

THE ST. THOMAS LAW REVIEW: TWENTY-FIVE YEARS YOUNG AND YET SO ESTABLISHED

JESSICA FONSECA-NADER*

I am honored to be a part of the *St. Thomas Law Review*'s 25th Anniversary celebrations.

I always knew the *Law Review* was very important to me, but writing this piece, I realize just how it has all come full circle. I have had the unique opportunity to be a part of the *Law Review* as its Editor-in-Chief and most recently as its faculty advisor. Looking back at the *Law Review*'s many accomplishments, I am honored to have been a part of such a wonderful organization, and I am grateful to have shared in the growth of St. Thomas University School of Law. For me personally, the *Law Review* was so much more than a résumé builder; my colleagues and peers were my family for that period of my life.

Believe it or not, some of my most memorable law school experiences are attributed to the *Law Review*. I gladly gave up weekends to discuss potential articles for upcoming issues, edit articles, and plan for an upcoming symposium because I worked with such wonderful people who I am happy to still call friends.

I watched the *Law Review* grow from a two-issue journal to a three-issue journal. More importantly, I have watched the *Law Review* leave its mark on the legal community with excellent symposia in Intercultural Human Rights (1996-2000), Criminal Law (1996-1998, 2011-Present), *Bush v. Gore* Anniversary (2010), and Media and the Law (2012). The *St. Thomas Law Review* has forged great relationships with The Florida Bar, particularly, the Criminal Law and Elder Law sections. This coming year, it will host the Ninth International Conference on Contracts, once again helping to put St. Thomas University School of Law on the map.

In its short existence, the *Law Review* has even hosted the National Conference of Law Reviews ("NCLR"). The NCLR has been instrumental in shaping law reviews and journals across the country. I know we implemented a number of policies and brought back many ideas from our

* Jessica Fonseca-Nader is the Assistant Dean for Enrollment and Scholarships and a Professor of Legal Writing at St. Thomas University School of Law. Professor Fonseca-Nader is a former Editor-in-Chief of the *St. Thomas Law Review* and graduated with honors from the School of Law in 1997. She is also the current faculty advisor and a great mentor for the *St. Thomas Law Review*.

experience at the NCLR. In 2010, I sat through several of the sessions of the NCLR and was impressed with the caliber program the *Law Review* provided. I am certain that other journals took some ideas back with them.

I met and continue to maintain contact with some of my greatest friends, who I met through *Law Review*. Who would have thought that those late nights and weekends in the *Law Review* office would be the start to some very special friendships?

One of the greatest honors an institution can bestow on a student organization is confidence. Professor Daniel Gordon, and the School of Law, was a great support system and mentor for me and the members of the *Law Review* during my year as Editor-in-Chief. I recall the first day I met with Professor Gordon to discuss the *Law Review*'s plans for the upcoming year. We met in his office and I shared a proposal for a Criminal Law Symposium we wished to host in partnership with The Florida Bar Criminal Law Section. If you knew Professor Gordon, you can imagine how terrified I felt. Professor Gordon leaned over the pile of papers and books on his desk and, like only Professor Gordon can do, he looked at me square in the eyes and said, obviously not expecting me to respond, "Do you know what you are getting into? Who will come to this? How will you get anyone to come? Jessica, this will be a lot of work. Are you sure you know what you are getting into?" I finally had an opportunity to respond and muttered a weak, "Yes." But I can admit now I was slowly feeling the weight of the pressure. Then Professor Gordon came around to the front of his desk and said to me, like only Professor Gordon can, "You cannot fail! You hear me? You understand?" And with those menacing queries, I went down to the Executive Board and said, "It's a go, but WE CANNOT FAIL!" Words that continue to carry me at times to this day. And so we proceeded.

Some of the great criminal law scholars and practitioners and members of Florida's judiciary participated in the symposium, including Chief Justice Gerald Kogan,¹ who presented on a panel about television coverage in state criminal trials with Judge Stanley Weisberg² and Rikki Klieman.³ Justice Harry Lee Anstead⁴ delivered the keynote speech, which

1. Justice Kogan was the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Florida at the time and served on the Court from 1987 to 1998.

2. Judge Weisberg has presided over notable trials including the Menendez brothers' trial, the Rodney King state trial, and the McMartin preschool trial.

3. Rikki Klieman was an anchor for *Court TV* at the time. She has been named one of the five most outstanding woman attorneys in the country by *Time* magazine and was a member of the United States Supreme Court Advisory Committee on the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.

focused on the limitations of the adversary approach in our criminal justice system. Professor Steven Wisotsky identified some miscarriages of justice and suggested cures. Professor Mark Dobson and Professor Alfredo Garcia participated in a panel discussion about the Fourth Amendment and the effect of the *Whren* case. Professor John Yetter spoke about jury instructions and lesser included offenses. Additionally, many criminal defense attorneys, including Ben Kuehne, Al Kreiger, and Jeff Weiner, shared valuable expertise about criminal practice. We had a great turn-out, as many attorneys both government and in private practice supported the symposium. Needless to say, the symposium was a huge success. I remember how proud we were on the day of the Criminal Law Symposium. We pulled it off.

I must say that I was always very fond of the *Law Review* for everything it meant to me. It was an honor for me to, years later, serve as its faculty advisor. I immediately reflected on my relationship with Professor Gordon and remembered the impact his guidance and advice had on me personally and on the *Law Review* during my time as Editor-In-Chief. I vowed to provide a similar hands-off guidance to the *Law Review*, never losing sight that it belonged to the students of this great law school. During my time as faculty advisor, I had the honor of working with a very committed group. I watched the *Law Review* achieve its goals from year to year as they hosted a symposium on Media and the Law and, most recently, as they organized and presented a wonderful twenty-five year anniversary celebration.

Congratulations to the *Law Review* and to all who have served and continue to serve. Thank you, *St. Thomas Law Review*, for everything you have given to me.

4. Justice Anstead served on the Supreme Court of Florida from 1994 to 2009.