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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 final issue of Volume XIX. The idea for this issue blossomed from my experience in a seminar exploring Mindfulness and the Legal Profession.

On the first day of class, I entered the room to find a small group of students, and a sense of panic started to overwhelm me. Like most law students, grades were an ever-present anxiety for me, and most of the people in the room were ranked at the top of our class. How could I compete? I seriously considered dropping the course before it even began. Our professor began with a short meditation. In the course of the meditation, I experienced something I had never felt before in law school: peace. In those brief quiet moments, I decided I needed to stay in the class, no matter my final grade.

What followed was a semester that built the foundations for a mindfulness practice I hope to continue for the rest of my legal career. At its core the class was an introduction into self-awareness. Meditation exercises brought self-awareness to the scattered nature of my mind. Active listening exercises brought self-awareness to my professional relationships in school and beyond. Writing workshops brought self-awareness to my own scholarship and exposed me to the range of legal scholarship more broadly. Overall, this self-awareness helped me to become more patient, more inquisitive, and calmer in law school and in life.

The real challenge for me came after the class ended. Without the weekly structure and support of my classmates, I found myself starting to lose the sense of peace I acquired in class. After reading so many moving articles in class, I knew there must be more beyond our syllabus. I looked at other resources to learn more about how others benefit from mindfulness practices. I learned that diverse people from newscasters, to athletes, to inner-city school aged children, to actors are reaping the benefits.¹ I realized I needed to focus attention on mindfulness in order to build on the foundations of the

¹ See Dan Harris, *10% Happier with Dan Harris* (ABC Radio 2016) (interviewing various guests on mindfulness and meditation).

class. With a renewed sense of self-awareness, my practice has only grown stronger since the end of the course.

When soliciting articles for this issue, Professor Shari Motro asked members of the community to “share their wisdom.” That is exactly what follows in these articles—wisdom. The wisdom of both legal professionals and their experience after years of practice, and the wisdom of those with law school trials and tribulations still fresh in their mind.

Deborah Cantrell, Associate Professor of Law at the University of Colorado, writes about her journey in the law with love and anger. *Love, Anger and Lawyering*, details Cantrell’s personal experience from law school to practice, using meditation to explore emotions that arise in the law and discusses her legal scholarship on love and anger in the law.

In *Kingsfield Meditates*, John J. Osborn, explores the effect of meditation on the famed Professor Kingsfield from his novel, *The Paper Chase*.

Peter Huang, Professor of Law at University of Colorado, describes professional responses from his previous article about his upbringing under a “tiger parent.” Professor Huang then details how he incorporates mindfulness into his courses and the response from students.

In *A Lawyer’s Journey of Worker Advocacy and Faith*, Ann Hodges details her journey through the law and her faith to find her passion for advocating for social justice change as a labor advocate. Professor Hodges is a Professor of Law and the University of Richmond School of Law.

Scott Rogers, Lecturer in Law and Director of Mindfulness in Law Program at the University of Miami, explores his idea of “reciprocal practice” in mindfulness. *Mindfulness, Law and Reciprocal Practice* argues that our professional lives can serve as the best avenue to employ mindfulness practices.

Robin West, a Professor of Law and Philosophy at Georgetown University Law Center, explores the intersection of the law and emotions. *Law’s Emotions* claims that U.S. law is not only impacted by emotions, but also produces four distinct types of emotions in our society.

In *Integrating Mindfulness Theory and Practice into Trial Advocacy*, David Zlotnick discusses using mindfulness techniques to help students learn authenticity in trial setting. David Zlotnick is a Professor at Roger Williams University School of Law.

Toward Lawyering as Peacemaking: A Seminar on Mindfulness, Morality, and Professional Identity, outlines the experience in teaching mindful-

ness meditation to law students. Angela P. Harris writes how her seminar connected mindfulness to theories of lawyering and introduced students to lawyering as peacemaking. Harris is a Professor of Law at the University of California King Hall School of Law.

Linda Alvarez, author and attorney, offers her new perspective on contract law in *Discovering Agreement: The World in Which We Find Ourselves*. Alvarez advocates for a change in the conversation in how lawyers negotiate contracts, moving away from competition between the parties and toward a more cooperative relationship.

Susan L. Brooks is a Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Experiential Learning at Drexel University School of Law. *Teaching Relational Lawyering*, discusses how to incorporate “relationship-centered lawyering” into the law school curriculum through communication practices and how strong relational skills are helpful to lawyering and their professional lives.

In *Mindfulness, Self-Care and the Law*, Victor Narro offers his advice for law school graduates on living in the present moment, engaging in active listening, and “heart to heart” communication through mindfulness. He explores his own career and provides a framework for self-care in professional life using the teaching of Thich Nhat Hanh and St. Francis of Assisi. Victor Narro is the Project Director at UCLA Downtown Labor Center, Lecturer in Law and UCLA School of Law, and Professor of UCLA Labor and Workplace Studies.

Christopher Corts, Associate Professor of Legal Writing at the University of Richmond School of Law, shares his poem *A Lawyer Sits (The Practice)*. This piece shares the power of sitting in silence with other lawyers.

Morality Now: Healing the Heart of Darkness of the First Year Law Student, shares the personal story of the journey of one law student, M.C., and argues that the negative implications of the current law school curriculum which encourages the separation of law and morality. The author advocates for mandatory clinical experiences for all first year law students and shares how his own clinical experience and mindfulness practice helped him to retain his own morality and personal identity in law school.

Dominique Simon shares his law school experience and the struggle to understand the motivations behind legal education process and the shortcomings of the legal justice system. *Finding Peace in Law School* also explores how mindfulness and Simon’s own spiritual awakening improved his legal education.

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Pro Bono Scholastici: Getting Out of the Building While Remaining in the Classroom, details B. Allen Wall's experience in developing his personal identity in law school and cultivating purpose while helping one illegal im-migrant faced with deportation.

In this final issue of Volume XIX, I would like to offer my gratitude to the wonderful staff of the Richmond Journal of Law and the Public Interest. This year has been a journey filled with hard work and success even through some adverse circumstances. I would like to thank the members of the Editorial Board for their unconditional trust and tremendous efforts. I have a deep admiration for your work, and I enjoyed serving as your Editor-in-Chief. I wish the Editorial Board of Volume XX the best of luck in furthering public interest legal scholarship.²

Sincerely,

Katherine R. Schroth

Editor-in-Chief

² Beginning with the next volume, the Richmond Journal of Law and the Public Interest will continue as the Richmond Public Interest Law Review.