

PREFACE

This issue is devoted to voting rights and is dedicated to the late Mayor Harold Washington. Lula Bailey-Ballton in her Dedication writes, Mayor Washington “strove to make the right to vote and democracy mean something for millions of Blacks, both inside and outside of Chicago.” Khadijah Muhammad reviews Adolph’s Reed’s *The Jesse Jackson Phenomenon*, a recent book that focuses on the contest between two political groups over the representation of the Black community. But the heart of this issue is six student written Comments that consider various aspects the political process and its relation to Black Americans in their quest for effective representation. All of the Comments were produced as part of a Voting Rights seminar held during the 1987 Fall Semester at the UCLA School of Law.

The diversity of approaches was limited only by the number of students in the class. The first two Comments focus on the role of “a government of the people” that frequently appears to only benefit the few. George Brown considers whether the United States’ form of representative democracy can work effectively for Black Americans. Martin Duncan believes that the federal judiciary—similar to the role it assumed for Blacks in the Civil Rights era—is the only branch of government capable of initiating an effective national policy that may alleviate the plight of the underclass.

The next three authors consider recent developments in antidiscrimination law. David Rice uncovers the genesis and progeny of the latest doctrinal nuance of civil rights law—the “intent standard”—and he looks at the Supreme Court’s application of the standard in voting rights cases. Rosalind Harrison challenges the notion that Blacks are politically apathetic and points out potential pitfalls for future litigators under the 1982 amendments to the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Applying the preclearance provisions of the Voting Rights Act nationwide as a means of eradicating racial gerrymanders is considered in the next Comment.

The final Comment suggests that Blacks can become active political brokers in the system. Hurumia Ahadi outlines the historical precedents and the current means of forming an independent Black political party and its attendant benefits for the Black community.

As Professor Crenshaw discusses more fully in her Foreword, one of the purposes of the seminar was for students to produce quality Comments. The following Comments demonstrate that the seminar was a success. Indeed, most students in the seminar found it to be one of the most meaningful courses in law school. More specifically, the structure—twelve minority students, taught by a Black female—allowed us to discuss issues of fundamental importance to Black people in our contemporary society.

We acknowledge the assistance of Dean Susan Westerberg Prager and Associate Dean Carole Goldberg-Ambrose for allowing this rather unique teaching experiment to take place.

It is our hope that this issue is simply the first in a series and that more will be produced in the future.

—DWIGHT AARONS
EDITOR IN CHIEF 1988-89



HAROLD WASHINGTON
1922-1987