AAA President Calls for Dialogue on Race and Justice

Following yesterday’s grand jury decision not to criminally indict Ferguson, Missouri Police Officer Darren Wilson in the fatal shooting of an unarmed teenager, Michael Brown, American Anthropological Association (AAA) president, Dr. Monica Heller, called for continued public conversation about the historical legacies and contemporary forms of racial and class inequalities that persist in the U.S. justice system, and on related larger questions of state security, race and violence in the U.S. and elsewhere. Heller said that the AAA, which is holding its annual meeting in Washington, D.C. next week, will make its own contribution to moving the public conversation forward.

Anthropologists have a long history of research and public engagement on race, racism, and inequality. Through the public education initiative RACE: Are We So Different?, which has been seen by more than 1 million people in 37 cities, anthropologists have put the spotlight on the social construction of race, the lived experience of racialized inequality, and the differences between the science of human biological variation and how people imagine and use it.

As events have unfolded in Ferguson, anthropologists have contributed to public discussions of law enforcement practices and the sociocultural, economic, and historical dynamics that have shaped the U.S. justice system. AAA encourages continued debate and anthropological enquiry aimed at finding ways of remedying racialized injustice.

AAA has experts available for interview upon request. For more information, read work by anthropologists on events in Ferguson:

Anthropology News:

Standing their Ground in #Ferguson – Lydia Brassard and Michael Partis
Ferguson: An American Story – Raymond Codrington
Social Media, Racial Violence and Confronting the Ensemble of Michael Brown – Tiffany Cain
Ferguson and the Right to Black Life – Steven Gregory
The Violence of the Status Quo – Pem Davidson Buck

Anthropoliteia:

Notes on Ferguson: Some factors in the policing of protests – Meg Stalcup

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Founded in 1902, the American Anthropological Association, with more than 10,000 members, is the world's largest professional organization of anthropologists. The Association is dedicated to advancing human understanding and tackling the world's most pressing problems.