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Reflections of the Founding Members.

The Founding Editorial Board

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REFLECTION

REFLECTIONS OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS

THE FOUNDING EDITORIAL BOARD†

In March of 1998, we sought the support of the law school in reviving *The Hispanic Scholar*, a law review that several years earlier endeavored to examine legal issues from the perspective of Hispanic students and faculty. Beginning with the stories that were never told in *The Hispanic Scholar*, we established this law review. Not only did we change the name, we created a new mission.

The Scholar: St. Mary's Law Review on Minority Issues was born out of an idea that students would help each other through the writing process. With the guidance of faculty, student comments would be a respectful collaboration between the writer and editor, always maintaining the writer's voice. Unlike traditional journals, *The Scholar's* organization would be founded on cooperation and consensus. *The Scholar* became our own. We did not do it alone, however. If it had not been for administrators, faculty and fellow students, *The Scholar* would have remained only an idea.

Our vision was to begin a conversation about issues rarely examined in traditional legal discourse; issues which affected our families, our communities, and ourselves. Five years later, the conversations have not ended, nor should they.

Upon reflection of the past five years, we are humbled at the steadfast determination of those students who followed us, to continue the dialogue.¹ If not for the editors and writers, whose words have filled the

† Maria Montoya Chavez, Denise Y. Mejia, Tamara D. Pitts, Isabel de la Riva, Antonio Fernandez Rivera, and Sonia M. Rodriguez.

1. More than 100 students have dedicated their efforts to promote the mission of *The Scholar* as writers and editors.

pages of this law review and whose dedication has been unshaken, *The Scholar* would not exist today.

In the first four volumes of *The Scholar: St. Mary's Law Review on Minority Issues*, the voices of Latina garment workers were heard, the stories of migrant school children were told, and the struggles of homosexuals in the military were studied. The impact of the law on these groups, and so many more, has been the subject of inquiry by those who have accepted the challenge to educate themselves and others not only about the law, but about the lives of those who endure discrimination and inequality as part of their existence.²

For many, it is uncomfortable to talk about race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. It is difficult to analyze differences and address inequities. *The Scholar* was founded as an outlet for those students who were brave enough to have those conversations and to add to the discourse of the legal community from the perspectives of the voiceless.

Listening and retelling our clients' stories are a part of what we do as advocates. Words, written and spoken, form the foundation of our work. *The Scholar* taught us that we could not be good advocates for people if we do not understand their stories.

We are very pleased that the topics throughout the years have stayed true to the mission of *The Scholar*. The law review's focus is on minority issues. *The Scholar* is inclusive - it explores ideas such as reparations for Holocaust survivors, the constitutionality of border inspections, and the accessibility of healthcare for undocumented immigrants. Last year it provided a voice for an award-winning article examining the issue of NAFTA's impact on minorities and women.³ The editors and writers continue to challenge the constraints that have been historically placed on marginalized groups. It is their dedication that represents the spirit of *The Scholar*.

The work of *The Scholar* and its devotion to justice and scholarship is important. In the coming years, disenfranchised groups will continue to face significant challenges. *The Scholar's* legal analysis will continue to be important in addressing these conflicts and in respecting differences.⁴

To the editors and writers of *The Scholar*, we emphasize that your words, the words of your families and your communities, with all their

2. Letter from the Editors, 2 SCHOLAR 2 (2000).

3. In 2002, Karla S. Jackson received The State Bar of Texas' Labor and Employment Law Section Writing Competition award for her comment, "Is Anything Ever Free?: NAFTA's Effect on Union Organizing Drives and Minorities and the Potential of FTAA Having a Similar Effect," 4 SCHOLAR 307 (2002).

4. Kevin R. Johnson, "Dedication of *The Scholar: St. Mary's Law Review on Minority Issues*," 1 SCHOLAR 1 (1999).

anger, pain, struggle and joy, add to the ongoing conversation of the law. It is your responsibility as legal writers to tell these stories. Your work will continue as practitioners of the law. With much gratitude and hope for the future, we challenge *The Scholar: St. Mary's Law Review on Minority Issues* to remain true to its mission, to continue the difficult conversations, to hear those voices which are muted by mainstream society – and to examine the law as it impacts disenfranchised groups.

We are proud to align ourselves with you, the progressive leaders who came after us to make *The Scholar* what it is today.⁵

5. Letter from the Editors, 3 SCHOLAR 1 (2000).