The Case for Reparations

We believe strongly in reparations. Our focus is on the larger scope of reparations, which means repairing past damages and making amends through acknowledgment, apology, and atonement. This process is central to racial reconciliation in Tulsa.

Survivors and descendants deserve remedy and reparation for the atrocities of 1921. The Centennial Commission’s work toward reparations falls in restitution through advocacy for investment in education, infrastructure and economic development in North Tulsa. While far from comprehensive, Greenwood Rising and subsequent programming and initiatives will serve to hold space for visitors to learn about our past and present in order to work for a future in which these horrific events never occur again.

Reparations, as discussed in the 2001 final report of the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, involve compensation at the individual and community levels, and there are organizations and advocates working diligently for that purpose.

Reparations may take both individual and communal forms. Monetary damages are a type of individual reparations, and we believe that this is an important subject for discussion. Monetary investments in public spaces, public facilities, and economic initiatives are a type of communal reparations. These forms of reparations are complementary, not mutually exclusive. Both are important.

The Centennial Commission and Greenwood Rising, the history center project it has led, seek to provide a platform where these issues can be discussed and moved forward in a meaningful manner.

Greenwood Rising honors the icons of Black Wall Street, memorializes the victims of the massacre, and examines the lessons of the past to inspire meaningful, sustainable action in the present. This truth-telling and education for all is aimed at repairing lingering historical racial trauma--working toward restoration--and charting a new, vibrant, inclusive course for the future.

We support the work of others who are similarly committed to the pursuit of justice through reparations and racial reconciliation.