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Letter from the Editor

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

The Richmond Journal of Law and the Public Interest is proud to present the Symposium Edition of Volume XIX. This issue explores various topics relating to wrongful convictions. The articles in this issue grew out of our 2015 Symposium—Wrongful Convictions: Science, Experience & the Law held in October of 2014.

I would like to thank Caitlin Kear, the 2015 Symposium Editor for her hard work and dedication. Through her efforts, Wrongful Convictions: Science, Experience & the Law was a great success which brought together members of the legal community to explore a topic area that has a significant impact on the public interest. I would also like to thank our panelists and speakers who helped present a successful and thought-provoking symposium. Finally, I would like to offer a tremendous thank you to Professor Mary Kelly Tate, who offered her time and expertise on both the Symposium and this publication.

This issue includes several articles examining the various aspects of wrongful convictions. The first piece of this Symposium Issue is a transcript of the keynote panel of our symposium. The discussion consists of three legal professionals who provide their experience working with the criminal justice system and wrongful convictions. Shawn Armbrust, Executive Director of the Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project, Michael N. Herring, Commonwealth's Attorney of the City of Richmond, and Douglas A. Ramseur, Capital Defender for Central Virginia, offer rich insight into their experience with the law and wrongful convictions. Professor Mary Kelly Tate served as the moderator for the panel.

Sarah Lucy Cooper, Senior Lecturer in Law at Birmingham City University's Centre for American Legal Studies provides an examination of judicial decisions in post-conviction relief cases. *Forensic Science Developments and Judicial Decision-Making in the Age of Innocence: the Influence of Legal Process Theory and its Implications* examines potential consequences of legal process theory themes and how courts demonstrate a conservative approach toward appellate challenges, particularly with forensic science identification evidence.

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In *America is Slowly Awakening to the Structural Unfairness in Our Criminal Justice System*, Professor Mary Kelly Tate offers a review of Bryan Stevenson's book *Just Mercy*. Professor Tate is the Director of the Institute for Actual Innocence at the University of Richmond. Her review focuses on how the experiences from Mr. Stevenson's career provide a critique of the criminal justice system.

Douglas A. Ramseur, Capital Defender for Central Virginia offers an analysis of discovery reform. *A Call for Justice: Virginia's Need for Criminal Discovery Reform* explores the current discovery rules in Virginia and their shortcomings. The article also discusses Virginia's recent Special Committee on Criminal Discovery. Mr. Ramseur examines the benefits of these reforms and their necessity to avoid wrongful convictions and trial by ambush in Virginia.

Finally, a comment by J.D. Candidate Alanna Trivelli provides a survey of state compensation for the wrongfully convicted and a proposal for more adequate relief. *Compensating the Wrongfully Convicted: A Proposal to Make Victims of Wrongful Incarceration Whole Again*, explores how the tort theory of compensatory damages may be applied to wrongfully incarcerated persons in both economic and noneconomic forms of relief.

We hope that you will enjoy this issue. Just as our 2015 Symposium Wrongful Convictions: Science, Experience & the Law provided thought-provoking discussion and insight into our criminal justice system, we hope the pieces in this issue help to create a dialogue in the legal community. Thank you again to the staff of Volume XIX for their efforts on this issue. We look forward to bringing you forthcoming publications.

Sincerely,

Katherine R. Schroth

Editor-in-Chief