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From Journal to Review: UALR's Student Legal Publication Comes of Age, 1998-99

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*Patrick W. McAlpine**

The first thing I always think of when I remember my year as editor-in-chief of the *University of Arkansas at Little Rock Law Review* ("Law Review") was how the members of our board pulled together on *Law Review* matters. We published six books that year, and we all gave our best effort to make sure the books got out on time.¹

We were lucky to be on the editorial board at a very dynamic time for both the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) and the *Law Review*. Our board oversaw the change of the publication's name from the *UALR Law Journal* to *UALR Law Review*. We were responsible for designing a new cover and were lucky enough to have the opportunity to put our own stamp on the *Law Review*.

All of us on the editorial board that year felt a special responsibility to the publication because we were its caretakers during its twentieth year. With the leadership of Dean Chuck Goldner² and the rest of the Faculty Publications Committee, the faculty and administration backed most of the changes that our board proposed.

One of the most important experiences our board had was the opportunity to attend the National Conference of Law Reviews (NCLR)³ together

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1. Members of the editorial board for volumes 21:1 through 21:4 with whom I had the privilege to work with were: R. Margaret Dobson, Executive Editor; Bryan Duke, Managing Editor; Missy McJunkins Duke, Articles Editor; Joe Ghormley, Note Editor; Julie Great-house, Survey/Comments Editor; and Justin Allen, Research Editor.

2. Then-Associate Dean Chuck Goldner led the Faculty Publications Committee in 1998-99. Goldner became Dean of the UALR William H. Bowen School of Law in 2001. As Chair of the Faculty Publications Committee, Dean Goldner played a key role in changing the name of the publication and was an invaluable counselor to me during my year on the editorial board. I extend my deepest gratitude for his tireless work on behalf of the *Law Review*.

3. The NCLR is a nationwide association of student legal publications. Each year the NCLR holds a conference where member schools attend seminars and other sessions to help them learn more about the publication process. In 1996 UALR bid to hold the conference in Little Rock. The 1997-98 Editorial Board (specifically Chris Thomason) did an outstanding job in putting together the NCLR in Little Rock.

the year before we took over. We were able to attend the conference in scenic downtown Little Rock as UALR was the host school our year. Though we did not travel out-of-town to the conference, remaining in Little Rock did not detract from the confidence we gained while attending sessions together. The late-night strategy sessions turned into a blueprint for what we wanted to do during our year on the editorial board. Once we took over, we knew where we wanted to go because we had already discussed it at the NCLR.

The most challenging part of our year was putting on the Symposium on Racial Equality held at UALR in the spring of 1999. The symposium itself was not particularly difficult; the hardest part occurred after the authors left—getting the written articles in time to publish them together in the symposium issue! Luckily, after much persuasion, we were able to put out a sizeable volume with all the symposium articles in it. Former Dean Rod Smith's vision of a symposium touching on one of the most sensitive issues of our time was an idea far beyond anything UALR had attempted in the past. We had over fourteen nationally recognized scholars on campus, and the logistics of putting them all in the right place at the right time was extremely challenging.

My experience on the *Law Review* will remain a part of my professional life. I will always remember with gratitude my experiences on the *Law Review* because the experience taught me how to act and write like a lawyer. Whether chairing a meeting of the editorial board (the firm); dealing with recalcitrant authors (clients); meeting with members of the *Law Review* who just hated cite-checking (opposing counsel); or interacting with the faculty and administration of the law school (the judges, of course), I firmly believe that I am a better lawyer today because of the skills I learned during my year on the editorial board. I learned to critically examine contracts and write a firm but polite letter to persons who had neglected to turn an article or other assignment in on time. More important, however, I learned that anything is possible when you have a committed group of intelligent and motivated people working with you. I hope that membership on the *Law Review* will always be a practical learning tool for second- and third-year law students. Further, I hope that those students will always take from the experience its most valuable lessons—those opportunities to learn the day-to-day skills of being an attorney before getting a law license.⁴

4. EDITORS' NOTE: In addition to serving as editor-in-chief of the *Law Review*, McAlpine most recently co-authored *Immigration Practice in Arkansas: A Practitioners' Guide*, 23 U. ARK. LITTLE ROCK L. REV. 953 (2000), with Melissa McJunkins Duke. McAlpine also authored the Evidence and Labor surveys in 21 U. ARK. LITTLE ROCK L. REV. 665, 697 (1999), and the ERISA survey in 20 U. ARK. LITTLE ROCK L.J. 1089 (1998).