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Gwen M. Lerner

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A NEW BEGINNING

Gwen M. Lerner[†]

What did it take to start a new law review and, more to the point, what did it take when the law school itself was brand new? The circumstances surrounding the launch of the *Hamline Law Review* in 1978 were strikingly different than those surrounding this new combination with the *William Mitchell Law Review* in 2016. How did it happen and how does it compare with the emergence of the *Mitchell Hamline Law Review* today?

I. JOURNAL FOR A NEW SCHOOL

By the fall of 1977, only two classes had graduated from Hamline University School of Law. As the third law school in the community, it was a pioneer in every sense of the word and the second-year students were ready to roll in helping to raise its status and establish its credibility in the legal community. As Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert Sheran was to write in the 1978 inaugural issue, this would be “a big step forward in your rapidly advancing academic accomplishments.”¹ The same milestone would be expressed by United States District Court for the District of Minnesota Chief Judge Edward Devitt: “I am pleased to see that Minnesota’s third law school is thriving to the point where it has determined to launch a law review. The journal will enhance the already burgeoning reputation of the Hamline Law School in the scholastic and legal community.”²

We were entirely new to the business of creating a sustainable, quality publication that would continue on a parallel path with the school’s solid trajectory. Not only did we need to decide what to publish and where to find authors, but also to manage the business of producing a complicated and demanding journal that would adhere to the *Bluebook* religiously, stand on its own among peers,

[†] Gwen Lerner is the first Editor-in-Chief of the *Hamline Law Review*.

1. Robert J. Sheran, *Inaugural Messages*, 1978 HAMLINE L. REV. iv.

2. Edward J. Devitt, *Inaugural Messages*, 1978 HAMLINE L. REV. iv.

and serve as a springboard for future Hamline law students to carry to ever higher levels. To make our first issue unique and practical, we decided to undertake and include a major research project covering the Minnesota Statutes of Limitations that we could handle on our own. After devoting two years of seemingly endless but dedicated teamwork, we unpacked Volume 1978, Number 1, with its 496 pages, on the very brink of Commencement.

As I look over the long rows of grey and red volumes on my bookshelves, I realize the enormous contribution the *Hamline Law Review* has made to legal analysis, discourse and debate, and to providing pragmatic tools for important research and everyday practice. Also, the frequent use of a primary focus through symposia and major research projects that began in 1978 stands out as a lasting tradition. No less than twenty symposia and conferences that featured experts in major fields, with often complementary, timely, and thorough research projects undertaken by successive editorial boards, emerged as distinguishing features of the publication. All the required attention to detail, accuracy, and clarity—as in any law review—has meant that the information, perspectives, insights, and theories presented in its pages can be trusted as worthwhile material to cite and develop for scholarly and practical purposes.

II. TWO JOURNALS BECOME ONE

With the respected *William Mitchell Law Review* tracking a parallel course in nearly the same time frame, this 2016 combination has all the makings of a powerhouse publication. The two editorial boards do face their own real challenges in making this work, however, by virtue of the years of differences between the two institutionalized ventures now loaded into the mix. For starters, the William Mitchell Editor-in-Chief, James Schoeberl, points to critical fundamentals they have had to handle like the new constitution, mission, and bylaws, as well as new decisions about cardstock, printer, and cover design. Cha Xiong, the Hamline Editor-in-Chief, calls out strategic factors they must manage, acknowledging clear differences in collaborating, writing, and editing, but at the same time believing in the ability to achieve a foundation as firm as each journal has built from its respective beginnings. Deep-seated cultures and values do not shift easily, but are salient features that need respective recognition in order to blend well for the best of both traditions. As the two stellar law

schools combine to form a 21st century model for legal education, the new flagship publication has the rich opportunity and proud obligation to reach the new heights that Mitchell Hamline School of Law can achieve. The lasting legacies and long experience the two journals bring with them surely will stand them in good stead.

With hearty congratulations on this momentous inaugural issue, I offer the words of our 1978 editors revised for today:

The process of collectively creating a law journal cannot be described nor can it ever be complete. This issue is the beginning of a continuum and speaks for itself as the benchmark of the journal's evolution. We offer it as a means of introducing Minnesota and nationwide attorneys to scholarly communication from the students of Mitchell Hamline School of Law.³

3. See Gwen Lerner et al., *Acknowledgement*, 1978 HAMLIN L. REV. vi.