

# THE JOURNAL OF APPELLATE PRACTICE AND PROCESS

## FOREWORD

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### “PERFECT HARMONY”

In July 1971, the Coca-Cola Company released a television commercial featuring a diverse array of young people singing the song, “I’d Like to Buy the World a Coke.” The idea for it came to an advertising executive after his plane was rerouted due to bad weather.<sup>1</sup> According to the executive, the passengers needed to stay near the airport in case the weather changed and allowed the flight to continue to its destination. This infuriated some of the passengers, but the executive later saw them sitting in an airport café eating snacks, drinking Coca-Cola, and sharing stories. It was this experience that caused the executive to view Coke “as a tiny bit of commonality between all peoples, a universally liked formula that would help to keep them company for a few minutes.”<sup>2</sup>

For Superbowl XXIV, Coca-Cola recorded a reunion commercial, featuring the original children and their own children on the same hill in Italy singing the now famous song.<sup>3</sup>

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1. *Creating “I’d Like to Buy the World a Coke”*, COCA-COLA CO., [cocalacompany.com/company/history/creating-id-like-to-buy-the-world-a-coke](https://cocalacompany.com/company/history/creating-id-like-to-buy-the-world-a-coke) (last visited May 20, 2021).

2. *Id.*

3. *Coca-Cola—I’d Like to Buy the World a Coke (The Story of Hilltop)*, THIS IS NOT ADVERTISING: BLOG (Dec. 15, 2011), [https://](https://thisisnotadvertising.com/2011/12/15/coca-cola-id-like-to-buy-the-world-a-coke-the-story-of-hilltop/)

I may be nostalgic, but I have always loved the song, and I vividly remember the 1990 reunion. And while it might seem naïve to think that bringing the world together around a beverage will result in us singing in “perfect harmony,” in truth the idea is not so far-fetched. In fact, this idea serves as the basis for the Fulbright Student Program,<sup>4</sup> which I participated in between college and law school. Living in and interacting with a culture different from my own helped me better understand that culture and helped others better understand America through me. This was especially true as my Fulbright year included the tragic events of 9/11. The outpouring of sympathy that I received even from strangers who asked if I was an American was overwhelming.

And yet, this emphasis on cross-cultural awareness and acceptance seems to stop at the borders of our own country. As many of the authors in this issue discuss, our country is deeply divided along racial, ethnic, religious, political, and socio-economic lines. This special issue is dedicated to what lawyers and judges can do to help ease those divisions. And while judges may be more limited in what they can do (as compared to legislators, executives, civics leaders, religious leaders, educators, and parents), as our authors point out, they still have an important role to play.

In the remaining space I have left, I will not preview the wide array of articles in this special issue, as Vice-Chief Justice Ann A. Scott Timmer does that ably in her preface. Instead, I will leave you with a suggestion of something that each of us can do to tear down some of the walls that divide our nation: be kind to your neighbor. And, if you ask “who is my neighbor,” you could follow the perspective that my three-year-old takes. In his mind, everyone is his neighbor. As we drive around town,

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thisisnotadvertising.wordpress.com/2011/12/15/coca-cola-id-like-to-buy-the-world-a-coke-the-story-of-hilltop/.

4. *What is the Fulbright U.S. Student Program*, FULBRIGHT U.S. STUDENT PROGRAM, <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/about/fulbright-us-student-program> (last visited May 20, 2021).

he likes to point at cars and say, “That’s my neighbor.” Before you think him too charitable, he also sometimes clarifies that they are “his” neighbors, and not “my” neighbors or his little sister’s neighbors. But regardless of his ability to share toys or neighbors, I find his innocence refreshing and convicting.

Maybe the first step to living in “perfect harmony” is to treat everyone as our neighbors. It won’t solve all of our country’s problems, but it is a start.

TLD

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