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In The Beginning . . .

In this 150th year since the founding of the Dickinson School of Law it is certainly appropriate for the *Dickinson Law Review*, one of the oldest scholarly legal publications in the country, to join in that celebration. The members of the Dickinson faculty with the help of the *Law Review* staff have created this collection of legal essays.

It was in 1834 that Judge John Reed conceived and gave birth to what is the sixth oldest surviving law school in the nation. In "The Book" now housed in the archives of the school, Reed wrote as a preface to this little volume in which the first students inscribed their names: "The design of this institution is to prepare students of law thoroughly for the practice of their profession and to afford to others the means of such general instruction in this science as is deemed indispensable to every finished scholar and eminently useful to every American citizen." Reed promised that the study at Dickinson would "embrace a minute inquiry into the science of the law and the technical details involved in the practice of it." In accomplishing these objects, "the more severe studies will occasionally be relieved by an attention to history and such other branches of general literature as are intimately connected with the study of the law and are deemed indispensable in forming a professional character." The founder indicated that a methodical course of study of the best books, "properly arranged," of course, would be accompanied by frequent examinations and "easy and familiar conversations" mixed with a regular series of lectures. Approved precedents and books of practice would be studied, but also fictitious cases together with an application of theory and practice through moot court proceedings.

Indeed John Reed was a pioneer. Although legal education has been extensively modified and perhaps improved over the years, these refinements and innovations we note today in quality law schools from coast-to-coast still generally fit within that basic Reed framework constructed a century and a half ago as a guide to the Dickinson School of Law.

A happy academic mix of legal theory and its practical application has been a hallmark of this institution and of the many great law schools which followed our founding. It is not surprising, therefore, that the *Dickinson Law Review*, established originally as *The Forum* in 1897, has been a valuable contributor to legal literature,

examining and shaping American legal thought, and all in aid of excellence in practice.

The opening editorial in Volume 1, No. 1, published in January of 1897, reaffirms the Reed mission to examine not only well established principles of law but to generate discussion of legal questions and to help adduce new principles and apply them to specific cases. In that first edition was a reprint of a lecture by Robert Snodgrass, Esq., "one of the most eminent members of the Dauphin County Bar." His subject was Equity Jurisprudence, and he urged that all lawyers acquire a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of that system, not only its origin but its entire history and development, to enable the lawyer to grapple with the novel questions which are sure to arise "under the ever changing conditions of modern civilization." He urged the student "to know the reason of the law as well as the law itself so to make what he reads and studies his own, recognizing that he soon will forget his superficial knowledge of the law but in understanding reasons can hold the knowledge 'long with him' and apply it 'for the benefit of others.'" That first Law Review also contains reminiscences of Samuel Hepburn who claims to be the first student at the school in 1834, which incidentally belies "The Book" which gives that honor to Alfred Nevin whom Hepburn asserts was only a close second. Hepburn reminds us that those early classes produced Governors Curtain and Ramsey, Senators Morgan, Smithers and Kelly as well as Ambassador Spence, the minister to Turkey under President Pierce. No student in the Reed school was allowed to board or lodge at a hotel and frequenting a tavern needlessly "will be esteemed a withdrawal from the institution." (This rule has not been enforced this year at Dickinson.)

It was in 1908 with Volume 13 that *The Forum* officially changed its name to the *Dickinson Law Review*. In that volume are articles dealing with Sales by Sample, Party Walls, the Enforcement of Contracts for the Sale of Real Estate and the Proper Manner of Addressing Juries. An excellent article dealing with the use of reputation evidence appeared in Volume 13, author unknown, parts of which could be easily incorporated into an evidence course in 1984.

Since John Reed's one-man band in his house at West and High Street teaching a handful of dedicated students, Dickinson has grown to become a prestigious institution of more than 500 students with a faculty of twenty-one full-time professors and twenty-six practitioners who give part-time service to the education of outstanding men and women picked from an abundant pool of qualified applicants. This school has a proud heritage, and so does the *Law Review* as it speaks to the profession for the Law School. As *The Forum* treated problems of its day, the *Dickinson Law Review* con-

tinues to address concerns of society in 1984. Articles in Volume 87, relating to the Export Trading Company Act, At Will Employment Developments, Asbestos Litigation, Industrial Pluralism and Unemployment Compensation Law Policy, would be totally incomprehensible to Judge Reed and to the editorial board of *The Forum*. But the spirit and motive behind the production of these articles is the same today as yesterday, and the scholarship is certainly even better.

On this sesquicentennial anniversary we also congratulate the *Dickinson Law Review* which so well reflects the quality of this fine olde School. This issue with its potpourri of short articles by members of the present faculty provides a fitting tribute to John Reed and his timeless mission.

DEAN WILLIAM L. WILKE
April 2, 1984