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## Letter to Our Readers

Mecca Wilkinson

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## DePaul Journal for Social Justice

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Volume 17

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Issue 1

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Dear Readers,

My name is Mecca Wilkinson and I just want to thank you for reading and supporting Volume 17, Issue 1 (Winter 2023) of the Journal for Social Justice. As Editor-in-Chief, I, along with the rest of the Editorial Board and Research Staff, aim to make the Journal a space that allows us to not only disseminate important information regarding the social issues discussed within, but to genuinely learn from the authors we choose to highlight. By amplifying the voices of those who either have experienced social injustices or who advocate for social justice, we encourage our readers to develop the intersectional forward mindset necessary to digest and address these issues productively.

The Journal for Social Justice is a platform for legal scholars, practitioners, social justice advocates, and students alike to express not only their personal experiences with social justice issues, but also the experiences of those within the communities they serve. Our journal harnesses its strength from the firsthand knowledge and experiences of those who contribute to the continuous battle for social justice. While still on the tail end of the various effects that COVID has left on all of our lives, the U.S. saw major legal events like the Supreme Court appeal of *Dobb's* as well as an eruption of civil rights and racial tensions throughout the country. We had no shortage of important issues to address and, likewise, no shortage of authors ready to lend their voices.

I appreciate and will never be able to thank our authors enough for providing content that allowed Volume 17, Issue 1 of the Journal to cover such a range of topics. We start with an insightful article about punitive deterrence that is authored by a wrongful conviction advocate, Joseph Dole, who also happens to be currently incarcerated. Our next article is a piece on public interest burnout, written from the viewpoint of an experienced public interest attorney and current professor, Sandra Simkins. The following article, regarding professors and their use of pronouns and general classroom management language within the classroom, is also from the perspective of experienced legal professor, Michael Park. The next article is our only piece by a student, Anna Greer, and focuses on the foundation of *Dobbs* and its impact on women historically. Lastly, but certainly not least of all, we round out this publication with a deep and focused discussion on the Constitution's connection with black liberation, led by Professor Paul Gowder. We intentionally focused on the true voice of our authors as THAT is exactly what makes for the impact that we hope the Journal will have. We knew that these pieces were truly felt by the authors as a lived experience and they did not disappoint, given each author is an invaluable part of the community that they wrote about or on behalf of. I believe that we successfully met this goal, and we wouldn't have been able to do this without acting as a team.

I want to thank every member of the Journal, both editorial board and research staff, for making this possible. To start, our Executive Submissions Editor, Jay, spent countless hours combing through every single submission we received to artfully craft a comprehensive grouping of pieces. Our Executive Article Editors, Miranda and Sabrina, worked tirelessly and efficiently to not only maintain the voice of the authors throughout the editing process, but to ensure we stayed within our timeline for a successful publication. Our Executive Managing Citations Editor, Shaundranique Perkins, not only expertly delegated to our research staff, but led by example and was available to support and take on as much of the work as necessary to ensure accuracy within citations for every article. Likewise, our entire Research Staff never failed to make the Journal a priority and worked tirelessly to round out and finalize these articles in an instrumental way. Lastly, our Executive Symposium Editor, Elle Topacio, split her time planning our Symposium event while making herself available to support other members on the Journal however they needed, with a consistently upbeat and positive attitude.

THANK YOU, EVERYONE!

I hope you all enjoy reading this publication as much as we enjoyed creating it for you!

Mindfully,

Mecca Wilkinson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mecca Wilkinson', with a stylized, flowing underline.

Editor-in-Chief

*DePaul Law Journal for Social Justice, 2023-2024*