

# INTRODUCTION: A JOURNAL OF LAW IN THE SERVICE OF HUMAN NEEDS

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On behalf of the editors and staff of the *New York City Law Review*, we would like to extend a warm welcome to our readers. The development of a new law journal is a huge undertaking — and one which the students at the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law have not taken lightly. While this law review has not been welcomed, shall we say, with open arms, by many of the faculty and administration at this school, the support we have received from the student body has been tremendous. Thus, perhaps a bit of background on CUNY School of Law and the *New York City Law Review* would be appropriate.

[CUNY School of Law], which opened in 1983, was created to fill a void in the legal community. CUNY's central purpose is to create an educational program that honors students' aspirations toward a legal career built on a commitment to justice, fairness, and equality. These principles form the basis of the Law School's motto, *Law in the Service of Human Needs*. As a result, CUNY's curriculum combines the strengths of traditional methods of legal teaching with an emphasis on clinical training.<sup>1</sup>

CUNY is committed to educating lawyers who will serve communities which have been historically under-represented by the legal profession. One way this commitment is manifested is by insuring that the student body reflects a true cross section of urban society. As a result, CUNY is recognized as a national leader in the diversity of its student body and faculty. Since the school was established, CUNY graduates have overwhelmingly chosen to serve in public interest areas of the law.<sup>2</sup>

As for this journal, suffice it to say that it has been a long time coming. The CUNY Law Review Steering Committee first made an attempt to publish what they hoped would be the *CUNY Law Review*, a general-focus law review, beginning in the Spring of 1993. While lay-

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<sup>1</sup> 16 ILSA J. INT'L L. (1993).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

ing significant groundwork for the project, *CUNY Law Review* was still just a dream.

The primary objections to a law journal at CUNY seemed to be: (1) there are already too many law journals and another one is unnecessary; and (2) that having a law journal would be inconsistent with the school's non-competitive philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

A Law Review Steering Committee was once again formed in the Summer of 1994. After developing an organizational structure, and meeting with law school officials, we were blessed with a faculty advisor — Ruthann Robson — who gave us significant input on law review procedure. The Steering Committee selected the initial editors and staff members through a student-judged writing competition. All the students who participated in the production of this law review were selected based on their writing and organizational skills.

However, we were still faced with significant obstacles. The Law Review was denied funding by the body which allocates student fees. The then-acting dean of the Law School informed us that, pursuant to City University regulations, the journal could not use "CUNY" in its name. Although the Law Review disagreed with his interpretation of the regulations, we had no choice but to change our name.

So, we changed our name. *New York City Law Review* sounded good and seemed an appropriate title for a journal published by students at the only public law school in New York City. We emphasized that our law review would be different — as different as our law school. And we received funding. And then we found sponsors. And then subscriptions started selling. And we even had publication agreements with authors. In the Spring of 1995, *New York City Law Review* became a reality.

While *New York City Law Review* is not an official publication of the City University of New York, we are proud of what we are: the first and only student-run, student-edited law journal in the history of this school. We believe that a "traditional" student-edited law review significantly enhances, rather than impedes, all the efforts being made to improve the quality and reputation of the legal education at the City University of New York School of Law.

But make no mistake, this law review is different. Our law school's motto is "Law in the Service of Human Needs." We hope this law review will serve that mission. While trying to remain a quality,

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<sup>3</sup> CUNY School of Law grades all courses Pass/Fail and does not rank its students. Although the faculty is preparing to change the grading system to provide better indicators of success in a course, there are no plans at this time to begin ranking students.

general-focus legal publication, the Editorial Board will publish only those articles it deems to fall within that mission, or is of significant interest to the New York City legal community. We hope the articles you read will have a slightly different, more public interest-oriented focus. With your readership, and the submission of articles from legal scholars and practitioners — particularly those working in public interest law — this law review will succeed.

The students of The City University of New York School of Law now have something which is both vital to their own legal education, as well as a much needed addition to the legal community: *A Journal of Law in the Service of Human Needs*.

Executive Committee

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