

## ACRP Thomas Remembrance Acknowledgement Statement

Benjamin Thomas came to his death at the hands of a white mob, citizens of Alexandria and neighbors to Benjamin, his mother Elizabeth, and the Thomas family.

White Alexandrians wrongfully accused Benjamin Thomas. They listened to a 7-year-old white child – his accuser – but they did not give Benjamin Thomas an opportunity to speak. They refused to listen to the Black community who warned of a lynching. Law enforcement disregarded their pleas and escalated the conflict. Alexandria’s white community reacted by lynching Thomas, who was 16 and innocent.

The mother of the child who accused Thomas said: “the young man was not guilty.”

***Public Acknowledgement:*** *(please read aloud if you identify as white)*

*We hold the 1899 leadership of Alexandria responsible for failing to protect Benjamin Thomas and for failing to prosecute the perpetrators.*

*We further hold Alexandria’s white community of 1899 responsible for:*

- *the racial terror torture and killing of Benjamin Thomas;*
- *the terrorizing of their Black neighbors;*
- *and their actions and inactions on August seventh and eighth.*

*We acknowledge that our predecessors failed this boy, his family, and betrayed their fellow citizens.*

*We hope to begin to rectify this past injustice by:*

- *giving back Mr. Thomas’ story;*
- *telling the truth of our shared history;*
- *and by committing to a future Alexandria that welcomes diversity and provides equality and justice to all.”*

