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FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA: THE MIDWESTERN ORIGINS OF THE FIRST NATIONAL MEETING OF THE REGIONAL PEOPLE OF COLOR LEGAL SCHOLARSHIP CONFERENCES

LINDA S. GREENE*

*We, all of us, have different strengths and different weaknesses but legal scholarship has enough scope, or it should have, for all of our talents to be displayed.*¹

INTRODUCTION

The First National Meeting of the Regional People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences (First National Meeting)² marked two landmark events in the people of color legal scholarship movement. First, it was the product of a groundbreaking collaboration among the regional People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences. Second, the 1999 First National Meeting coincided with the tenth anniversary of the first People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference, the Midwestern Conference.³ The First National Meeting had two important antecedents. One was the general tradition of meetings to explore common concerns and develop racially transformative legal theory. The other was the specific history of People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences, which began with the Midwestern People of Color Legal

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I dedicate this paper to Professor James Jones, Jr., my beloved mentor, colleague and friend, whose unwavering commitment to excellence and rigor in scholarship has inspired me and enriched the University of Wisconsin as well as the nation. His encouragement of my fledgling endeavors has been priceless.

¹ Professor James E. Jones, Jr., "Scholarship: Reflections After Twenty Years," Address at the first annual meeting of the Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference Luncheon, Loyola University Chicago School of Law (Feb. 10, 1990).

² The First National Meeting of the Regional People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences was held at The John Marshall Law School in Chicago on March 25-27, 1999 (proceedings on file with author).

³ Program on file with author.

Scholarship Conference. Therefore the First National Meeting stood on a foundation of emancipatory politics.

In this article I discuss that foundation. In Part I, I will discuss the First National Meeting. In Part II, I will discuss the formation, activities, and purposes of the Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference, the first "People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference." I conclude that the people of color movement is significant because it provides both emancipatory space and common ground to law professors of color during this period of tokenism in legal education.

I. THE FIRST NATIONAL MEETING

The events that lead to the First National Meeting began in Chicago, Illinois, at the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference at The John Marshall Law School, held in April, 1997.⁴ At that annual meeting, Linda Crane of The John Marshall Law School proposed that the Midwestern Conference spearhead a national meeting of all the regional People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences. She proposed that this meeting of the Conferences take place in Chicago during March, 1999, in conjunction with the John Marshall centennial celebration and related programs. The Midwestern Conference attendees endorsed the proposal and authorized Linda Crane and me to contact representatives of the other People of Color Conferences and commit Midwestern financial resources to accomplish this objective.

Thereafter, Linda Crane and I convened a meeting of representatives of the six regional People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences during the 1998 Association of American Law Schools (AALS) meeting in San Francisco to discuss the Midwestern proposal of a national meeting and to create circumstances for consensus.⁵ Jon

⁴ See *infra* Part II.

⁵ Reggie Robinson of Howard University Law School was the founder of the Mid-Atlantic Conference, which focused on critiques of works-in-progress and discussion of legal theory trends and debates. The Sixth Annual Mid-Atlantic People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference will be hosted by Widener University School of Law, Wilmington, Delaware, on February 10–12, 2000 (correspondence on file with author).

The Southwestern Conference meeting was sponsored by the AALS and the University of Arizona on April 23–24, 1992. See Reginald Leamon Robinson, "The Other Against Itself": *Deconstructing the Violent Discourse Between Korean and African Americans*, 67 S. CAL. L. REV. 15, 17 n.2 (1993). The Southwestern and Southeastern Conferences held a joint meeting in May, 1994. See Angela Gilmore, *They're Just Funny That Way: Lesbians, Gay Men and African-American Communities as Viewed Through the Privacy Prism*, 38 How. L.J. 231, 246 (1994).

Sylvester, the Associate Dean of Golden Gate University Law School, hosted the meeting at Golden Gate. After a two-hour discussion, representatives from all the conferences present endorsed the Midwestern proposal and agreed to forego their 1999 annual meetings in favor of a joint national meeting. Those present decided to form a steering committee which would represent all the conferences to organize and execute the First National Meeting. Representatives present at the San Francisco conference agreed that a successful first national meeting would require the broad-based support and participation of all the regional conferences. Linda Crane agreed to chair a national steering committee and to insure that each regional conference was represented.⁶ All the regional people of color scholar-

The Western Law Teachers of Color Conference's first meeting was held in the Bay Area in 1993. The second meeting, in 1994, was held at Lake Arrow Head and was arranged by Sean Scott, John Calmore, and Gary Williams of Loyola-LA. Organized by Bob Chang, Gloria Sandrino, Laura Padilla and Frank Valdes of Cal Western, the 1995 meeting took place in La Jolla. The 1996 Conference was held in Santa Cruz and was arranged by H.G. Prince and Keith Brown of Hastings College of the Law. The 1997 Conference was held in Albuquerque and was arranged by Margaret Montoya of the University of New Mexico (correspondence on file with author). In 1998, the Western Conference met at the Salishan Resort in Gleneden Beach, Oregon. Among the events that took place were a roundtable entitled "Beyond Race Essentialist Politics: Multidimensional Coalition Building" and plenary discussions on teaching and scholarship (program on file with author).

The First Annual Northeastern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference: Law Professors of Color in the Post Modern World was held March 29-30, 1996, and was hosted by Western New England College School of Law (program on file with author).

⁶ The National Steering Committee included General Chair Professor Linda R. Crane of The John Marshall Law School and Midwestern Regional People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference, Inc.; Program Chair Professor Reginald Leamon Robinson, Howard University Law School and Mid-Atlantic People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference; Fundraising Co-Chairs Professor Linda S. Greene, University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Law and Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference, Inc. and Professor Leonard M. Baynes, Western New England Law School and Northeastern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference; Members, Professor Margaret Chon, Seattle University School of Law and Western People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference; Professor Bryan K. Fair, University of Alabama School of Law and Southeastern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference; Professor Sheila Foster, Rutgers University School of Law-Camden and Mid-Atlantic People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference; Professor Tanya Hernandez, St. John's University School of Law and Northeastern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference; Professor Steven H. Hobbs, Tom Beville Chair, University of Alabama and Southeastern Regional People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference; Professor Darren Lenard Hutchinson, Southern Methodist University School of Law and Southwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference; Professor Rogelio Lasso, Washburn University School of Law and Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference, Inc.; Professor George Martinez, Southern Methodist University School of Law and Southwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference; Professor Laura Padilla, California Western School of Law and Western People of Color Legal Scholarship

ship conferences agreed to forego their own 1999 annual meetings in favor of an opportunity to meet to assess the objectives and accomplishments of this nationwide movement.⁷ After lively debate during meetings via telephone and email, the Steering Committee agreed on a theme for the First National Meeting—"Celebrating Our Emerging Voices: People of Color Speak."⁸

The resulting three-day meeting was a whirlwind of scholarly and social activity. Structured around five plenary discussions, the First National Meeting opened on Thursday, March 25, 1999. This first plenary featured a keynote address on "The Role & Responsibility of Intellectuals of Color" by Juan Williams, a Washington Post columnist and the author of *Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary* (1998) and *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965* (1988). Immediately following the Williams keynote, a diverse panel commented on Williams' remarks and provided alternate views on the role and responsibility of intellectuals of color. The second plenary was a roundtable discussion entitled "Celebrating Our Emerging

Conference; and Professor Antoinette Sedillo Lopez, University of New Mexico School of Law and Southwestern Regional People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference.

The Benefactors (contributions of \$10,000 or more) were The John Marshall Law School (Robert G. Johnston, Dean) and the Law School Admission Council (Dean Leo Romero, President; Kent Lollis, Associate Director).

The Sponsors (\$1,500-\$9,999) were American University-Washington College of Law (Claudio Grossman, Dean); Boston College Law School (James S. Rogers, Interim Dean); Howard University Law School (Alice Gresham Bullock, Dean); Northern Illinois University School of Law (LeRoy Pernell, Dean); Ohio State University School of Law (Gregory Williams, Dean); Quinnipiac College School of Law Neil H. Cogan, Dean); Seattle University School of Law (James E. Bond, Dean); University of Alabama School of Law (Kenneth C. Randall, Dean).

The Patrons (\$900-\$1,499) were Fordham University School of Law (John D. Feerick, Dean); Washburn University School of Law (James M. Concannon, Dean); and Wayne State University School of Law (Joan Mahoney, Dean).

The Supporters (\$500 or \$899) were Georgia State University College of Law (Janice C. Griffith, Dean); Notre Dame Law School (David T. Link, Dean); Rutgers University School of Law-Camden (Rayman L. Solomon, Dean); Suffolk University Law School (John E. Fenton, Jr., Dean); Syracuse University College of Law (Dan Braveman, Dean); University of Houston Law Center (Stephen Thomas Zamora, Dean); University of Nebraska College of Law (Nancy B. Rapaport, Dean); University of Tennessee College of Law (Thomas C. Galligan, Jr., Dean); and Western New England School of Law (Donald J. Dunn, Dean).

⁷ Their "mission accomplished," on January 10, 1998, Linda Crane and I arranged a dinner party hosted by the Midwestern Conference for thirty regional conference representatives at the elegant Lulu's in San Francisco. It was a celebration of our agreement to hold a national meeting of the regional People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences and a fortification for the work ahead.

⁸ Conference brochure on file with author.

Voices: People of Color Speak, Coherence or Tower of Babbble?" The following morning began with "Nurturing Our Emerging Voices: The Creative Process," the third plenary discussion. During lunch the respective regions held separate annual business meetings. Later, participants presented and commented on over thirty works-in-progress. That afternoon, the fourth plenary entitled "Deans of Color Speak: Opening the Doors for Students, Faculty and Administrators of Color" was devoted to issues unique to law school deans of color. On the final day, the National Steering Committee presided over a discussion of the future of national meetings and the people of color regional conference movement.

However, a singular focus on the titles and topics of the plenaries would leave an incomplete impression of the First National Meeting. This meeting was not only dedicated to the task of building on and consolidating the past fruits of the people of color movement, but was a celebration of our growth as a community as well as our scholarly achievements.⁹ The celebratory purposes were evident in the social events planned as integral parts of the meetings. Our first dinner, held at John Marshall, was decorated and catered to showcase the cultural and culinary attractions for which Chicago is renown. The next night's festivities occurred at the Cliffdwellers Club, founded by Chicago artists and writers, and featured a "brindis and tertuilla"—toast and performances. On the final night, participants were treated to an historic Chicago dinner at Mansion. Participants enjoyed a jazz combo during dinner, a lively discussion on the merits of the LSAT, and after-dinner conversation and dance.

Michelle Cammers Goodwin, a Hastie teaching fellow and law graduate at the University of Wisconsin Law School, captured the celebratory and festive atmosphere of the First National Meeting in an e-mail to her colleague at Wisconsin:

History was made this weekend in Chicago at The First National Meeting of the Six Regional People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences Through these meetings some of the most provocative scholarship and publications from law professors of color has emerged Through Linda [Greene] the University of Wisconsin Law School also made history when, ten years ago, it supported the idea of a Mid-

⁹ Over two hundred articles have been published by members of the Midwestern Conference, in a wide range of law reviews and journals, including the most competitive publications. *See generally* Midwestern Conference Bibliography (on file with author).

western Conference. Congratulations to Linda and the University of Wisconsin Law School.¹⁰

While new assistant professors marveled at the rich mix of energy, substance, organizational excellence, and pure style exhibited over the course of the meeting, more seasoned—and senior—professors noted that the meeting was one of the most intellectually fruitful and sociable of a long-running series of meetings and conferences of professors of color.¹¹ Professor Clark of Catholic University Law School and a thirty-year veteran law teacher, observed,

The most significant thing I took note of at the P/C meeting [People of Color meeting] was the sense I had that understanding and bridges were being built across groups that are in conflict in other areas of the country. I was very impressed with the way in which people spoke respectfully, but honestly, about minority conflicts. I also saw an ease of relating outside of the formal sessions, when people were dealing with one another socially.¹²

The First National Meeting fulfilled the expectations of even the most optimistic of its organizers. It brought together a diverse community of scholars in an environment committed to building intellectual growth, community and friendship.

II. THE MIDWESTERN PEOPLE OF COLOR LEGAL SCHOLARSHIP CONFERENCE: ROOTS OF THE FIRST NATIONAL MEETING

The success of the First National Meeting owes much to a tradition of independent meetings and conferences organized by law professors of color.¹³ The tradition can be traced back to the formation of the Caucus of Black Teachers as an outgrowth of the frustration

¹⁰ Correspondence on file with author.

¹¹ "The annual regional conferences have been the birthplaces of some of the most stimulating scholarship in the legal academy. In the regional meetings that I have participated in (over the past three years) ground breaking scholarship in family law, adoption, law and literature, mental health law, and identity politics, are among the recent issues given scholarly attention. The scholarship coming from these conferences has provided a new avenue in legal education." Michele Cammers Goodwin, Hastie Fellow, University of Wisconsin Law School (correspondence on file with author).

¹² Correspondence on file with author.

¹³ See generally Andrew Haines, *The Ritual of the Minority Law Teachers Conference: The History and Analysis of the Totemic Gathering of the Shaman to Reconsecrate the Tribal Totem of Law School*, 10 ST. LOUIS U. PUB. L. REV. 393 (1991).

voiced by Derrick Bell in 1969. At the time, Professor Bell admonished the AALS for its lack of responsiveness to the needs of minority professors. The Caucus' early conferences honed the organizational skills and fostered networks of minority law professors critical to building stable and fruitful institutions independent of the established academy.

Further, the regional People of Color Conferences' commitment to the development of legal scholarship was an extension of the Minority Law Teachers Conference. This independent minority-headed organization provided fertile ground for the development of legal theory rooted in the experience of people of color. Moreover, the Midwestern Conference's commitment to the advance of legal theory, which later manifested itself in the First National Meeting's sessions dedicated to peer review of legal scholarship, coincided with the formation of another important institution dedicated to intellectual exchange and scholarly development, the seminal 1989 Critical Race Theory (CRT) Workshop.

Both "movements" signaled a collective interest in the development of institutions controlled by legal scholars of color and dedicated to scholarly development and production. The People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences movement began in 1989. New to the Midwest as a tenured full professor, I decided to bring together minority scholars in Midwestern states to alleviate my own local isolation as well as that of my colleagues in the region and to provide a nurturing and supportive environment for scholarly development, particularly for untenured legal scholars of color. This would be an intellectual exchange and critique of works-in-progress. Though isolation of law professors of color was common when I began teaching in 1978, it was problematic that it persisted in 1989, when I returned to teaching. Most law teachers of color in the region taught at law schools where there were no other teachers of color. My intention was to create a critical and uplifting space in which scholars from divergent racial and ideological backgrounds could share in the rewards of the intellectual camaraderie of a scholarly community beyond the reach of the tokenism and the history of exclusion that marred minority experiences within the dominant academy. I had in mind the development of an educational institution that would be independent of and com-

plementary to traditional law schools, providing alternative models to existing educational institutions.¹⁴

¹⁴ The following chronology of the Midwestern Conference's institutional history attests to the efficacy of our emancipatory model of institution building—a model dedicated to the creation of an institution grounded in broad-based support and participation through the engagement of sponsoring deans of hosting institutions and annual rotation of site coordinators and organizing committee members. This chronology traces the creation of a community of legal scholars of color, as evidenced by the roster of professors. But perhaps most importantly, it is an opportunity to pay homage to our community of outsider scholars.

Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference Inc., An Illinois Non-Profit Corporation: The Board of Directors include: Linda S. Greene, President (University of Wisconsin); Norman C. Amaker, Vice President (Loyola University Chicago); Linda R. Crane, Secretary-Treasurer (John Marshall School of Law); Ronald C. Griffin (Washburn University); Michael A. Middleton (University of Missouri-Columbia); Vincene Verdun (Ohio State University); Leland B. Ware (St. Louis University); N. Douglas Wells (Capital University).

Record of Annual Meetings (1990-2000)

February 10, 1990: Annual Meeting Committee: Linda S. Greene (Chair). Law School Partner and Dean: Loyola University, Dean Nina S. Appel. Site Arrangements: Norman C. Amaker.

March 22-24, 1991: Annual Meeting Committee: Linda S. Greene (Chair), Norman Amaker, Linda R. Crane, Michael A. Middleton, Gerald Torres (University of Minnesota), Leland B. Ware. Law School Partner and Dean: University of Minnesota, Dean Robert Stein. Site Arrangements: Gerald Torres.

March 20-22, 1992: Annual Meeting Committee: Linda S. Greene (Chair), Yvette M. Barksdale (John Marshall Law School), Kevin D. Brown (Indiana University), Linda R. Crane, Paula C. Johnson (Northern Illinois University), Jennifer M. Russell (Case Western Reserve University), Gerald Torres. Law School Partner and Dean: The John Marshall Law School, Dean Howard T. Markey. Site Arrangements: Linda R. Crane.

March 26, 1993: Annual Meeting Committee: Linda R. Crane (Chair), Leona S. Green (Northern Illinois University), Cheryl I. Harris (Chicago-Kent College of Law), Keith Norman Hylton (Northwestern University), Sabrina A. McCarthy (Notre Dame University), Solomon Oliver, Jr. (Cleveland Marshall College of Law), Jennifer M. Russell, Vincene Verdun. Law School Partner and Dean: Case Western Reserve University, Dean Peter M. Gerhart. Site Arrangements: Jennifer Russell.

March 1994: Annual Meeting Committee: Vincene Verdun (Chair), Ronald C. Griffin, Ann L. Iijima (William Mitchell College of Law), Vernellia R. Randall (University of Dayton), Jennifer M. Russell, Anna W. Shavers (University of Nebraska), N. Douglas Wells. Law School Partner and Dean: University of Missouri-Columbia, Dean Tom Heinz. Site Arrangements: Michael A. Middleton.

March 1995: Annual Meeting Committee: N. Douglas Wells (Chair), Ronald C. Griffin, Ann L. Iijima, Anna W. Shavers, Vernellia R. Randall, Neil G. Williams (Loyola University Chicago), Vincene Verdun. Law School Partner and Dean: Washburn University, James M. Concannon. Site Arrangements: Ronald C. Griffin.

March 1996: Annual Meeting Committee: Ann L. Iijima (Chair), Ronald C. Griffin, Michael A. Middleton, Anna W. Shavers, Leland B. Ware. Law School Partner and Dean: St. Louis University Law School, Dean John B. Attanasio. Site Arrangements: Leland B. Ware.

April 1997: Annual Meeting Committee: Anna W. Shavers (Chair), Yvette M. Barksdale, Ann L. Iijima, Kimberly J. Norwood (Washington University), Vernellia R. Randall,

The philosophy of the Midwestern Conference—its commitment to ideological as well as institutional pluralism—was grounded in my conclusion that legal scholars of color would benefit from both ideological and non-ideological independent institutions. Put another way, we would be enriched by institutions devoted to a critical and transformative ideological vision, as well as institutions that eschew ideological boundaries. As a participant in the first Critical Race Theory Workshop and as Conference Chair of the 1990 Wisconsin Conference on Critical Race Theory, I firmly believed that ideologically-rooted institutions are necessary to the transformation of American legal institutions—as well as doctrine—which have structurally and theoretically facilitated racial and class subordination. I, and others, believed that the creation of parallel educational institutions providing a critical space for minority scholars was essential to the development of racially transformative legal theory.

The collective ideological work exemplified by the CRT movement engages us squarely in the battle of position,¹⁵ as described by Gramsci as a bid for “intellectual and moral leadership of society.”¹⁶ However, non-ideologically based cooperation provides important benefits as well. Non-ideologically based cooperation builds our own intellectual traditions of tolerance. Further, cross-ideological discourse exposes all scholars to a wide range of critical and doctrinal frameworks, thereby enlightening and enriching the intellectual re-

Leland B. Ware, Catherine L. Wilson (University of Nebraska), Neil G. Williams. Law School Partner and Dean: The John Marshall Law School, Dean Robert G. Johnston; Loyola University Chicago, Dean Nina S. Appel. Site Arrangements: Yvette Barksdale, Neil G. Williams.

March 1998: Annual Meeting Committee: Kimberly J. Norwood (Chair), Shirley L. Mays (Capital University), E. Michelle Rabouin (Illinois University), Catherine L. Wilson. Law School Partner and Dean: Capital University, Dean Steven Bahls. Site Arrangements: N. Douglas Wells.

March 26, 1999: (During the First National Meeting of the Regional People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences—John Marshall Law School, Chicago, Illinois) Annual Meeting Committee: Michael A. Middleton (Chair), Ronald C. Griffin, Ann L. Iijima, Rogelio A. Lasso (Washburn University), Anna W. Shavers, Neil G. Williams. Law School Partner and Dean: The John Marshall Law School, Dean Robert G. Johnston. Site Arrangements: Linda R. Crane.

March 22–26, 2000: Annual Meeting Committee: Michael A. Middleton (Co-Chair), Neil G. Williams (Co-Chair), Ronald C. Griffin, Ann L. Iijima, Rogelio A. Lasso, Anna W. Shavers. Site: Double Tree Resort, Sedona, Arizona. Site Arrangements: The Y2K Annual Meeting Committee.

¹⁵ See generally Stanley Aronowitz, *On Intellectuals*, in *INTELLECTUALS: AESTHETICS, POLITICS, ACADEMICS* 10 (Bruce Robbins ed., 1990).

¹⁶ Professor J. Clay Smith, *In Tribute: Charles Hamilton Houston*, 111 *HARV. L. REV.* 2173, 2173 (1998) (“domination of the jurisprudential matrix”).

sources of legal scholars of color. The Midwestern Conference embraced this tolerance paradigm as an essential part of our decade-long scholarly and intellectual tradition. I conclude that both kinds of communities—ideological and non-ideological—are essential to the survival and prosperity of legal scholars of color. More specifically, I conclude that the health of American legal educational institutions would also be enhanced by the supportive, yet critical, non-token environment the Midwestern Conference would provide for legal scholars of color. It would be a place to devote to the prosperity of legal scholars of color. We would assist in mentoring professors of color and their institutions would reap the benefits.

We firmly believed in our value to legal educational institutions and adopted an “emancipatory” funding policy to insure that we would have a sound financial institution. We awarded the privilege of hosting each annual meeting to the law school offering the most generous support for our annual meetings. In addition, the Midwestern Conference funded itself by charging a market rate to its annual meeting participants. We theorized that the deans of the participants’ law schools should fund the cost because they recognized the high value of the Conference’s mentoring services to its minority professors. In addition, we thought that law schools would relish an opportunity to show their support for diversity in law teaching by hosting a meeting of legal scholars of color. The annual meeting would be an opportunity for deans and their faculties to meet a large and diverse group of scholars of color. Moreover, these practices of the Midwestern Conference fostered valuable peer-partner relationships with law school deans in the regions that have hosted meetings and funded the participation of minority professors presenting and critiquing the papers. The success of these financial arrangements demonstrates that the Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference was correct when it concluded that historically white institutions would value this collaborative opportunity. Our maintenance of a positive balance sheet safeguards the Midwestern Conference’s ideological independence and assures its operational independence.

Our stability and consistency are promoted by our policies which require diverse and broad-based participation among Midwestern legal scholars of color in the planning and production of meetings. The Midwestern Conference annually passes the honor of hosting conferences around the region to ensure a rotation of logistical responsibilities and to broaden the base of support for our activities. The Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference is blessed with a particularly rich and varied pool of leadership talent and the rota-

tion of responsibilities and leadership positions is specifically designed to take advantage of the diversity of skills and talent our community has to offer. Junior professors and professors new to the Conference are initially tapped to play supporting roles but eventually serve in key roles as site coordinators, program committee chairs and annual meeting chairs. Even a cursory glance at the roster of professors participating as organizers, moderators, and presenters¹⁷ of works-in-progress demonstrates the broad spectrum of intellectual and cultural backgrounds represented among our participants and leaders. We have deliberately required a large pool of participants to share in the organization and execution of annual meetings in order to move beyond an organization dominated by individuals to one which is truly a collective enterprise.

However, the movement as a whole owes a debt to those individuals, such as Linda Crane, Norma Amaker, Mike Middleton, Neil Williams, Leland Ware and Anna Shavers, who have demonstrated tireless commitment to building the People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference movement. The success that we have achieved is the result of the collective effort of a broad and dynamic community.¹⁸ We cultivated that original seed of the 1989 Midwestern Conference for

¹⁷ For instance, moderators of the 1992 Midwestern Conference included Professor Linda S. Greene (University of Wisconsin), Professor Joyce A. Hughes (Northwestern University), Professor Beverly I. Moran (University of Wisconsin), Christine Jones, Esq., Professor Norman Amaker (Loyola University Chicago), and Professor Ann L. Iijima (William Mitchell College of Law). Conference Announcement, Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference Third Annual Meeting, Mar. 20–22, 1992 (on file with author). Moderators of the 1993 Midwestern Conference included Professor Leland B. Ware (St. Louis University), Professor Vincene Verdun (Ohio State University), Professor Robin McGee (Hamline University), Professor R. Carl Moy (William Mitchell College of Law), and Professor Yvette M. Barksdale (John Marshall Law School). Conference Announcement, Fourth Annual Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference, Mar. 26–28, 1993 (on file with author). Moderators of the 1997 Midwestern Conference included Anna W. Shavers (University of Nebraska), Rogelio A. Lasso (Washburn University), and Linda S. Greene. Conference Announcement, Eighth Annual Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference, Apr. 25–27, 1997 (on file with author).

The presenters at the 1990 meeting of the Midwestern Conference included Professor Jerome Culp (Duke University), "Black Legal Scholarship;" Professor James E. Jones, Jr. (University of Wisconsin), "Scholarship: Reflections After 20 Years;" and Professor Gerald Torres (University of Minnesota), "Reunderstanding the Voices Debate: Culture, Pluralism, and Law." Conference Announcement, Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference, Feb. 10, 1990 (on file with author).

¹⁸ From the original 1989 meeting of the Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference to the upcoming conference in the year 2000, the Midwestern Conference has enjoyed the hospitality of seven different law school partners. Its Annual Meeting Committee of up to eight members during any given year has benefited from the rotation of some thirty participants.

ten years. In that time, our seed has grown into a tree with coast-to-coast roots. We have nurtured a healthy and positive response to the paradox of tokenism's opportunity and burden. The People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference movement provides peer support and the "critical space" necessary for the flowering of intellectual potential. We worked to create this critical space to nurture minority scholars who endured disproportionate pressures and demands due to their scarcity in academia. These token professors were compelled to serve as signs and symbols of equality on a wide range of law school and university committees and to perform as role models for both majority and minority students. Simultaneously, we worked incessantly to disprove assumptions of group inferiority. These extracurricular responsibilities often left minority law professors with little or no space for individual intellectual growth and exploration. The Midwestern Conference set out to right this imbalance by announcing a firm commitment to intellectual and scholarly development. By doing so we hoped to signal a reevaluation of the priorities of both law professors of color *and* their institutions, as well as to send a clear message about the importance of scholarly productivity and mentoring. We also intended to address the dilemma of alienation and assimilation. A by-product of token environments is the isolation and visibility of tokenism that lone minority professors experience within the historically white academy. Integration under terms of tokenism dictates an existence without any real promise of equal citizenship and a resultant alienation and separation from the institution, while the assimilation required may demand a rejection of one's own experiences and perspective in favor of those of the dominant culture. The resultant Scylla and Charabydis is a no-man's land.

The Midwestern Conference offered an alternative to this untenable double bind. Its evolution into a network of regional conferences has challenged the paradigm of tokenism and rejected alienation, assimilation and tokenism as acceptable options for the twenty-first century's law professor of color. Rather, the People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences promote a model of dual citizenship. This model encourages full participation of legal scholars of color in every aspect of law school life while reciprocally supporting the existence of other "emancipatory" sites of intellectual citizenship. The model of dual citizenship recognizes the limitations of traditional legal educational institutions and encourages that those limitations be acknowledged and addressed. The People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences—and the law schools which have supported them—have embraced the model of dual citizenship "from sea to shining sea."

III. EPILOGUE

During the First National Meeting, each regional conference made remarks and proposed toasts to the work of their colleagues. Norman Amaker of Loyola-Chicago, who worked with me to organize the first Midwestern meeting, and I presented the chronology of Midwestern events from 1989 through 1999. As we spoke, we invited each professor from our region who played an important role—from chairing and serving on annual meeting committees to serving as on-site coordinator and members of the board—to join us. Eventually, over twenty people who had served in key leadership roles joined us in the stage area. As always, the smiles, camaraderie and spirit of our group moved me. I scanned the room filled with people from the other conferences and thought, “your Midwestern idea is spreading like wildfire from sea to shining sea.” I silently thought that while our idea did spread like wildfire across the nation, the most wonderful reward was the joy and gratification we experience in our color-constructed community.

I ended my remarks in this way:

Next year, we will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference. We are planning a retreat where we will reflect on the past, assess our present state and plan for the future. We also plan to eat well, relax, and enjoy ourselves, celebrate our relationships, laugh at our arguments and unashamedly bask in our success. With the First National Meeting, our desire to create an emancipatory and emancipated institution was ratified. Moreover, my intent was to create an intellectual community which by its very existence represented an oppositional statement to the pervasive practice of tokenism. This step, while building on the work of prior legal scholars of color, went further in its endeavor to create a critical community. It was not critical in the sense in which we have come to know that term as an ideological marker. But it was an institution born out of my critical assessment of the permanence of tokenism and a creative attempt to bypass an anticipated century-long-if-ever process of historically white institutional transformation. It was also critical, in the common sense meanings of the term—acute, central, compelling, crucial, elemental, fundamental, exigent, important, indispensable, significant, strategic, urgent—to our prosper-

ity and survival as a community and the reforming of legal education generally.

There is an irony here too. The Midwestern—and the subsequent People of Color Conferences—emerged at a time when legal scholars of color began to fragment—necessarily so—over questions of ideology and commonality of interests. In a real sense, we have gone our separate ways and have neither sufficiently expressed nor resolved the ideological and community tensions raised by the specificity of our respective subject positions. How ironic it is that as these movements grew and flourished, so too did the people of color legal scholarship movement. How ironic it is that as these movements grew in strength, so too did the people of color legal scholarship movement. And, how ironic it is that as these movements fragmented us, we were kept together in and by the people of color.

Tonight, we celebrate a fact. Whatever our differences, *we are people of color.*