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New Beginnings: Embracing the Tradition and Innovation of “Practice Greatness”

Gary Gildin
Penn State Dickinson Law

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Introduction

New Beginnings: Embracing the Tradition and Innovation of “Practice Greatness”

Gary S. Gildin*

It is truly a privilege to introduce the inaugural issue of the *Dickinson Law Review*. “Inaugural issue,” however, is a serious misnomer; the *Dickinson Law Review* traces its lineage to *The Forum*, first published in January 1897 by the Dickinson School of Law, the oldest law school in Pennsylvania and the fifth oldest law school in the country. Over the succeeding 120 years, first under the auspices of an independent law school and later affiliated with the Pennsylvania State University, The Dickinson School of Law’s flagship review published over 4,000 articles and other submissions totaling close to 70,000 pages. Rather than signifying the launch of a new journal, Volume 122 marks the maiden voyage of the *Dickinson Law Review* under the banner of Penn State’s Dickinson Law, one of two fully and separately accredited law schools in the Penn State constellation.

* Dean, Professor of Law, G. Thomas and Anne G. Miller Chair in Advocacy, and Director, Center for Public Interest Law and Advocacy, The Dickinson School of Law, Pennsylvania State University, Dickinson Law. Gildin is the thirteenth person to serve as dean of the law school and the first dean of Penn State’s separately accredited Dickinson Law.

In the 1833 letter detailing his founding vision for the Dickinson School of Law, Judge John Reed penned:

As to the object of the institution. It is two-fold. First: To prepare students of law, thoroughly for the practice of their profession. Secondly: To afford others the means of such general instruction in the science of law as is deemed indispensable to every finished scholar. The two objects, so far as expedient, will be separately attended to.¹

180 years later, the Faculty of Penn State's Dickinson Law adopted as its mission the education of lawyers and leaders equipped with the entire coterie of legal and extra-legal competencies necessary to "Practice Greatness." Unlike Judge Reed, the Dickinson Law Faculty did not view "prepar[ing] students of law, thoroughly for the practice of their profession" and "afford[ing] . . . such general instruction in the science of law as is deemed indispensable to every finished scholar"² as objects to be "separately attended to."³ Rather, the Faculty identified four interdependent Core Values, embodying attributes all deemed indispensable to the global profession of law in the 21st century:

I. Teaching: To vest in our students the entire range of concrete lawyering skills necessary to most effectively perform as legal professionals at the local, state, national, transnational, and international levels in the 21st Century.

- These skills include, but are not limited to, research and analysis; mastery of legal and database resources; written and oral communication; negotiation skills; project management; due diligence; problem solving; implementation of transactions; and advocacy, both in courts and other formal adjudicatory institutions, as well as through complementary dispute resolution fora such as mediation and arbitration. To teach these skills, we will draw upon legal knowledge and knowledge from other disciplines.

II. Scholarship: To engage in a constant quest for knowledge and wisdom that we can share not only with our students, but with the legal profession, scholars, policy makers, and others, consistent with Penn State's role as a world-class research university.

- We believe that our scholarly and teaching missions should be complementary. As engaged scholars, we believe that having

1. HON. BURTON R. LAUB, *THE DICKINSON SCHOOL OF LAW: PROUD AND INDEPENDENT* 13 (1984).

2. *Id.*

3. *Id.*

both a solid understanding of existing theory and the ability to develop new theories is indispensable to our students' ability to operate as legal professionals in an increasingly global, diverse, and sophisticated legal environment.

III. Service: To willingly contribute our services to the university and to local, state, national, and international efforts to improve global understanding and the lives and well-being of our students and the worlds in which they will live.

IV. Community: We pledge that on a daily basis we will strive to foster a sense of community and mutual support between and among faculty, students and staff, and in our interactions outside the Law School.

- We not only view community as a proper ethos but also believe that cultivating the interpersonal skills, respect, and tolerance that promote community will enable our students to more professionally and sensitively counsel their clients and accomplish their professional goals.⁴

Over the arc of its 120-year history, the *Dickinson Law Review* presaged and codified the interdependence of the practice and the science of law. How appropriate, then, that for its inaugural issue, the first editorial board of Penn State's Dickinson Law has chosen to compile signature articles from its illustrious past that so aptly demonstrate, through both tradition and innovation, commitment to all four elements of "Practice Greatness." This issue reprises previously-published articles under six themes:

- I. What it Means to be a Lawyer
- II. Efforts to Help Shape the Law
- III. Commitment to Experiential Education
- IV. Reflections About Legal Education
- V. Facilitating Dialogue with and About the Profession
- VI. Understanding and Improving Our Judicial System

Upon even modest reflection, it will be apparent that each of the six themes embraces one or more of the Core Values—Teaching, Scholarship, Service and Community—that characterize the majesty of the legal profession.

In the introduction to his seminal work, *Pennsylvania Blackstone*, Judge Reed warned of the threat to society absent education in the theory, doctrine and practice of law:

4. Pennsylvania State University The Dickinson School of Law—Dickinson Law, Core Principles (Dec. 2012) (on file with the *Dickinson Law Review*).

If the profession of law becomes degraded, and ignorance, and unskillfulness, find their way in the inns of court, the character of a nation is humbled, and the rights and liberties of the people are rendered insecure. Its theory should be taught as a distinct science; and its practice, be pursued as a separate profession. It requires the energies of a sound intellect to apprehend the one, and habits of unyielding intuition, to master the labors of the other.⁵

As it enters the latest chapter of its almost 185-year history, the entire Dickinson Law family remains committed to advancing the profession of law through sharpening its practice as well as by promoting exploration and discovery in the interdisciplinary science of its theory. I am supremely confident that, as with this “New Beginning,” by promoting scholarship that captures both “the energies of sound intellect” and “habits of unyielding intuition,”⁶ the *Dickinson Law Review* will continue to make a valuable contribution to the cause of rendering secure the rights and liberties of people across the globe.

5. JOHN REED, PENNSYLVANIA BLACKSTONE: BEING A MODIFICATION OF THE COMMENTARIES OF SIR WILLIAM BLACKSTONE, WITH NUMEROUS ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS, DESIGNED TO PRESENT AN ELEMENTARY EXPOSITION OF THE ENTIRE LAWS OF PENNSYLVANIA, COMMON AND STATUTE, WITH A SHORT NOTICE OF THE JUDICIARY OF THE UNITED STATES, VOL 1, at 4 (1831).

6. *Id.*