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Reflections from the Chair-The Road Taken: Honoring the Decade of Scholarship by Law Professors of Color in U.S. Law Schools and the People of Color Movement (1989-1999)

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REFLECTIONS FROM THE CHAIR—THE ROAD TAKEN: HONORING THE DECADE OF SCHOLARSHIP BY LAW PROFESSORS OF COLOR IN U.S. LAW SCHOOLS AND THE PEOPLE OF COLOR MOVEMENT (1989–1999)

LINDA R. CRANE*

I. THE BIRTH OF THE PEOPLE OF COLOR “MOVEMENT”

The first national meeting of the six regional People of Color (POC) Legal Scholarship Conferences was the result of a planning process that began in March, 1997, during the eighth annual meeting of the Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference (Midwestern Region) at The John Marshall Law School in Chicago, Illinois.¹

The Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference, Inc., was the brainchild of Professor Linda S. Greene² who, upon accepting a teaching position at the University of Wisconsin in 1989,

* Associate Professor of Law, The John Marshall Law School, Chicago, Illinois. Special thanks to the entire National Steering Committee who, for almost two years, planned the first national meeting of the six regional People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences and whose story is told here. Thanks also to the following: Dean Robert G. (Gil) Johnston, The John Marshall Law School, for his long-term support for the Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference and for his generous support as host of the third and the eighth meetings of the Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference and the first national meeting of the Regional Conferences; Professor Ralph Ruebner, chair of The John Marshall Law School Centennial Planning Committee, for supporting the national meeting as one of the important academic programs on the Centennial Activities Calendar and for troubleshooting problems as they arose; Brian Williams, my research assistant; Professor Linda S. Greene, my friend and role model in the academy, through whom I have learned so much that is of value; and the Boston College Third World Law Journal.

¹ The eighth annual meeting of the Midwestern Region was co-hosted by John Marshall and Loyola-Chicago. The idea for a national meeting of all of the regional POC Conferences was taking shape simultaneously in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

² As of July, 1999, Professor Greene is the Associate Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has earned this position through her extensive work in the area of faculty development, a great deal of which she did in connection with the creation and perfection of the POC Legal Scholarship “movement.”

began to look for ways to bond with other law professors teaching nearby. Finding no existing institution that would facilitate the formation of relationships based on mutual needs and interests among law professors of color in the area,³ Greene decided to organize a meeting of people of color who were teaching at Midwestern law schools. With the enthusiastic support of Professor Norman Amaker who agreed to host the meeting at his school, Loyola University in Chicago, the two-day meeting was convened on Friday, February 16, 1990.

I began my new career as a law teacher in August, 1989. In September, 1989, I was excited to attend what I later learned was the first national Critical Race Theory meeting at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. That meeting was attended by law professors from around the country who were, and are, some of the most prolific scholars in what was then usually referred to as "non-traditional" legal scholarship. Since then, several additional areas of less-traditional legal scholarship have emerged. Over time many of them have come to be viewed as mainstream, if not as traditional. However, in 1990 there were essentially only two "non-traditional" schools of thought: Critical Legal Studies, or "Crits," and the new Critical Race Theory (CRT). The Wisconsin meeting was attended by leading scholars, many serving as panelists and speakers, from both of these "movements."

I did not understand much of what I heard during that meeting. One thing was clear to me, however, when I returned to my office in Chicago: I had overestimated my suitability for my new job.

Before the Wisconsin meeting,⁴ I had realized that, when taken seriously, the job description for law professor included a number of demanding components. I immediately had to become an expert in the substantive areas that I had been assigned to teach. Check. I had

³ According to Professor Taunya Lovell Banks of the University of Maryland Law School, the Northeast Corridor Collective was started by Professor Emma Coleman Jordan of the Georgetown University Law Center after the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) workshop on civil rights held in Chicago in 1986. During the workshop, a small group of women, most of whom were untenured, expressed the need for more support. The group, which predates the Midwestern POC Legal Scholarship Conference, is comprised primarily of African-American female law professors who teach at law schools in the northeastern and mid-Atlantic states. In addition, the Minority Section of the AALS was already in existence and provided a good model for encouraging all law professors of color to combine their efforts to advance the goals of diversity in hiring and scholarship within the legal academy.

⁴ Ironically perhaps, but not coincidentally, the 1989 Critical Race Conference was the first of its kind and was organized by Linda Greene.

to find time for a great deal of faculty committee work⁵—both official and unofficial. Check Check. I also had to find time to meet the enormous demands of providing service to all of the students of color within the law school, the bar, and the broader community, a potentially enormous commitment in a major city like Chicago. Check Check Check. I had to write. Check Check Check Check. Now, according to what I had learned at the Critical Race Theory confab, the biggest part of the job—writing publishable legal scholarship—was not a simple matter of writing law review articles about traditional legal issues. No, it would take more.

Specifically, after the CRT meeting at Wisconsin, I was convinced that my scholarship would be deemed second-rate at best unless it included some of the ideas these great thinkers had bestowed upon me. I did not know exactly what most of these ideas meant, but I knew they were essential to respectable scholarship; I also knew they had something to do with “Marxism,” “social constructs,” “deconstructionism,” Fanon, Fuqua, and Locke! I felt well out of my depth and more than a little depressed. The way out of the confusion came a few months later, in February, 1990, when I attended the now legendary first annual meeting of the Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference.

Initially, the significance of this meeting was that it introduced me to a broader group of law professors. We were different in so many ways, yet so accepting of each others’ differences and so focused on our common need for direction as we developed our individual scholarly and teaching agendas. Some of those who attended that first meeting already knew each other and were seasoned law profs. Others of us were in our first or second year of teaching. Some were on law faculties in the Midwest; several were not. What was clear from that first POC meeting was that there were ties that bound us and that the group made each individual member stronger and more productive at no one else’s expense. Everyone’s questions were welcomed and discussed fully—and in accessible language. Experiences were shared and lofty egos were left outside. This meeting was the very embodiment of that often touted, but rarely experienced, word “collegiality.” Then and now, I felt blessed to know the twenty-eight people who at

⁵ Because of the demand for “diversity” in the absence of an adequate supply of diverse faculty, law faculty who are people of color are asked to perform a disproportionate amount of the work done for standing faculty committees, ad hoc faculty committees, student organizations, and individual students. This is one of the many important issues that the POC Conferences have helped their members learn to manage.

tended that first meeting, including Professors Linda Greene (now Associate Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison); Norman Amaker (Loyola-Chicago); Michael Middleton (now at the University of Missouri-Columbia); Gerald Torres (then at Minnesota, now at Texas); Jim Jones (Wisconsin-Madison); Beverly Moran (then at Cincinnati, now at Wisconsin-Madison);⁶ Leland Ware (St. Louis University); Beverly McQueary-Smith (Touro); the late Andrew Haines (who shared the story of his nightmarish experience at William Mitchell, forever disabusing us all of the fiction that tenure protects us from unfair firings); Yvette Barksdale (John Marshall); Neil Williams (Loyola-Chicago); and Solomon Oliver (then at Cleveland-Marshall, now a Federal District Court Judge in Ohio).

After this first meeting in the Midwest, news of its success spread across America and led to the creation of what has become a total of six regional People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences since 1990.⁷ It was during the second annual meeting of the Midwestern Region that it adopted its full name: the Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference.⁸ This second meeting was held at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis at the end of March, 1991; it was lead by on-site coordinators Professors Gerald Torres and Van Hayes and chaired by Linda Greene. At the end of the second meeting, Gerald Torres proclaimed that the Midwestern Conference "had its legs." He was right; beginning then, and every year since, there has been an orderly transition of power from one planning committee to another, perhaps the best indication of success for any new endeavor.

It was also during the second annual meeting of law professors of color in the Midwestern Region that the states that would comprise the Midwestern Region were identified as Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, Northern Kentucky, Nebraska, Minnesota, Indiana, and Kansas.

A bona fide "movement" requires lateral motion, however. In the case of what is now the People of Color Legal Scholarship Confer-

⁶ The Midwestern Region's history includes the true story of how Jim Jones, impressed with Beverly Moran's formal response to Gerald Torres' paper about Native American folklore, recruited her on the spot to teach at Wisconsin. There are many similar success stories within every Regional Conference.

⁷ The regional groups are referred to as Conferences. Each year the Conferences have annual meetings, not "conferences" per se.

⁸ The suffix "Inc." was added when the planning committee decided to become a non-profit corporation in 1994.

ences movement, that lateral motion was provided by Professor Leslie Espinoza. It was Leslie who organized the first annual meeting of law professors of color in the Southwest, thus giving life to the second of the regional POC Conferences. Leslie also deserves credit for continuing the use of the "People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences" name that has been used by every region since. As a result of this expansion of the original concept, there are now six regional POC Conferences encompassing every law school in all fifty states.

I remember receiving a phone call from Leslie in the fall of 1990 during which she described her plans to convene a meeting of her colleagues in the southwestern states. She said that it was her intention to emulate the work recently begun by minority law professors in the Midwest. She asked me to describe our philosophy and approach to organizing the Midwestern Region. I did so happily. I told Leslie that the Midwestern Region had adopted a policy of holding its annual meetings in academic settings, and that each meeting would be sponsored by a law school to be selected through a competitive bidding process. Bids would be submitted by one of our members who taught at the school that was interested in hosting the next meeting; the member who secured the proposal would have to be willing to serve as the on-site coordinator. I told her that we felt this process would serve several purposes. First, it was compatible with our focus on and our commitment to developing legal scholarship. Second, it would create opportunities for our colleagues to satisfy their dean's desire to spotlight the school. Finally, it would secure financial support to pay for the meetings: by accruing funds through registration fees, we would be able, ultimately, to create financial independence from any institutional sponsor at our option.

Leslie, on the other hand, felt that what her colleagues in the Southwest needed the most was time together away from an academic setting. Since then, every region has conducted their meetings in the ways that best suit their needs. However, thanks to Leslie Espinoza, one thing has remained consistent in all six regions: the name. The genius of Linda Greene and Norman Amaker may have gone underappreciated were it not for this trend that was established by Leslie.

From the beginning of the expansion of the concept of the People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences into additional geographic regions, the planning committees in the various regions have adopted distinct approaches. However, they have all been able to uphold the traditions that we all honor. The glue that binds the various regions can be found in this dichotomy: we respect our differences, affording room to conduct our affairs based on autonomous deter-

minations of the needs of our respective regions; we also embrace our collective oneness and have continued to pursue similar goals.

1991, the year of the second annual meeting of the Midwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference and the first annual meeting of the Southwestern People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference, marked the creation of a multi-regional POC movement. This formation was achieved with the vertical motion in the Midwest Region and the lateral motion in the Southwest Region, keeping the same name and focus on scholarship and collegiality.

II. THE NATIONAL MEETING

In 1997, as a result of a discussion during the eighth annual meeting of the Midwestern POC Legal Scholarship Conference, Inc.,⁹ about how we should celebrate the tenth annual meeting of the Midwestern POC Conference in 1999, a decision was made to spearhead an effort to plan a national meeting of all six of the regional conferences. The membership unanimously approved the decision to convene the national meeting at the time of the tenth annual meeting as an appropriate way to honor the now fully developed POC movement.

It was agreed that the national meeting would include a time period during which each region's members could gather privately and conduct their annual business meetings. The main part of the national meeting, however, would be devoted to a program to be planned by a national steering committee. I was asked to assume responsibility for making this vision a reality. The membership also approved my recommendation that we accept The John Marshall Law School's offer to include the national POC meeting as one of the important academic programs being planned in observance of its centennial celebration. Within the hour, I had secured support from my dean, Robert G. Johnston. These decisions occurred in March, 1997; then the work remained to be done.

I spent the next eight months contacting people in all six regions who were known or rumored to be involved in the POC movement and who, more importantly, were likely to be willing to help plan the national meeting. The immediate objective was to organize a face-to-face steering committee meeting during the January, 1998, annual meeting for the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) in San

⁹ The 1997 meeting of the Midwestern Region was the eighth annual meeting and was co-sponsored by The John Marshall Law School and Loyola-Chicago, with Yvette Barksdale and Neil Williams sharing the on-site coordinating responsibilities.

Francisco, California. To sweeten the request, the Midwestern POC board approved funds for a dinner for the steering committee and friends of the Midwestern POC in San Francisco. So, in addition to organizing and chairing the meeting itself, I also had to locate a restaurant and plan the dinner.¹⁰

Associate Dean Jonathan Sylvester (Golden Gate) offered to host this first steering committee meeting on January 10, 1998—an offer I gladly accepted. In attendance at that meeting were Professors Linda Greene (Wisconsin-Madison), Reginald Robinson (Howard), Maggie Chon (Seattle), Kimberly Norwood (Washington), Lisa Ikamoto (Loyola-L.A.), Norman Amaker (Loyola-Chicago), Leonard Baines (Western New England), Associate Dean Sylvester, and Kent Lollis (Associate Director of Minority Affairs, Law School Admissions Council (LSAC)).

During this first meeting, we confirmed The John Marshall Law School (JMLS) as the site, agreed on the dates, and created the structure for the standing committees. The most significant substantive agreement reached in San Francisco was that each region would forego its separate meeting in 1999 in favor of encouraging all members to attend the national meeting in Chicago. It was also decided that time would be allotted during the national meeting for each region to meet separately to conduct its own business. We also began to talk about programmatic content for the meeting and continued the process of identifying people who were known leaders within their respective region. We decided that each region would be represented by two people on the new planning committee. I accepted a nomination to serve as the general chair of the National Steering Committee; everyone attending agreed that this position needed to remain neutral during the committee's deliberations, i.e., without regional identity or leaning. Because my school, JMLS, was the selected site, I also assumed the duties of the chair of the Site Committee.

Originally, we had planned to call the ultimate committee the "Planning Committee." This name change was to occur after the original Steering Committee established the parameters for the meeting and secured commitments from the members of the working committee. It was also agreed that the new committee would be or-

¹⁰ Thanks again to Gwen Konigsfeld, JMLS faculty secretary, who did much of the legwork needed to plan this now legendary dinner at Restaurant LuLu on Market Street in San Francisco.

ganized according to the format outlined during the San Francisco meeting.

All these ideas were eventually implemented with one exception: instead of changing the name of the final working committee to the "Planning Committee," we continued to call it the "National Steering Committee." This name was retained (although encompassing mainly new members) because the two representatives from each region were expected to do just as much "steering" as "planning," given the massive number of constituents they were representing and the scope of their responsibilities on this "working" committee.

I devoted the spring of 1998 to securing commitments from two people from each region to serve on the National Steering Committee. Another important objective was to make sure that the committee was diverse. This was a huge task that was accomplished through the cooperation of many people involved in a national search that took place entirely via e-mail (as did most of the meeting planning). The result was worth all the effort. It turned out to be the most rewarding and productive committee experience of my life. This committee gave "committees" a good name. The following people served on the committee: General Chair and Site Chair, Professor Linda R. Crane, Midwestern Region,¹¹ The John Marshall Law School; Program Chair, Professor Reginald Leamon Robinson, Mid-Atlantic Region, Howard University; Fundraising Co-Chairs, Professor Linda Greene, Midwestern Region, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Professor Leonard Baynes, Northeastern Region, who was visiting at American University; Margaret Chon, Western Region, Seattle University; Bryan Fair, Southeastern Region, The University of Alabama; Sheila Foster, Mid-Atlantic Region, Rutgers-Camden; Tanya Hernandez, Northeastern Region, St. John's University; Steven Hobbs, Southeastern Region, The University of Alabama; Darren Hutchinson, Southwestern Region, Southern Methodist University; Rogelio Lasso, Midwestern Region, Washburn University (Rogelio also served as the first Fundraising Committee Chair); George Martinez, Southwestern Region, Southern Methodist University; Laura Padilla, Western Region, Cali-

¹¹ My regional affiliation is the Midwestern Region, but we all agreed that it was important for the chair of the Steering Committee to provide a region-neutral perspective in overseeing the planning process and content, a task that I worked scrupulously to accomplish.

fornia Western; and Antoinette Sedillo Lopez, Southwestern Region,¹² University of New Mexico.

The new, reconstituted National Steering Committee was in place and ready to begin working during the summer of 1998. The next task was to tame the unwieldy logistical problems presented by the fact that the fourteen members of the Steering Committee were scattered throughout the country.

This problem was solved largely under the auspices of Reggie Robinson, who, through his school, Howard University, created and maintained a private listserve that was dedicated solely to our planning committee.¹³ By providing a means of easy and rapid communication between me and all representatives of the six regions, this listserve proved indispensable to full disclosure and discussion about the myriad of tasks that were undertaken and completed, thus allowing collective decision-making. Admittedly, in a less technologically advanced world, this goal of full participation in decision-making may have been ambitious—and unrealistic. However, our vision of a successful national meeting could only be realized if all aspects of the meeting—programmatic, social, emotional, and financial—were designed to have meaning for law professors of every color from every region of the country. This goal required input that was geographically diverse, national in scope, and mindful of the differences in the traditions developing within each regional POC Conference.

One of the first things we did as a committee was to establish a policy that the Steering Committee members would not take prominent roles as speakers during the national meeting. We later carved out a very limited exception that allowed committee members to present and/or respond to papers during the works-in-progress sessions, but not during the plenary sessions.

This policy was important to us because we had all attended meetings where we had felt that, as mere attendees, our interests were secondary to those of the planners who inevitably populated all of the important panels. These were not fond memories; we wished the national POC meeting to be different. We wanted it to be an uplifting

¹² Through the combined efforts of various people, three members from the Southwest Regional POC Conference were confirmed simultaneously as members of the National Steering Committee. Each was allowed to remain on the committee after everyone agreed that we would not make decisions by regional vote, but by majority vote.

¹³ The e-mail address, npcl-scholarship@law.howard.edu, will remain alive in my memory for years to come. I have saved over 1,000 e-mail messages that relate directly to the national meeting.

experience for those who attended. We all felt that it was important for the National Steering Committee to seek the involvement of and to focus its attention on the members of the regional conferences who had responded to our call to come to Chicago, thereby foregoing their regularly scheduled annual regional meetings. We did not want the attendees to play second fiddle to the meeting's planners. Consequently, appearances by Steering Committee members on the formal program were very rare and very brief, occurring only when it made the most sense or upon special request.¹⁴

During a few lengthy conference calls, we discussed possible names and themes for the national meeting, as well as options for topics and presenters for the plenary sessions. The name, "People of Color Speak: Celebrating Our Emerging Voices," was a unanimous choice, and we also reached consensus rapidly on the fact that we wanted the meeting to include several plenary sessions. In addition, we felt strongly that there should be sufficient time devoted to the all-important tradition of helping our colleagues develop their scholarship through works-in-progress sessions. We also wanted the meeting to include wonderful and diverse social events as well as some free time. Our goals were lofty for a two-and-a-half-day meeting, but we did it, and judging from the effusive positive feedback from those who attended, we did it very well. Many people said that it was the best meeting they had ever attended.¹⁵ The only complaint was "sensory overload."

To pay for the costs of the meeting, we devised an ambitious plan to ask all of the law school deans for donations. We were confident of a positive response because deans have sponsored the individual meetings of the regional conferences since the very beginning of the People of Color movement.

¹⁴ As general chair and site chair, I made brief comments to open the proceedings before introducing our host, Robert G. (Gil) Johnston, dean of The John Marshall Law School, who welcomed the People of Color Conference to The John Marshall Law School for the third time. Reggie Robinson made a few opening comments about the program in his capacity as Chair of the Program Committee. Upon the request of Juan Williams, our Keynote Speaker for the Opening Plenary (Plenary I), Linda Greene was allowed to introduce him. All of this took place during the first twenty minutes of the Thursday evening meeting. I represented the Steering Committee again on Saturday afternoon, during the Closing Plenary (Plenary V), and led discussions about making a report to the entire body and about various other topics raised by those present in a town hall meeting format.

¹⁵ One particularly meaningful compliment came from someone who said that the National POC meeting was the first time he had ever attended a conference (small "c") without hearing a single grumble, complaint, or criticism from anyone during the sessions or during the free time—high praise indeed from a group of law professors.

At different times, Professors Linda Greene, Len Baynes, and Rogelio Lasso all served as chairs and/or co-chairs of the fundraising committee. Beginning in October, 1998, Rogelio and I sent letters to all law school deans that announced the national meeting and asked for their support in two key ways: first, by encouraging and paying for their faculty of color to attend; and second, by selecting one of four levels of financial support for the meeting on an unrestricted basis or, alternatively, by underwriting a specific event or program during the meeting. We also presented a proposal to the Board of Trustees of the Law School Admission Council (LSAC), through Kent Lollis, Associate Director for Minority Affairs for the LSAC, asking for financial support. All of the requests included pledge forms and return envelopes addressed to me at JMLS.

The four levels of giving for underwriters were: Benefactors (\$10,000 or more), Sponsors (\$1,500 to \$9,999), Patrons (\$900 to \$1,499), and Supporters (\$500 to \$899). Pledges from many schools started to arrive almost immediately. The LSAC Board of Trustees met in November, 1998, and unanimously approved a grant of \$10,000 to sponsor panel discussions and social events during the meeting.

In November, 1998, Linda Greene and Len Baines became co-chairs of the fundraising committee. Linda focused her attention on the all-important task of collecting the pledges. For the benefit of our cause, Linda also offered, literally, to capitalize upon her impressive and extensive contacts among law school deans. With great results, she wrote personal letters to deans who had not yet made financial commitments. She also sent letters and made calls to the deans who had pledged support. Instead of trickling in, the money began to flood in. These combined efforts resulted in approximately \$80,000 in actual funds received from law school deans and the LSAC. This figure does not include amounts schools spent for faculty members to attend the meeting and in-kind contributions.¹⁶ In addition to the

¹⁶ In-kind contributions were donated primarily by the schools of our Steering Committee members and occurred in connection with their committee responsibilities. These contributions covered such costs as those resulting from conference calls, postage, long distance phone calls, computer services, stationery, and copying. JMLS, for example, as the host of the meeting which was to be one of its Centennial Celebration Academic Programs, incurred all of the above costs and more; the school paid for the design, printing and mailing of the brochure; for hundreds of hours of work by secretaries, its Conferences Services Department, and the Public Relations Office; for photography; and for a lavish opening night reception—complete with champagne and a “Taste of Chicago” theme.

donations from our fundraising efforts, each registrant paid a registration fee of \$175.¹⁷

Our fundraising efforts enabled us to pay for the entire meeting and then some. As of the fall of 1999, all net proceeds are to be divided equally among the six regional People of Color Legal Scholarship Conferences. After we make these disbursements we will have met the most important objective of the national meeting—supporting the continued development of the work of the Regional Conferences—in the most meaningful and tangible way possible.¹⁸ To encourage each region to develop an internal organizational structure, the Steering Committee has attached only one string to the disbursement. Each region must formalize its structure enough to allow it to

¹⁷ This fee was waived in some cases upon request due to hardship.

The following list of law schools and their deans is intended to thank them once again for their generosity and support. Benefactors included: The John Marshall School of Law (Robert G. Johnston, Dean) and the Law School Admissions Council (Leo Romero, President and Kent Lollis, Associate Executive Director). Sponsors were: University of Alabama School of Law (Kenneth C. Randall, Dean), American University-Washington College of Law (Claudio Grossman, Dean), Boston College Law School (James S. Rogers, Interim Dean), Northern Illinois University School of Law (LeRoy Pernell, Dean), Ohio State University School of Law (Gregory Howard Williams, Dean), University of Oregon School of Law (Rennard Strickland, Dean), Quinnipiac College of Law (Neil H. Cogan, Dean), Seattle University School of Law (James E. Bond, Dean), South Texas College of Law (Frank T. Read, Dean), and University of Wisconsin (Kenneth B. Davis, Jr., Dean). Patrons included: Fordham University School of Law (John D. Feerick, Dean), Georgetown University Law Center (Judith Areen, Dean), University of San Diego (Daniel Rodriguez, Dean), Washburn University School of Law (James M. Concannon, Dean), George Washington University Law School (Michael K. Young, Dean), and Wayne State University School of Law (Joan Mahoney, Dean). Supporters were: University of Akron School of Law (Richard L. Aynes, Dean), Arizona State University College of Law (Patricia White, Dean), California Western School of Law (Steven Ray Smith, Dean), Georgia State University College of Law (Janice C. Griffith, Dean), Hofstra University Law School (Stuart Rabinowitz, Dean), University of Houston Law Center (Stephen Thomas Zamora, Dean), University of Michigan Law School (Jeffrey S. Lehman, Dean), William Mitchell College of Law (Harry Haynsworth, President and Dean), University of Nebraska College of Law (Nancy B. Rapaport, Dean), Notre Dame Law School (David T. Link, Dean), Nova Southeastern University (Joseph D. Harbaugh), Pennsylvania State University, Dickinson School of Law (Peter G. Glenn, Dean), Rutgers University School of Law-Camden (Rayman L. Solomon, Dean), University of Southern California (Scott Bice, Dean), Suffolk University Law School (John E. Fenton, Jr., Dean), Syracuse University College of Law (Dan Braveman, Dean), University of Tennessee College of Law (Thomas C. Galligan, Jr., Dean), Texas Wesleyan University (Frank K. Walwer, Dean), Western New England School of Law (Donald J. Dunn, Dean), and Tulane University School of Law (Edward F. Sherman, Dean).

¹⁸ We will have helped each region do what Linda Greene stated early on was her primary objective when she created the prototype in the Midwest: "to work toward positive financial independence through emancipatory politics."

open a bank account with a federal tax identification number into which the check can be deposited.

Another very important task identified early in the planning process was the need to select a fine student-edited law journal to publish the proceedings of the national POC meeting. Professor Laura Padilla (California Western), working with Reggie Robinson (Howard), the Program Committee Chair, assumed the primary responsibility for completing this task. Laura sent out notices of our intent to publish the proceedings to selected law journals and received several responses indicating an interest.

Following a lengthy set of discussions, the Steering Committee agreed that, since the program was divided into two natural parts (the plenary sessions and the works-in-progress sessions), two separate symposia were appropriate. The plenary sessions were designed and executed according to a vision shared by the members of the Steering Committee. However, with regard to the works-in-progress sessions, there was no common theme to any of the papers. Consequently, including them in the same publication as the plenary presentations was potentially misleading.

We decided to accept Laura's recommendation to place the plenary proceedings in the *Boston College Third World Law Journal* and to publish the completed works-in-progress in the *California Western Law Review*.¹⁹ Furthermore, we agreed that anyone who missed the submission deadlines for these two journals could publish materials in one of the Centennial Celebration volumes of the *John Marshall Law Review*.

III. THE DEANS OF COLOR MEETING

One of the most exciting developments during the eighteen-month planning period resulted from a request from a dean after he had received the letter announcing the meeting and soliciting funding. Shortly after sending the letter, I received a phone call from Dean LeRoy Pernell of Northern Illinois University College of Law. He informed me that he wanted to make a pledge "at the highest level of giving."²⁰ He also wanted to know whether our steering committee

¹⁹ Where the work would be published depended upon whether the work had been presented during a plenary session or as a work-in-progress.

²⁰ Several deans of color made pledges at the highest level of giving (\$1,500 or more): Dean LeRoy Pernell (Northern Illinois), Dean Gregory Williams (Ohio State), Dean Daniel Rodriguez (San Diego), and Dean Alice Bullock (Howard), who gave the highest amount at \$2,500. Thanks again.

might consider allowing him to invite the law school deans of color to gather for a meeting to take place during the POC meeting.

We were already planning to invite six present or former deans of color to participate in a plenary session on Saturday morning called "Deans of Color Speak," but Dean Pernell actually wanted to create a new organization for deans of color—something he said had never been done before. The Steering Committee's support for the request was enthusiastic and unanimous. One of our members, Professor Antoinette Sedillo Lopez, volunteered to act as a liaison between our committee and Dean Pernell to facilitate the planning of the deans' meeting. In January, 1999, several deans of color met during the annual AALS meeting in New Orleans to plan their first national meeting. Dean Gregory Williams of Ohio State was the host. On Saturday, March 27, 1999, yet another historic meeting took place when more than a dozen deans²¹ of color attended their first private business meeting at the same time that the six regional conferences each held private annual business meetings.

IV. SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since I am speaking for the National Steering Committee, I would be remiss if I failed to issue very special thanks to some very special people for their help: Associate Dean John Sylvester (Golden Gate) for hosting our first in-person steering committee meeting in San Francisco in January, 1998; Professors Leslie Espinoza (Boston College) and Antoinette Sedillo Lopez (New Mexico) for hosting our second in-person steering committee meeting in a hotel suite in New Orleans in January, 1999; Associate Dean Peter Alexander (Penn State), and Professors Dennis Greene (Oregon) and Cynthia Hawkins-Leon (Syracuse) who were drafted to bring their unique talents to the task of realizing our vision of the program; and last, but not least, three very fearless and tireless JMLS staffers: Mrs. Diane Gordon, faculty secretary; Ms. Michele Graham, Public Relations Assistant;²² and

²¹ Later, it was suggested and agreed to that the associate deans of color would be invited to attend this meeting as well.

²² In 1999, we received mentions by the following for the National Meeting: *Chicago Lawyer Magazine*, May issue, feature article with photo; *Chicago Lawyer Magazine*, May issue, second photo in a different article; *Shadow Broadcast*, radio interview; *The National Law Journal*, Apr. 19 issue, feature article with photo; *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin*, Feb. 26 issue, article; *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin*, May 20 issue, front page photo; *New Voice of New York*, Mar. 25 issue, article; *Up & Coming*, Mar. 1-7 issue; *Up & Coming*, Apr. 19-25 issue, article and event photos; and *Near West Gazette*, Mar. 4, column mention.

the incomparable Mr. Gary Watson, Director of Conferences Planning. Thanks also to Georgette Reynolds, President of The John Marshall Law School's Black Law Students Association (BLSA), who organized a group of students from all of the student of color organizations, including BLSA, the Hispanic Law Students Association (HLSA), and the Asian-Pacific Islands Law Student Association (APLSA), to provide the many hands we needed to help us in various ways during the entire meeting. Thank you all.

V. CLOSING

On a couple of occasions during the meeting, such as during the disagreement-raising Saturday evening LSAC-sponsored talk by Dr. Richard Adams, Director of Test Development for the LSAT, I reminded everyone of what differentiates our POC movement from others to which we belong.

One of the most important characteristics of the POC movement is that it encourages different voices to speak up regardless of the views they reflect. The POC Conferences provide a safe place for all law professors of color, not just those with whom some of us happen to agree. We do not insist that everyone share the same views, and we welcome the opportunity to hear all of our colleagues' voices. Some of us are "liberal," some "conservative." Some are worldly, while others are less so. Some are angry, and some content. What is important is that all of us are in a safe place when we meet.

We received media inquiries from the following: *The Wall Street Journal*; *Time*; *The Today Show*; WBBM-TV, Chicago Affiliate, Channel 2; and *BET Weekend Magazine*.

After submitting our press kit to *Today's Chicago Woman*, the publication nominated me for its annual poll of "100 Women Making a Difference," which was published in its July, 1999 issue.

