

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The history of *The Modern American* is a very short one. In April 2004, I approached the newly elected leaders of the diverse student organizations: Asian Pacific American Law Students Association (APALSA); Black Law Students Association (BLSA); Hispanic Law Students Association (HLSA); Lambda Law Society; and the South Asian Law Students Association (SALSA), about starting a legal publication dedicated to diversity and the law. Many people expressed interest in getting the publication off the ground but Angela and Preeti remained steadfast in their dedication and we began to create a publication.

Over the summer, we worked hard to assure the new publication would have a distinct voice. From the beginning, we knew we did not want the publication to be a rant and rave about what's wrong with American society. We wanted to convey the message that many people experience America differently because of many factors. Although labeled as minorities, their experience is no less patriotic, typical, or American. In a time of modern Americans, we wanted to start a publication that expressed the distinct perspective of our generation, while conveying the sense of pride we have as Americans for our history and hope for the future.

We live in a time where the lines that separate issues of race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender are rapidly moving closer together. As an increasingly diverse nation, we cannot limit the discussion of legal issues and civil rights to simple sound bites such as "blacks vs. whites," "liberal vs. conservative," or "women vs. men." We, at *The Modern American*, want to initiate a full discussion encompassing all the complexity of the minority community, gender relations, and sexuality by publishing articles that provide a unique perspective in analyzing diversity and the law. However, our philosophy is to present a balanced perspective on critical issues of minority communities by including both liberal and conservative views. We are a diverse population and it would be a travesty to only present one voice.

The Modern American's purpose is to provide a discourse with regards to the legal and social issues that affect groups that have traditionally experienced discrimination, including but not limited to, people of color, ethnic groups, and the gay, bisexual, lesbian and transgender community. For so long the legal community's analysis of issues that affect these groups has been in a tone of "uniqueness," instead of a one that reflects their ever growing presence and influence in America. The legal community has also virtually ignored any discourse concerning the intra-group and inter-group conflicts that arise within these groups in their growing efforts to assert their voices, protect and maintain civil rights, and find their respective niche in American politics. We believe that any discussion that brings to light this particular struggle will only help groups form cohesive bonds within their constituency and increase problem solving discourse

among the groups. This publication will also examine the way people associated with minority groups have been treated by the legal system and we intend to present a critical analysis of the current social and legal remedies for minority issues.

Since this is our first issue, we thought that an appropriate theme would be the "State of Our Union." Having recently inaugurated a president who gave a State of the Union address, it seemed only fitting to inaugurate our first issue with a variety of issues that affect Americans. What you will find in the following pages are articles that provide a new perspective on topics in the mainstream media as well as articles that discuss issues neglected by the legal community and larger public.

In closing, this publication has been the dream of many generations at American University Washington College of Law and is finally coming to fruition. Many alumnae have shown their support, proving that "we are all descendants of the good works of others." Therefore, we would like to thank our advisors Professors Jamin Raskin, Pamela Bridgewater, Perry Wallace, Jr., and the director of Diversity Services, Ms. Sherry Weaver for all their support. Also an integral ingredient to this publication's success is the energy from a dynamic staff that believed in this publication for over a year. It is with great humility and admiration that we would like to thank them for all of their contributions, whether editing, writing, or advising. We continue to be amazed by their endurance, dedication, and energy. As such, it is with great anticipation that we can finally say, "Here is the first issue of *The Modern American*."

Sincerely,

Lydia Edwards
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