

From the Editor

This issue represents two benchmarks for the *ABF Research Journal*; the completion of two years' issues under our open, refereed publication policy and the end of my editorship.

When we began the new publication policy at the outset of the 1983 volume, I wrote that the *Journal* would strive to present "a blend of contents between the traditional student-edited law reviews and the journals of the social science disciplines," one that would "provide a much needed bridge between legal scholarship and other pertinent scholarly disciplines." Our open, refereed publication policy for articles and research notes has contributed to meeting that goal.

First, the "open" aspect of the publication policy has attracted a substantial number of submissions from scholars with no institutional ties to the ABF. These outside submissions have enriched and extended the subjects discussed in *Journal* articles and research notes beyond even the diverse research program of the ABF staff and ABF-funded research. From an editor's perspective, however, the open publication policy has also led to somewhat more difficult publication decisions. To prevent the growth of a backlog of accepted manuscripts, it has sometimes been necessary to decline articles that might well have been publishable under other circumstances. While such choices make the editor's job more difficult, they speak well for the quality and visibility of the *Journal*.

The need to make harder publication choices also underscores the value of a refereeing process for evaluating submitted manuscripts. The use of referees to review and evaluate article manuscripts has proven to be very worthwhile. In addition to informing the editor's assessment of the quality, thoroughness, and rigor of a manuscript and its relationship and potential contribution to existing knowledge on the subject, referees' evaluations often provide significant suggestions for strengthening and improving manuscripts under consideration. The revisions made because of those suggestions have been especially gratifying to me as editor because they represent a significant contribution that an editorial process can make to scholarship. The benefits of a refereed process are well worth the logistical arrangements and time commitments it entails; I hope that the *Journal's* use of a refereed publication process may encourage other legal journals to adopt similar policies.

Looking to the past, let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the authors who have submitted manuscripts to the *Journal* over these last two years. And let me express my gratitude to all of the outside scholars, as well as to the members of the Editorial Advisory Board and the ABF staff, who have served as reviewers; the substantive quality of the articles and research notes appearing in the *Journal* reflects both their willingness to undertake reviews and the diligence they applied to the task. The willingness of outside scholars to review manuscripts for the *Journal* has been especially gratifying. Bette Sikes, managing editor, and the members of the ABF editorial department are also to be commended for their commitment to maintaining the high quality of the finished product.

Looking to the future, the outlook for the *Journal* is bright. Beginning with the 1985 volume, the *Journal* will be coedited by Terence C. Halliday and Rayman L. Solomon, both members of the ABF research staff. Halliday is a sociologist who has written extensively on the legal profession; Solomon is a lawyer-historian who has been studying the evolution of legal doctrine and the institutional role of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. The breadth of their research interests bodes well for the future direction of the *Journal*.

Happily for both the past and future, Howard S. Erlanger, of the University of Wisconsin, will continue as editor of the Review Section of the *Journal*. Erlanger deserves full credit for the success of the *Journal's* expanded review section. Under his editorship, the annotated book notes provide readers with an overview of recent publications while the review essays in this section provide a unique "bridge" for the dissemination and critical evaluation of recent writings on law, legal institutions, and the legal profession.

T.Y.D.