

PREFACE

This issue of the **BLACK LAW JOURNAL** begins the second decade in the life of a publication conceived in the turmoil of the sixties and matured in the ambiguity and conflict of the seventies. The *Journal* remains the only national publication published at a predominantly white law school by black law students. As such, its original uniqueness has ripened into a historical mission to represent the aspirations and legitimate demands of black law students for full participation and relevant education within American legal educational institutions and of black people for a responsive legal system.

Although born at UCLA, the *Journal* has occasionally shared its responsibilities with black students at other institutions. As part of a consortium, students at the University of California, Berkeley, Harvard and Northwestern have published issues of the *Journal* with the cooperation of their own law schools and the UCLA School of Law.

The issues of the early seventies established the personality and role of the *Journal*—that of a publication of high calibre which speaks to the contradictions of the American legal and social order not dealt with in traditional law reviews, in a format and style that engages the attention of a wide readership. Although almost all traditional law reviews perpetuate the existing social and economic relationships in the United States, the **BLACK LAW JOURNAL** seeks to change, not glorify, the status quo.

To guard the fortunes of the *Journal* in its formative years, a national board consisting of former UCLA students was formed and dedicated to the survival of the *Journal* as a publication which would speak to the problems that confront black and third world people in America. But as the issues of the seventies grew more complex, and the careers of these pioneers grew more demanding, the responsibilities of the *Journal* fell once again into the hands of currently enrolled UCLA law students. In the middle and late seventies, the *Journal* completed the process of making its existence permanent within the student body of UCLA while maintaining relationships with other universities, so that participation by black law students throughout the nation could remain a major part of the *Journal's* existence.

As outside financial support withered with the advent of the backlash of the mid-seventies, the **BLACK LAW JOURNAL** turned inward to black people and their institutions for support. Fortuitously, one of the founders of the *Journal*—Professor Henry W. McGee, Jr., of the UCLA School of Law faculty—became Director of the UCLA Afro-American Studies Center and made the *Journal* a major part of that research unit's publication effort.

The *Journal* obtained larger facilities and more dependable financial and technical support commanding the respect and support of administrators and faculty throughout the campus. This legitimization as a university activity was given added vigor when the present director of the Center, Professor Claudia Mitchell-Kernan, continued and expanded the relationship between the Center and the *Journal*. The support of the Center for Afro-American studies was augmented by institutional and moral support from the faculty of the UCLA School of Law and its Deans, Murray L. Schwartz

and William D. Warren. With these combined resources, the *Journal* was able to stabilize its financial situation and to increase its subscriptions so that it has a loyal readership upon which its continued independence rests.

Though there have been numerous crises and positive events of importance in the life of the *Journal*, perhaps the most crucial event of the recent past was a meeting in the summer of 1977 at which a small group of students volunteered to complete Volume 6:1, the Thurgood Marshall Issue. In the context of growing political retrenchment outside the law school and self-aggrandizement within, these students determined that the *Journal* would not only exist but expand, and that the Thurgood Marshall issue would serve as a symbolic affirmation of the past and a promise of future accomplishments. In short, the mission of the *Journal* was renewed. Articles in the *Journal* would be written by legal scholars, but also by specialists in fields of study such as history, economics, or sociology. While some articles would resemble those appearing in traditional law reviews, others would be written in a manner more comprehensible to a diverse readership.

The *Journal*, therefore, remains dedicated to providing a forum in which the struggle for justice can continue in American law schools and legal institutions and maintaining a black perspective in a publication of national significance.

The *Journal* will also meet a crucial additional goal. Through the BLACK LAW JOURNAL, black law students can develop the legal skills necessary to function in the legal system of the United States while remaining sensitive and responsive to black and third world communities, those true sources of America's future strength and vitality.

DIMITRI A. NIBBS*
MORRIS L. THOMAS**

* Editor-in Chief 1978-79

** Editor-in-Chief 1980-81