Dear Joiner Friends, Supporters and UMass Boston Faculty, Staff and Students,

Amidst an unprecedented moment in history, the Joiner Institute continues to fight for its mission to understand the social and public health consequences of war for veterans, family members of veterans, war refugees, and all victims of war.
Over the past almost twenty years of the War on Terror, we at the Joiner Institute have watched with alarm at the increasing militarization of local police forces under acts like the National Defense Authorization Act, the Patriot Act, and other federal legislation.

We now see the war coming home, with the recent targeting of civil protestors of the Black Lives Matter movement across the country, and National Guard vehicles and armed military patrolling our own streets in the City of Boston.

The William Joiner Institute fully supports peaceful protests and political action to fight racism in America in all its forms, including institutionalized racism, systemic violence and discrimination against people of color, immigrants, and refugees.

We support the ending of racial profiling and targeting of people of color on our streets, in our schools, and through employment, housing, and education. We support the demands put forth by the Movement for Black Lives, statements of solidarity written by the UMass Boston Dean's Council, and the recent demands brought forward by the Coalition of Student Organizers and the Faculty Council at UMass Boston, including a moratorium on using UMass Boston parking lots as a staging area for riot police.

We strongly oppose the unconstitutional use of active duty military troops in an effort to intimidate and repress American citizens right to peacefully protest against racism, discriminatory practices and injustice in our country.

The William Joiner Institute commits to continue its own efforts supporting racial justice and equity through our campus programming, such as our conversations series with Millennials of Colors, our ongoing Black Words Matter grant with the Boston Cultural Council, and programs and exhibitions highlighting the voices of refugees, veterans of color, deported veterans and countries impacted by U.S. wars. This past year the Joiner Institute helped provide office space for the new student chapter of the NAACP with whom we co-sponsored our spring veterans event.

We will continue to be a welcoming space for students, scholars and veterans of color to work, research, and explore the social and health effects of war, violence, displacement and conflict.

Though the Covid-19 crisis shortened our Spring Calendar we were
able to host important community events celebrating student veterans of color, and long term healing from war through meditation. Our research work continues remotely, contributing to State and campus surveys into services available for veterans, and we are actively writing grants and working with donors to support our ongoing work. We look forward to a summer and fall of new programming in an online form, to be announced soon.

We are ever grateful to our supporters, donors, and fellowship of writers, scholars, veterans and community members who support our work and mission. We hope you stay safe, active, and involved in local initiatives for peace, justice, and healing.

Follow Joiner updates on Facebook and Twitter, as we continue to grow our active online network.

Contact mitch.manning@umb.edu with any questions or feedback.

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Joiner Institute Spring 2020 Recap

Salute to Those Who Served
Veterans' Celebration
On February 11th, the Joiner was thrilled to co-host with the UMB Student Chapter of the NAACP "Salute to Those Who Served: Celebrating Black History Month and Honoring Student Veterans of Color and Dr. Charles Desmond."

The event honored Dr. Charlie Desmond, a Bronze and Silver star recipient in the Vietnam War, and long-time champion for veterans and underprivileged students. Charlie Desmond was an early supporter and co-founder of the Joiner Center and gave many years of service in various capacities at UMass Boston.

You can check out video from the event, including the excellent panel with young student veterans of color about their experience in the military, coming home, and their work and service in the community. Hosted by local journalist Wale Aliju. Thank you to all of our veterans who participated and our many co-sponsors for making the event a success.

Joiner Veteran Researcher awarded grant to support My Brother's Keeper Boston COVID-19 response this summer
Joiner Institute Graduate Researcher and veteran Tony Martin

The nonprofit The Mission Continues has awarded UMass Boston student veteran, and Joiner Institute Graduate Researcher, Tony Martin '19 a $1,500 grant to support My Brother's Keeper Boston in its COVID-19 response this summer. Tony will be working with students in Boston Public Schools through his internship position.

Tony has been an important part of the Joiner mission the past years, including helping to organize the Conversations with Millennials of Color series, mentorship, pursuing graduate studies in the Critical Ethnic and Community Studies Graduate Program, and was the driving force of our Salute to Those Who Served event. Way to go Tony!

Read more at UMass Boston News
The Joiner was grateful to host Vietnam combat veteran and Zen Buddhist monk Claude AnShin Thomas on March 4th for a discussion and introduction to meditation for veterans, their families, and the UMB community.

AnShin discussed his service as a helicopter door gunner in the Vietnam War and his subsequent journey through post traumatic stress, working with the then newly formed Joiner Center and other Boston area veterans groups, and finally his path to Buddhist meditation and being ordained as a monk.

"The war is never over. War does not begin with a declaration and ends with an armistice. Wars can not exist unless we support them. War is a collective expression of our individual aggression, it is a collective expression of our individual suffering... And if I am not willing to wake up then this reality of aggression will continue."

AnShin leads Zoom talks every Sunday for veterans to explore the effects of military and/or combat service and how to find more peace in our lives. Every Sunday, 7:00 pm Eastern Time. Zoom link here. Family members are welcome. Please share this opportunity with other veterans. Questions? info@zaltho.org.

Higher Education Day of Advocacy at the State House
Joiner Institute Director Tom Kane with Joiner friends, students, supporters and other Higher Ed activists visiting Rep. Tackey Chan's office at Higher Education Lobby Day at the State House (3/2/20)

For the third year in a row, The Joiner Institute participated in PHENOM's Public Higher Education Advocacy Day at the State House this March. We were able to meet with local lawmakers to remind them of the importance of sustained state funding for the Joiner mission and other UMass Boston Centers and Institutes. We also need public colleges and universities that have the resources to provide a quality education without putting students in debt. Thank you to our supporters for joining us at the State House.

We are grateful to State House advocates Senators Michael Rush, Nick Collins, Pat Jehlen, Representatives Marjorie Decker, Tacky Chan, David Biele, Liz Malia, their wonderful staffs, and many others for their ongoing support of the Joiner Institute and our mission.

Two Essays on Racism by Writers' Workshop Faculty
Two Joiner Writers' Workshop faculty members have written important reflections inspired by recent protests for racial justice in the U.S.

Former Boston Poet Laureate, and Lesley Professor Danielle Legros Georges recently published a new essay titled, "Our Racism is a Hydra":

"Our racism is a hydra. It is multi-headed. It is systemic. Given its nature, it is fitting that its examination be conducted by a group-comprising individuals who have sought, through their work, to understand racism in America, present it to us, support those disenfranchised by it, teach its dangers, and un-teach its pedagogy."

Read more on the [Lesley MFA website](https://www.lesley.edu/).

Sean Davis, Iraq War Army veteran, professor, author, and veteran activist from Portland, Oregon recently published "There Comes a Time When Silence Is a Betrayal":

"I joined the Army infantry after high school and was submerged in the melting pot that the Founding Fathers meant our country to be. The Army and Marine infantry are filled with the poorest class because it is the hardest job in the military. For the first time in my life, I was the minority. My inherited prejudices melted away when I was forced to trust my Mexican, African American, and Korean squad mates (who were also my roommates in the barracks). Well, I thought they had melted away, but my first deployment was to Haiti during their revolution in 1994-5."
We are deeply saddened by the passing of George Kovach, a true friend of the Joiner family, a longtime Writers' Workshop participant, Vietnam Veteran, and generous friend and mentor to many students, veterans, and writers. An obituary was printed in The New York Times.

From CONSEQUENCE Magazine: "With deep sadness, the editorial staff at CONSEQUENCE magazine announces the loss of our founding editor, George Kovach, to cancer on Sunday, April 12. A poet and publisher, a kind and generous man, George walked through the world with compassion and empathy, and a strong need to speak to the culture and consequences of war. A Vietnam Veteran, George rarely spoke of his own experience, instead, he created a strong and vibrant platform for others. George's family has asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be sent to CONSEQUENCE magazine."

A profile of the Joiner Institute was recently featured on the CONSEQUENCE site written by Army Veteran and UMB MFA student Westley Smith.

WJI Associate Director Mitch Manning wrote a poem in George's honor, published on the CONSEQUENCE site as well.
Support CONSEQUENCE by buying a copy of Issue 12, available online for purchase.

Joiner Collaborates on Research Study of Veterans with UMB Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging

A meeting of 10th floor Centers and Institutes in the Joiner office (2/26/20)

The William Joiner Institute is featured in the May Newsletter from the Office of Community Partnerships on our recent remote work during the Covid-19 crisis. Director Tom Kane has been conducting interviews with heads of veterans support organizations in Natick, and with veterans of different service eras, branches and demographic backgrounds, in a collaborative study with the UMass Boston Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging. The Joiner Institute also assisted with a research study into the impacts of the coronavirus on UMass Boston student veterans. WJI continues to share its educational materials on alcohol and substance abuse, rehabilitation, and recovery programs with veterans organizations during this especially challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home orders.
Congratulations to all our UMass Boston graduates including Student Veterans and Joiner Institute Students!

Stay tuned for Joiner event updates and an online Writers' Workshop summer celebration coming soon!

Follow our updates on Facebook and Twitter

Donate Today!

Your Donation Goes Farther Than Ever!

Make a tax deductible gift to the Joiner today that goes farther thanks to the Endowment Match Program just signed into effect by the Mass. Governor!

"Through the endowment match program, the state will be able to incentivize philanthropists to support our public institutions and raise millions of additional private dollars for community colleges, state universities, and the UMass campuses."

https://www.umb.edu/joinerinstitute/support_us

William Joiner Institute for the Study of War and Social Consequences

100 William T. Morrissey Blvd. Boston, MA 02125
10th Floor, Healey Library
joinerinstitute@umb.edu | 617.287.5863

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