

A TRIBUTE TO STUDENT-EDITED LAW REVIEWS

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With this issue, the *Arizona Law Review* celebrates its twenty-fifth year of existence. The *Review* was established in 1958 under the guidance of Dean John O. Lyons. It began with a few monographs and over the course of the next two decades reached full maturity. It enjoys the respect befitting a quality publication. While at the beginning the *Review* was guided and took its fledgling steps under the watchful eye of Dean Lyons and the faculty, it has for many years now been a completely independent student-edited publication. Each editorial board has built on the progress accomplished by the preceding board and countless hours have been devoted by students at the College in establishing the quality of the *Review*. This exercise has undoubtedly been duplicated at a number of other law schools and it would seem appropriate on this occasion to reflect on the reasons for the existence of a student-edited legal periodical as part of this commemorative issue.

Twenty-five years ago there were approximately 152 law schools accredited by the American Bar Association. Of these schools, approximately 100 had established law reviews. Today there are 172 ABA-accredited law schools and there are approximately 273 law reviews currently published under the auspices of these schools. The various law reviews offer students the invaluable opportunity to engage in in-depth research and critical analysis. Law reviews, like other institutions, have not been immune from criticism. This sort of intense educational experience has been attacked as elitist and even a waste by those who are lured by the sirens of clerkships that seemingly produce more immediate practical rewards. The elitist criticism has been met by employing a greater variety of techniques for selecting those who staff the *Review*. In addition to grades and class standing, more weight is being given to a student's writing abilities.

Nonetheless, providing the opportunity for a student to engage in analytical writing and editing responsibilities is not to be denigrated where the end result is a better lawyer. Law firms, judges, and particularly, law

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faculties testify to the value of this unique educational experience in selecting young lawyers for employment. The standard is neither arbitrary nor foolproof, but it is an indicium that the person with law review experience is apt to be a better lawyer, clerk or teacher, all other things being equal. The problem is not the existence of law reviews, but how to duplicate the law review experience for the remainder of the student body so that they too can enjoy the benefits of this advanced curricular experience.

Law reviews also provide a valuable service to the legal community at large. Principally law reviews are a forum for legal debate. Law reviews also disseminate information concerning legal trends and developments. With these purposes in mind, many law reviews have specialized in certain areas of the law or have focused on recent developments in particular jurisdictions. Still others have more of a national audience. No matter which approach is taken, law reviews are a vital part of the legal community and will continue to be so in the future.

Former members of the *Arizona Law Review* have recently organized the Arizona Law Review Alumni Association. In this connection I have had the opportunity to review the names of those who were once members of the *Review*. It is not surprising that these people achieved, on the whole, prominence in their legal careers. I would be quick to admit that many of their classmates have also distinguished themselves in practice and other pursuits in the law, but as a group the law review students stand out. If you have not had the opportunity to do so, I recommend that you also review the mastheads of past issues from your school. I do so with the confidence that your prominent alumni(ae) will be well represented on those pages.

The *Review* has given students a valuable educational experience for its first twenty-five years, and I am sure that it will do so for the next twenty-five years. Congratulations to each and every member, current and former, of the *Arizona Law Review* on its twenty-fifth anniversary. Your work is appreciated and everyone, including your readers, is the better for it.