
Afterword: Forty Years Later

Jodi Lackman*

In his foreword to this issue of the *McGill Law Journal*, Jacques-Yvan Morin wrote about the *Journal's* past and its difficult beginnings. He has thus provided me an excellent springboard from which to describe the present and consider the future of the *Journal*. Forty years later, the *McGill Law Journal's* bilingual, bijuridical nature makes it unique in Canada and abroad. Our subscribers and contributors are located all over the world. The Supreme Court of Canada often cites our articles in opinions. The *Journal* is currently run by a board of fifteen law students, each of whom receives academic credit from the Faculty of Law for his or her work on the *Journal*. The uniform citation style, which was beyond the reach of the editors of Volume 1, has become a reality through the *Journal's Canadian Guide to Uniform Legal Citation*. The *Guide* not only governs the style in the *Journal*; it has also been adopted by many other journals across Canada and by some courts.

The *McGill Law Journal* was originally conceived as a "legal periodical ... edited by students and, largely, contributed to by students." It has, however, outgrown that conception; its pages include articles by students, professors, practitioners and judges. It also no longer merely reflects what goes on in the legal world; it sometimes affects the law. Earlier this year, an article slated for publication in Volume 40 was included as an appendix to a factum submitted to the Supreme Court of Canada. The lawyers of two of the parties to the litigation called to confirm that the *Journal* was indeed planning to publish the article. I was pleasantly surprised that the *Journal* could have an *ex ante*, and not merely *ex post facto*, impact on the law.

The *McGill Law Journal* has an enviable reputation in the world of legal scholarship and is even in a solid state of financial health. Nonetheless, if we stop to rest on our laurels, we risk falling behind in the global village that our world has become. With so much information currently available in electronic form, it is possible that the printed-on-paper form of the *Journal* could soon become obsolete. It is entirely that, in the very near future, our subscribers will receive their copies of the *Journal* on disk or through the Internet. With the *Journal's* current facilities and the implementation of in-house typesetting this year, computerized distribution of the *McGill Law Journal* could easily be accomplished.

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A greater challenge for the *Journal* is the current trend towards specialization. The increasing number of specialized law journals has somewhat eroded the amount of submissions we receive as a general law journal. It is my opinion, however, after a year of running a general law journal, that it is very special to find an article on Ontario's family mediation system in the same issue as an article on the history and future of nullities in the civil law. I hope that, as the *Journal* adapts to the twenty-first century, it does not lose the ability to remain on the cutting edge of *many* areas of legal scholarship.

I am certain, that whatever form the *Journal* takes forty years from now, it will have adapted and maintained its strength because its most important asset is the people who are involved in it: the thirty students who spend their spare time arguing over colons and chasing footnotes, everyone who works at McGill's Faculty of Law, the authors who submit articles, the evaluators who comment on the articles and all of the people who provide support to the involved parties. I know that my work at the *Journal* would not have been possible this year without the dedication of the Executive and of the whole Board and their uncomplaining acceptance of my nagging; without Professor Healy's patient support and calm dismantling of what seemed "tragedies" to me; without Nicole Leger, who is the *Journal's* Person Friday; and especially without the understanding, support and good humour of my loved ones. Being at the helm of the *McGill Law Journal* has been a pleasure and an honour, and as I pass that honour to my successors, I am confident that, forty years from now, the Editor-in-Chief of Volume 80 will express the same sentiments, with the only difference being that he or she will have been running an even better *McGill Law Journal*.

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Editor-in-Chief
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