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Preface

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Preface

The foreword to the first issue of the *Dalhousie Law Journal* (September 1973) stated that the editors commenced the enterprise “without lofty pretensions.” If the new journal’s existence served “to encourage creative research and writing among law teachers, among students, and generally among the legal profession and related disciplines, that may be justification.” The editors nonetheless concluded with a lofty enough mission statement: “we shall be endeavouring to produce a stimulating journal exemplifying those qualities that most people would characterize as scholarly, among them thoroughness, precision of thought, independence of judgment.” The Editorial Board believes that the *Journal* has fulfilled the ambitions of the “framers,” and that it will continue to do so during its next quarter-century.

When it first appeared, the *Journal* was called “Canada’s most newly established legal journal by Canada’s oldest established common law school.” One might well ask why Canada’s oldest common law school waited until its ninetieth year to mount a law journal. By 1973 virtually every law school had its own law journal, almost all of them having originated as student efforts. To this day most are primarily student-run with a faculty advisor or two. Given the small numbers of faculty members at virtually all Canadian law schools before the 1960s, it is understandable that such initiatives tended to be undertaken by students rather than professors. The better-endowed faculty at the University of Toronto was an exception, possessing a critical mass of professors who helped found the *University of Toronto Law Journal* in 1935.

Dalhousie students expressed interest in a student law review in the 1920s, but after investigation Dean John Read proposed “as a preliminary and experimental step to try to arrange for the publication of the work of our own student body in the *Canadian Bar Review*.” In fact, the *Canadian Bar Review* functioned almost as a surrogate *Dalhousie Law Journal* for several decades after its foundation in 1923. Charles Morse, a graduate of the class of 1885, was the *Review*’s first editor. He held the post until 1935 and thereafter served as consulting editor until 1945. Dalhousie faculty regularly published in the *Canadian Bar Review* during this period, and also during the editorship of George V.V. Nicholls (1946-1956). When in 1957 Nicholls joined the faculty at Dalhousie, he gave up his connection with the *Canadian Bar Review*.

With the growth of student numbers in the 1960s and early 1970s, the idea of a student law review again surfaced. This time Dean R. St. John Macdonald was receptive to the idea of a law journal, but insisted that “it was to be one run by professionals for professionals.” Having just spent ten years as editor of the *University of Toronto Law Journal*, his approach to the question should not be surprising. Nearly twenty more years would elapse before the students finally decided in 1992 to mount their own journal, the *Dalhousie Journal of Legal Studies*, which accepts papers only from registered Dalhousie law students. From its inception, however, the *Dalhousie Law Journal* has always published meritorious papers by student authors, whether from Dalhousie or elsewhere, in addition to those authored by academics, practitioners, administrators and judges from around the world.

Like most Canadian law journals, the *Dalhousie Law Journal* continues to be a “general interest” journal in the sense that no legally-related subject matter is excluded *a priori* from editorial consideration. However, the editors particularly solicit manuscripts with a focus on issues relevant to the Atlantic region, on legal education, and on two of the Faculty’s areas of emphasis: marine and environmental law, and health law. They plan to mount thematic issues, such as volume 20:2, “Lessons from Away: Comparative Health Law Reform,” approximately once every three years, but also to publish issues with thematic sections, such as this issue’s focus on Atlantic legal history, or last issue’s Forum on *R. v. R.D.S.* Suggestions for theme issues or sections are welcome.

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for the Editorial Board