

## EDITORS' NOTE

Though “diversity” is a term that has different meanings to different people, it is often identified as a goal for law firms and law schools with regard to hiring considerations and admissions factors. This year’s issue of the National Black Law Journal (NBLJ) seeks to unpack the meaning of “diversity” as it is used in the context of legal activism, education, and scholarship. When we discussed our vision for this year’s issue, we decided to interpret “diversity” broadly and thus create a space that was conducive to innovative legal thought that pushed authors and readers alike to think about the ways in which formal institutions as well as individuals’ lived experiences continue to shape the meaning of “diversity.” With this goal in mind, NBLJ hosted its first symposium in February 2017 with Chicano(a)/Latino(a) Law Review and Women’s Law Journal around the theme of “(Re)Defining Diversity.” Intended to be an initial starting point for an ongoing dialogue around diversity and who defines “diverse,” the symposium brought together a myriad of individuals including grassroots organizers, law firm hiring managers, legal scholars, and transgender activists of color. Our hope is that symposium attendees and presenters will continue these conversations about “diversity” and dig into its said and unsaid meanings in the classroom as well as the courtroom. In this present moment of increasingly legitimized hatred and discriminatory legislation against Black and Brown people as well as other systematically marginalized peoples, meaningful dialogues about diversity are no longer an option—they are a necessity.

In this issue, we present the work of authors whose analyses and discussions explore new and related layers of “diversity.” *The Myth of Abortion as Black Genocide* goes beyond the bounds of institutions and examines intersectional identity. By framing politics in the Black feminist tradition—the political as personal—Shyrisa Dobbins-Harris starts at home by interrogating the struggle for reproductive justice and Blackwomen’s sovereignty over their own bodies as well as the inter- and intra-racial dynamics of lack of autonomy and erasure. Blackwomen are left out of mainstream conversations about reproductive justice and yet directly targeted by anti-abortion policies. Dobbins-Harris centers Blackwomen in their own stories and urges that we center their voices.

*Creating a Roadmap to a LGBTQ Affirmative Action Scheme* takes a similar approach by digging in to intersectional oppression facing LGBTQ students of color and simultaneously examining traditional notions of institutional diversity. Gregory Davis posits LGBTQ affirmative action as a focus of diversity discussions for the courts as well as the greater public while also presenting ways in which these initiatives can continue to bolster efforts and include broader demographics of LGBT people. His work emphasizes the importance of expanding the ways we conceptualize inclusion and gives a working framework to apply it.

In *Rad Talk*, the dynamics of Black activism are broadened to include other marginalized groups through the lens of two historically key activists in Black and Latinx communities, Dolores Huerta and Harry Belafonte. In this way, Bryonn Bain's interview with these activists highlights the opportunities for coalition building between these two communities. Bain examines the ways in which we serve one another in the work and create space for collaboration and growth toward liberation. His work ultimately underscores the need to listen to one another especially among people of color working to make more space for us all.

Finally, our issue concludes with Erica Wilson grounding the discussion back into institutional failures to achieve diversity in *When Diversity Fails*. Even as elite institutions touting diversity programs become popular for largely white institutions, they are unable to maintain any meaningful diversity. Wilson employs Social Dominance Theory to frame why these diversity efforts fail and to redefine what actual diversity might look like.

At a time when white supremacist, xenophobic, homophobic and transphobic actions and rhetoric go increasingly unchecked, and are in fact facilitated and encouraged by national leaders, NBLJ continues to be a space for innovative and fearless scholarship. In times like this, these thinkers' words are not only welcome, but essential to legal discourse that both interrogates, expands, and reconstructs traditional legal concepts and their meanings. Thank you to our entire NBLJ staff for all of your efforts to bring this issue to life. Thank you to our adviser, Professor Cheryl Harris, for her tireless support of NBLJ. Last, but not least, thank you to our authors and symposium presenters without whom this issue would not have been possible. As Ella Baker said, radical change requires "facing a system that does not lend itself to your needs, and devising means by which you change that system." May NBLJ always be a ready "means."

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*Co-Editors-in-Chief, 2016-2017*