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Kim Brooks

Mark Lewis

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Twenty Years of Student Scholarship: Celebrating the Dalhousie Journal of Legal Studies

Kim Brooks¹ and Mark Lewis²

Almost all great things start because one person has a compelling idea and he or she convinces others through charm, persistence, and sometimes even the raw sensibility of the idea, to step up.

In the case of the *Dalhousie Journal of Legal Studies* that person was its first editor-in-chief, Ryerson Symons. In the production of the first volume, released in 1992, he was joined by an 11-person board of directors, a 30-person editorial board, a 10-person notes and comments editorial committee, a 12-person book reviews editorial committee, a large number of managers and assistants, five founding patrons, and a six-member advisory board. A lot of people were persuaded that the *Journal* had merit.

I might continue on the theme of identifying the characteristics of successful projects. If a good project has an early champion and a legion of people who see its merits, it has to be able to outlive those early visionaries. A friend once pointed out, a project is lousy if it fails to survive you.

The *Journal* has not just survived, it has thrived. Twenty volumes. A remarkable accomplishment that does great honour to its early advocates.

The editor-in-chief list could be read as a “who’s who” of the legal world: Ryerson Symons (1992), Ian C. Whan Tong (1993), Michael Feindel (1994), Olivier Fuldauer (1995), Scott Rollwagen (1996), Danielle Joel (1997), Adam Brebner, Patrick Gay and Timothy Hughes (1998), Colin Ground and Bay Ryley (1999), Patrick Mitchell (2000), Tina Piper, Eric MacDonald, Kate Burke (2001), Katherine Burke (2002), Andrew Inch (2003), Jennifer Agnolin (2004), Stephen Cooper, Charles Finlay and Jonathan Krashinsky (2005), Katherine Reilly and Danielle Robitaille (2006), Lindsay Bailey, Peter Dostal, Melissa Insanic and Ryan O’Connor (2007), Bruce Lee-Shanok and Daniel Zatzman (2008), Justice Drake, Jefferey Haylock and Bruce-Lee Shanok (2009), Maddy Carter, Mike Madden and Andrew Mercer (2010), and Erin Fowler, Matthew Murphy and Jonathan Edge (2011). This is a group that deserves the most credit for the longevity of the *Journal*.

¹ Kim Brooks is Dean and Weldon Professor of Law at the Schulich School of Law.

² Mark Lewis is Reference/IT Librarian at the Sir James Dunn Law Library at the Schulich School of Law.

But that crowd has been supported by an impressive group of contributors, hailing from virtually every school in the country. The students who authored articles for the *Journal* have made meaningful post-law school contributions. They have taken up positions teaching at law schools (Cynthia Chewter, Sheila Wildeman, Robert Currie, Tina Piper, and Graham Reynolds), become tax lawyers (Timothy Hughes), been listed in the top 40 lawyers under 40 (David T.S. Fraser), appeared as academics teaching in disciplines outside the confines of law (R. Blake Brown), in positions with government (William Georgas and Mark Heerema), and as counsel for health care organizations (Ayanna Ferdinand). That just illustrates the point by pulling out a few names.

The topics addressed by authors have been broad in scope. The first decade's volumes reveal a strong interest in legal theory, international law, constitutional issues, gender equality, and education law. The second decade reveals many of the same preoccupations but the emphasis on intellectual property issues, comparative work, health law, law of the sea, and Indigenous rights issues intensifies.

A student-run journal publishing work by students or recent graduates might be measured not only by the weight of its contributors and by the ambitious nature of the topics broached, but also by its influence. And the *Journal* has had influence. It has been cited 40 times in all manner of legal publications, from the *Manitoba Law Journal*³ to the *Michigan Journal of International Law*⁴ to the *Seattle Journal of Social Justice*.⁵ Courts in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, Quebec, and the Yukon have made reference to articles published by the *Journal*. Indeed, the journal has been cited in nine court and one tribunal decision in areas of law as divergent as education law, criminal law, constitutional law, and administrative law.

A journal that provides a home for student scholarship does society wide service. It encourages budding legal thinkers to reach out to others with their ideas. Since students seem more likely to embrace new ideas, trends, and practices before those of us with a few more years in the saddle, it shines a light on emerging issues of importance. And it builds a scholarly tradition in students, no matter where their paths take them. It is that constant quest for new knowledge, for a clear articulation of argument and issue that distinguishes leading jurists. We are proud that the *Journal* has found its physical home at the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University while finding its intellectual home nationally and internationally.

³ See Philip Girard, "The Maritime Provinces, 1850–1939: Lawyers and Legal Institutions" (1996) 23 Man LJ 379 and DG Bell, "Maritime Legal Traditions Under the Ancien Regime" (1996) 23 Man LJ 103 citing Jim Cruickshank, "The Chancery Court of Nova Scotia: Jurisdiction and Procedure 1751-1855" (1992) 1 Dal J Leg Stud 27.

⁴ See Joel Richard Paul, "Cultural Resistance to Global Governance" (2000-2001) 22 Mich J Int'l L 1 citing Anthony de Fazekas, "Free Trade and Culture: An Alternative Approach" (1993) 2 Dal LJ 141; Karen Knop and Christine Chinklin, "Remembering Chrystal MacMillan: Women's Equality and Nationality in International Law" (2000-2001) 22 Mich J Int'l L 523 citing Alison Symington, "Dual Citizenship and Forced Marriages" (2001) 10 Dal J Leg Stud 1.

⁵ See Emily Rose Gonzalez, "Battered Immigrant Youth Take the Beat: Special Immigrant Juveniles Permitted to Age-out of Status" (2009-2010) 8 Seattle J Soc Just 409 citing Alison Luke, "Uncertain Territory: Family Reunification and the Plight of Unaccompanied Minors in Canada" (2007) 16 Dal J Leg Stud 69.