

FOREWORD

*Nicole Gon Ochi**

Welcome to a new kind of law journal. We are a movement journal, committed to supporting, enhancing, and privileging all the diverse voices in our Southern California community that contribute to the steady march towards justice. We are a collaborative journal, uniting the energy of law school students from Loyola, Pepperdine, UCLA, and USC with public interest lawyers, activists, and community members to generate important practitioner-oriented scholarship. We are a journal striving to live by the social justice values we espouse by sharing resources, rejecting internal hierarchy, and promoting vigorous discussion, and even dissension, within the pages of our journal. And we are a journal that is unabashedly in process—our commitment is to support local social justice movements and we will be as flexible as necessary to serve the needs of these movements.

Our formation and development has followed a trajectory that is similar to the path of many public interest lawyers and advocates. Under the visionary leadership of Joshua Adams, a group of law school students dissatisfied with the status quo founded the Los Angeles Public Interest Law Journal in 2007 to bridge the gap between public interest advocacy and scholarship. We had little more than a vague idea of what this meant, but we knew that something was missing from traditional scholarship—that vitality and passion that we experienced in the welfare offices, eviction

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courts, detention centers, worker centers, and street corners in which we worked.

As we struggled to make our vision a reality, we faced many setbacks, from a lack of funding to a lack of human resources, but we also benefited from the support of many friends, like the professors that advised us, the schools and firms that funded us, and the practitioners that welcomed us into their community. It has taken nearly two years to produce this inaugural issue and we are proud to present it to you, but we have also found that the journey itself has been, perhaps, the most gratifying part of the process. We made friends we would have never met, partnered with people we have always admired, and been inspired and encouraged in ways that we never would have imagined. While these experiences do not equate with those exemplars whose voices we seek to promote within the pages of this journal, they have taught us important lessons about social justice lawyering that we hope to carry with us into practice and share with each new generation of editors.

This inaugural issue has three parts. The first section is a collection of articles from our inaugural symposium: “Immigrants’ Rights: From Global to Local.” In this section, local practitioners and scholars explore the following issues: the tension between lawyers and organizers in social change lawyering;¹ the strategies and challenges of anti-trafficking advocacy;² the role of immigrant workers’ in revitalizing the labor movement in Los Angeles and creating new organizing models;³ and the innovative tool of commercial debt collection to help workers collect unpaid wages.⁴

The second section is a collection of articles selected through a submission process that focuses on issues particularly salient in Los Angeles, such as the tension between gay rights and religious

1. Betty Hung, *Essay—Law and Organizing from the Perspective of Organizers: Finding A Shared Theory of Social Change*, 1 L.A. PUB. INT. L.J. 4 (2009).

2. Kathleen C. Kim, Charles Song & Srividya Panchalam, *Conversation with Two Anti-Trafficking Advocates*, 1 L.A. PUB. INT. L.J. 31 (2009).

3. Victor Narro, *¡Sí Se Puede! Immigrant Workers and the Transformation of the Los Angeles Labor and Worker Center Movements*, 1 L.A. PUB. INT. L.J. 65 (2009).

4. Matthew Sirolly, *Wage Justice: Workers’ Rights and Commercial Debt Collection*, 1 L.A. PUB. INT. L.J. 107 (2009).

liberty,⁵ foster youth advocacy,⁶ and the state remedies available to undocumented workers after *Hoffman Plastic*.⁷ In addition to contributing to the corpus of public interest scholarship, all the articles in these two sections are designed to document best practices and/or have practical applications for practitioners and advocates.

The third section is a collection of “Community Voices.” These pieces include comments from a worker involved in the CLEAN carwash campaign,⁸ as well as a worker assisted by the Wage Justice Center,⁹ a poem by an immigrants’ rights advocate,¹⁰ and reflections from various public interest practitioners about their careers.¹¹ The purpose of this section is to promote, learn from, and celebrate the unique experiences and voices of the diverse members of our public interest community.

We hope that you as you read our Journal, the heartbeat of the public interest community in Los Angeles will become clear to you. We hope that you are as inspired, as impassioned, and as motivated to action as we have been through this process. Most of all, we hope that you will allow us to partner with you in making our unique corner of the earth a more just and equitable place to live.

5. Matthew J. Murray, *Gay Equality, Religious Liberty, and the First Amendment*, 1 L.A. PUB. INT. L.J. 124 (2009).

6. Nicole Gon Ochi, *Ending the Emancipation Nightmare: Reforming the Paradigm of Emancipation Preparation For Foster Youth in California*, 1 L.A. PUB. INT. L.J. 240 (2009).

7. *Hoffman Plastic Compounds, Inc. v. NLRB*, 535 U.S. 137 (2002). Cindy Pánuco, *Assessing the Rights of Undocumented Workers: Rejecting Federal Preemption of State Labor Protections*, 1 L.A. PUB. INT. L.J. 285 (2009).

8. Bosbely Reyna, *Carwashero: A “CLEAN” Message*, 1 L.A. PUB. INT. L.J. 312 (2009).

9. Nneka, *Wage Justice: A Thank You*, 1 L.A. PUB. INT. L.J. 316 (2009).

10. Maria Marroquín, *Dime Pequeña (Tell Me Little One)*, 1 L.A. PUB. INT. L.J. 317 (2009).

11. This issue includes “Letters to a Young Public Interest Attorney” from Betty Hung, Special Counsel at Inner City Law Center & Senior Attorney in the Employment Law Unit at Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles; Paula D. Pearlman, Executive Director of the Disability Rights Legal Center (DRLC); Dan Stormer, Founding Partner of Hadsell, Stormer, Keeny, Richardson & Renick LLP; Hernán Vera, President & CEO of Public Counsel; and Sid Wolinsky, Co-Founder & Director of Litigation at Disability Rights Advocates, as well as a transcript of Inaugural Loyola Law School Social Justice Lecture, featuring Julie A. Su, Litigation Director at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center.