

FIRM NEWS

Last Known Living Survivors Added to Historic Tulsa Race Massacre Lawsuit

February 2021

In a major step forward for the historic Tulsa Race Massacre lawsuit, a 76-page amended petition has been filed in the suit. Highlights of the amended petition include the addition of Viola “Mother” Fletcher and Hughes Van Ellis, two previously-unknown living survivors of the Massacre; depositions from two of the lead plaintiffs, survivors Lessie Benningfield “Mother” Randle and Mother Fletcher; and the formal entry of appearance of several Schulte lawyers who have joined the legal team representing the plaintiffs, among other significant developments.

The lawsuit demands the City of Tulsa and other defendants fix the public nuisance of racial disparities, economic inequalities, insecurity and trauma that they caused by their destruction of the Black community of Greenwood in 1921, their continuing failure to rebuild the community and their audacity in seeking to reap benefits from their violent acts. Building on admissions from defendants and the City of Tulsa Mayor, as well as the testimony of living survivors of the Massacre, the complaint sets forth the reality that the racial and economic disparities that exist in Tulsa’s Black community today can be traced to the 1921 race massacre.

The Schulte team is led by partner, litigation co-chair and pro bono chair Michael Swartz, special counsel for pro bono initiatives Sara Solfanelli and litigation associate and Task Force for Racial Justice Initiatives co-chair McKenzie Haynes. The team also includes litigation associates and members of the Task Force for Racial Justice Initiatives Ekenedilichukwu (Keni) Ukabiala and Angela Garcia; individual client services associate

and member of the Task Force for Racial Justice Initiatives Victoria Harris;
and former Schulte lawyers AnnaLise Bender-Brown and John Garces.

[Learn more about how and why Schulte joined the historic lawsuit here.](#)

[Learn more about Schulte's involvement here.](#)

Related People



**Michael
Swartz**

Partner
New York



**Sara
Solfanelli**

Special Counsel for Pro
Bono Initiatives
New York



**McKenzie
Haynes**

Associate
Washington, DC



**Ekenedilichukwu
(Keni)
Ukabiala**

Associate
New York



Victoria Harris

Associate
New York

Practices

LITIGATION

PRO BONO