
IN CELEBRATION OF THE LAW SCHOOL CENTENNIAL

FOREWORD

SCOTT H. BICE*

We celebrated the centennial of The Law School on June 10, 2000. But as Michael Shapiro points out, selecting the year for the law school's centennial was more art than science.¹ There are in fact four years that might have been chosen as the "beginning" of the University of Southern California Law School: 1896, 1898, 1900, or 1904.

In 1896, there was no formal legal education in southern California. People trained to be lawyers in attorneys' offices. In Los Angeles, a group of these law-office apprentices, in contact with each other socially, decided that having a lawyer give them lectures on various areas of law would be a more efficient way of learning the law than simply working on the current business of their respective law offices. So the apprentices formed the Los Angeles Law Students Association, collected dues, and hired a well-known local attorney to present lectures in the evening.

By 1898, the Law Students Association lectures had evolved into the beginnings of a recognizable law school curriculum. Leading members of the bar who supported more formalized legal education helped incorporate the Los Angeles Law School. The board of directors of the school included some of the most prominent lawyers in the city. The school hired a dean and began offering classes in rented space, using local attorneys and judges to teach at night.

* Robert C. Packard Professor of Law, University of Southern California Law School; Dean of the Law School, 1980–2000.

1. See Michael H. Shapiro, *An Orphan's Story: What We Do at USC Law*, 74 S. CAL. L. REV. 311, 311–12 & n.2 (2000).

By 1900, the school desired to grant law degrees, and it affiliated with the University of Southern California. Although still governed by an independent board of directors, the school's partnership with the university allowed the university to grant the degrees.

In 1904, the Los Angeles Law School was merged into the University of Southern California, the independent board of directors was disbanded and the University's trustees assumed responsibility for the school.

Each of these four dates has a claim to being the "beginning" of the USC Law School. We ultimately selected 1900, because that was the year of formal affiliation with the University. We did not neglect the other dates entirely, however. In 1996, we held several functions to salute the contribution that students have made to the progress of the school. After all, our school was, in effect, "founded" by students. In 1998, we celebrated the contributions that lawyers and judges, most of whom are now our graduates, have made to our success, thus commemorating the pivotal role that the lawyers and judges played in 1898 by incorporating the Los Angeles Law School and becoming its first directors.

Our emphasis in this centennial year has been on the faculty, the third—and central—of the three groups that "are" the law school: students, graduates and faculty. As part of our focus on the contribution the faculty have made to our school, we invited faculty, past and present, to publish an essay in a commemorative issue of the *Southern California Law Review*. The papers in this issue are the results of the responses to that invitation.

The invitation was not subject-limited; faculty were invited to write on any topic of their choosing. However, when we were asked about subject preferences, we suggested three possible topics or themes: first, observations about the school itself—its history, culture or programs; second, reflections on one or more of the major themes important to the faculty member's work; and, third, a contemporary article illustrating the faculty member's scholarly interests and methodology.

Each of these three approaches is well represented by the articles in this issue, and many combine the approaches, linking observations about the school with reflections on the development of their own scholarly work. This issue of the *Southern California Law Review* is a fitting commemorative. The works illustrate the quality and breadth of faculty scholarship. They also reflect the contribution that a true sense of academic community makes to the quality of academic work—and to the enjoyment of doing that work.

The law school has been blessed with talented, dedicated, collegial and creative scholar-teachers. Reading these works will demonstrate the soundness of that appraisal.

