationships and trust with the people in all our neighborhoods.

It is our honor to serve you."

Statement from Human Rights Officer Carl Crawford:

"After months of waiting and worrying, yesterday's decision was a positive step forward in bringing justice to George Floyd and his family. It also provided the opportunity for many in our community to finally exhale. We know this decision will never bring Mr. Floyd back to the loving arms of his family, but it can start us on the journey to heal.

Here in Duluth, we know the hard work that is in front of us. It will take all of us to work alongside each other to acknowledge

that systems are not perfect, and that they have flaws. It will take everyone to create and build relationships, and to take a look at systems that have not changed in decades.

We know the deep grief that has been felt across the country, and my hope is that we can build on that grief to make positive change in every community in America. One verdict cannot erase years of pain from a justice system that did not protect us. We will never forget that, however, today is a new day and opportunity to create change. This is our time, and our time is now. Let's get to work."

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