

University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform

Volume 11

1977

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Recommended Citation

Alexander R. Domanskis, *The Journal: After a Decade*, 11 U. MICH. J. L. REFORM 1 (1977).

Available at: <https://repository.law.umich.edu/mjlr/vol11/iss1/2>

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THE JOURNAL: AFTER A DECADE

Alexander R. Domanskis*

Our legal institutions must have the flexibility to adapt to rapidly changing conditions. Often, laws are passed and implemented at a time when changed circumstances make them outmoded or unworkable. The legal community thus faces an enormous and important challenge: law reform. Legislatures, the framers of policies and the makers of law, need suggestions for law reform. Courts, the interpreters of the laws and the arbiters of private and public disputes, need guidance in dealing with new situations and new statutes. Administrative agencies, the delegated experts carrying out the legislative mandate, need guidance in defining their functions and roles. Suggestions and solutions for the efficient and just functioning of these institutions are not easy to formulate. Nevertheless, without continued evaluation and examination, there is an ever-present danger of institutional stagnation resulting in procedural and substantive inequities. The legal community must maintain a constant flow of new ideas and approaches to a variety of legal topics and problems. The *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform* was conceived to meet the need for communicating recommendations for law reform and to provide the basis for thoughtful discourse.

The *Journal* is now beginning its second decade of publication. This is an appropriate time to reflect on how well the *Journal* is realizing its original purposes. The publication was established to satisfy two principal goals: to provide a forum in which law reform can be examined and in which the administration of justice in all its aspects can be improved and to expand student opportunities for legal analysis, research, writing, and editing. In attempting to lay the groundwork for law reform and to provide guidance for the legal practitioner, the *Journal* has published a wide variety of articles. There have been articles on particular subject areas, case comments, notes on proposed and recently adopted legislation, proposed statutes, as well as reports of empirical research. The substantive areas covered have been as diverse as the methods of presentation. Furthermore, though professors have contributed significantly, the bulk of the *Journal's* articles have been written by students. In only three issues a year, the *Journal* provides as much space for students as other law reviews provide in as many as eight issues.

Certainly, my law school experience was greatly enriched by my participation on the *Journal* as a staff member, as an author of an article, and as an editor. The significant quantity of legal material to be digested in law

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school instruction often results in narrowly focused classroom discussions which rarely consider broad social and institutional problems. Through the *Journal*, I had the opportunity to probe more deeply into some of the legal issues which first captured my attention in the classroom. My *Journal* experience thus served to complement my traditional law school education.

Due to the annual change of staff and editors, the philosophy and procedures of the *Journal* are subject to constant evaluation and reworking. The *Journal's* two primary objectives, however, of providing a forum for the examination of problems of law reform and of offering students the opportunity to write on current legal issues will remain unchanged. It will continue to offer clarification to legal practitioners on complex legal issues, to examine recent and significant legislation, and to make suggestions for law reform.

The *Journal* should continue to note trends and point out new directions for legal reform. In addition, it should seek to expand the examination of legal changes within a broader societal context. New and complex problems require more than the traditional legal inquiry with its rehashing of cases and established legal theories. Legal problems must be viewed in a larger context, taking into account all that is being learned in the natural, physical, and social sciences, as well as the insights of the humanities. Without this perspective, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to make tenable recommendations for legal change.

There is no question that a great need exists for law reform. The *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform* is a forum in which legal change can be noted, examined, and inspired. The *Journal's* task of communicating ideas for law reform is a great challenge, and I wish future staff members and editors good fortune in meeting it. Those of us who have spent many hours working on the *Journal* and who have now entered legal practice anxiously await the results of the next decade. We look forward to growing and developing through the insights and ideas of the *Journal's* contributors.