

2010

Preface

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Recommended Citation

Prince, J. David (2010) "Preface," *Law Raza*: Vol. 1: Iss. 1, Article 2.

Available at: <http://open.mitchellhamline.edu/lawraza/vol1/iss1/2>

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The William Mitchell Law Raza Journal

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PREFACE

It is a very distinct pleasure for me to be able to add a few remarks to this first issue of the William Mitchell Law Raza Journal. I was very pleased to be asked many months ago to serve as the faculty advisor for this student initiative and willingly accepted that honor in large part because of my own interest in Latin America. The peoples south of the U.S. border, all the way to Patagonia, quite rightly think of themselves as Americans, too. Though we share a hemisphere with many other nations, we have focused too little on the peoples, cultures, legal systems, and legal issues of these neighbors. This journal will play a small part in addressing that deficiency by promoting and facilitating an academic dialogue on the legal issues of particular interest and concern to Latinos today.

Just as importantly, the Latino community has become the largest minority group in the United States and Latino issues in our legal system are certain to become more prominent. The term “Latino” disguises a remarkably diverse group of people with rich cultural heritages and a warm and welcoming spirit. Under this very large “Latino” umbrella are native-born and naturalized U.S. citizens, and immigrants from many Latin American nations, all of whom have blessed the United States with their energy and many other contributions to our economy and our society. Also included are the vast majority of citizens of all Latin American nations. The ambitious goal of this journal is to give voice to their special concerns about and interest in the law.

This first issue of the Law Raza Journal illustrates the wide range of the Journal’s interests. It includes a critique by João M. da Fonseca of Brazil’s new land reform law and its affect on the Quilombolas, descendants of slaves who, four hundred years ago, freed themselves

and established their own territory in the Amazon Basin. This is accompanied by Rob Trousdale's article that begins by provocatively saying "I am disappointed in the legal education I have received," and then proceeds to argue that the predominant case-dialogue method employed in U.S. legal education has the affect of systematically pushing discussion of race, class and economic inequality to the periphery of our education as lawyers.

We are fortunate, indeed, to have a very distinguished advisory board to assist the student editors, all of whom are noted on the Journal's web page. This first issue is the result of much hard work by many people, especially including the authors and editors. And though I risk unfairly singling out any one person from among the many who have worked so hard, I am especially thankful for the enormous contribution of Pablo Sartorio, now an alum, whose energy, enthusiasm and drive led us to this point.

I hope that you will find this issue of Law Raza as interesting and thought-provoking as I have found it to be. And I hope that the Journal will hear from you. Perhaps the most significant advantage of an on-line journal lies in its ability to facilitate a true dialogue on matters of common interest. I join the editors in encouraging your participation in the discussions that we hope to generate so that we may all learn more about Latino legal issues.

J. David Prince | Faculty Advisor