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Lessons from the Field, Looking to the Future*

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## Foreward & Dedication

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## FOREWORD & DEDICATION

In every moment in history where the economy suffers a severe downturn, it is the indigent who suffer the most. The inspiration that sparked this special symposium issue of the *Maine Law Review* came from a simple source: the times in which we are living and the people who are grappling with complex and oftentimes devastating legal problems. Accessing justice, even in the best economic times, has often proven elusive to the vast majority of the nation's poor and working class. When state funding and budgets dry up, accessing justice for the indigent can prove to be a nearly unattainable goal.

The *Maine Law Review* asked some of Maine's most dedicated legal minds, practitioners, and judges to address this issue. We then broadened our search for pertinent and necessary scholarship to a nation-wide call for papers. The articles and essays contained in this issue are an excellent representation of the scholarship and advocacy necessary to reinvigorate the access to justice movement.

Last spring, we contacted Judge Frank Coffin, former First Circuit Court of Appeals Judge and one of the most vocal advocates in the access to justice movement for Maine and "away," to pen the introduction to this issue. Though we were intimidated by contacting this great man, his enthusiasm for the task soon overcame any apprehension we had. His infectious zeal for this issue, and the people who are affected by it, is apparent from the introduction that follows. After he turned in his initial draft, which was nearly letter-perfect, Judge Coffin expressed dismay that we had no substantive critiques of the introduction itself. It truly was *that* good.

We at the *Maine Law Review* were terribly saddened at the news of Judge Coffin's passing in December 2009 at the age of ninety. His legacy lives on through the work of Maine's Justice Action Group, as well as the Frank M. Coffin Family Law Fellowship, which funds a recent law school graduate's work at Pine Tree Legal Services. In addition to the tremendous work Judge Coffin accomplished as a jurist and advocate, we were touched by his humility, grace, humor, and devotion. We are honored and humbled to publish one of his very last pieces of writing.

As the University of Maine School of Law Class of 2010 ventures out into the legal world, it is my most fervent hope that we may draw from the lessons imparted by Judge Coffin and the other distinguished contributors to this issue and prioritize providing legal services to the poor throughout our careers and our lives. As Judge

Learned Hand proclaimed nearly sixty years ago, “If we are to keep our democracy, there must be one commandment: thou shalt not ration justice.”

The second issue of Volume 62 is dedicated to the memory of Judge Coffin and the countless indefatigable legal advocates throughout Maine and the nation who have devoted their lives to ensuring that all people—regardless of income, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or location—have meaningful access to justice.

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Portland, Maine  
May 2010