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## Eleonora V. Eckert

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## ELEONORA V. ECKERT

*Christina B. Whitman\**

One day, relatively early in my term as Editor-in-Chief of the *Michigan Law Review*, Ele Eckert came to me with a draft of a student note that had been given to our secretary for typing. The secretary had turned to Ele in despair. Page after page of yellow legal paper had been filled with minuscule pencil scratches and then elaborately decorated with even more minuscule additions and emendations. Red lines and blue lines and green lines, overlapping each other and occasionally blurring together, wove in and out among the pencil scratches. I asked the editor who had produced this colorful, if illegible, masterpiece if *he* could read it. "Of course not," he replied, "but it's not my job to type up manuscripts."

Ele held one of the world's impossible jobs for over forty years. Every spring she had to adjust to an entirely new set of work relationships, and she was not faced with the most accommodating people. When Ele came to know us, we were newly selected law review editors, heady with achievement, jealous of our autonomy, and too often heedless of the talents of the people upon whom we were most dependent. She regarded us with amusement, patience, and even affection.

Ele came to the *Law Review* as a young college graduate, and over the years she became its memory. She was the only person who saw the whole picture, and she was completely aware of what was going on. Her main responsibility was for the business affairs of the *Review*. These she managed beautifully, educating us, with great tact, in what was necessary to preserve our financial foundation. But Ele had many other indispensable talents. One of the most useful was her ability to answer any question of grammar or usage that we could produce. She knew each staff member by name, observed our struggles with a reassuring irony, and could produce genuinely illuminating tales of the Great Editors of Yesteryear. For myself, I particularly enjoyed discussing books with Ele. We loved the same authors, and talking about them reminded me that there would be a time when my reading would not be made up entirely of notes on airport searches and real estate investment trusts.

The four decades through which Ele shepherded the *Law Review*

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\* Professor of Law, University of Michigan. Professor Whitman was an editor-in-chief of the *Michigan Law Review* during Ms. Eckert's tenure. — Ed.

were times of great social turmoil and change. It cannot have been easy for her, and I know she did not regard it all with approval. None of this, however, had any effect on Ele's attitude towards us or our mutual responsibilities. She was a complete professional, a model of what we were beginning to be. She taught us, temporary caretakers of an institution that was her life's work, to rise to her expectations of us.