

REFLECTIONS FROM THE CHAIR: A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY AND AHEAD TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

REFLECTIONS*

Michael K. Grogan**

The word symposium comes from the Greek language and literally means a coming together to share drink and discourse.¹ Continuing combined efforts of the City, County and Local Government Law Section of the Florida Bar and the *Stetson Law Review* have produced this latest gathering. While one may argue that law reviews focus on analysis, caselaw and the esoteric science of jurisprudence, the success of this Symposium is largely based on the dedication and efforts of people — practitioners, law professors and students.

The Symposium has served as an ongoing discourse and diatribe on everyday problems which challenge public officers and practitioners in the local government setting. As Alexis de Tocqueville, more than 150 years ago, wrote in *Democracy in America*:

PUBLIC officers in the United States are commingled with the crowd of citizens; they have neither palaces, nor guards, nor ceremonial costumes. This simple exterior of the persons in authority is connected, not only with the peculiarities of the American character, but with the fundamental principles of that society. In the esti-

* © Michael K. Grogan, 1999. All rights reserved.

** B.S., MacMurray College, 1972; J.D., Mercer University, 1976; Chairman, Local Government Law Section, 1990–1991; Symposium Editor, Local Government Law Section, 1998–present.

1. See 17 THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY 464 (2d ed. 1989).

mation of the democracy, a government is not a benefit, but a necessary evil. A certain degree of power must be granted to public officers, for they would be of no use without it. . . . The public officers themselves are well aware that they only enjoy the superiority over their fellow-citizens which they derive from their authority, upon condition of putting themselves on a level with the whole community by their manners. A public officer in the United States is uniformly civil, accessible to all the world, attentive to all requests, and obliging in his replies.²

To those of us who have been with the Local Government Law Symposium since its early days, de Tocqueville's description of a public officer could well serve as an introduction to Professor J.J. Brown, the activist, catalyst, and mustard seed from whence the mighty Symposium has grown over the years. With wit and patience, and a keen sense of observation, he has regularly maintained an aura of civility, accessible to all the world, attentive to all requests, and obliging in his replies. As a colleague and friend, Professor Brown has led a merry band in producing the Symposium year after year. From its inception in 1985 with a section circulation of 516 members, the Symposium has grown to the current annual section circulation of 1195. We are also providing copies to the Florida League of Cities, which adds approximately 300 additional readers. The Symposium has produced invaluable assistance to local government practitioners, public officers, pundits and the courts.

Over the years, many outstanding law review members served as symposium editors (they are listed by year and noted for their city of practice): 1985, Roger W. Yoerges;³ 1986, Richard A. Harrison;⁴ 1987, Alison M. Steele;⁵ 1988, Michael A. Marr;⁶ 1989, Sherrille D. Bailey (Akin);⁷ 1990, Marie De Marco;⁸ 1991–1992, Lin-

2. ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, *DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA* 187 (Craighead, Allen Printers 1992) (1838) (privately printed for the Classics of Liberty Library).

3. Washington, D.C.

4. Tampa, Florida.

5. St. Petersburg, Florida. Ms. Steele has served as legal advisor to the *Law Review*.

6. Clearwater, Florida.

7. Columbus, Ohio.

8. Clearwater, Florida.

da C. Darsey (Hartley);⁹ 1993, Kim R. Helper;¹⁰ 1994, Meredith E. Level;¹¹ 1995, Shannon Stancil¹² and Kenneth B. Rugh (Current Cases Editor);¹³ 1996, Ethan H. Cohen¹⁴ and Jason A. Lessinger (Current Cases Editor);¹⁵ 1997, Tara Janel Whetsel¹⁶ and Kimberly M. Johnson (Current Cases Editor);¹⁷ 1998, David C. Miller¹⁸ and Scott J. Sternberg (Current Cases Editor).¹⁹ The vast number of these fine individuals have learned an important lesson in their time on the Symposium, as confirmed by the fact that a few have chosen a career in city, county or local government practice.

Articles over the years have provided awareness, debate and reflection. They have attracted the interest of other authors who have cited our previous symposia works 269 times.²⁰ The articles provoking the greatest number of scholarly review have been in the areas of land use planning and voting rights.

Upon reflection, please take a moment and give thanks to the attentive and obliging J.J. Brown, a good and faithful professor, as well as all the people throughout the years who have labored to provide the reader with a yearly feast of publication. We ask you to accept the challenge to participate in upcoming symposiums. Take the pledge. *Juris praecepta sunt hæc: honeste vivere; alterum non lædere; suum cuique tribuere.* “These are the precepts of the law: To live honorably; to hurt nobody; to render to everyone his due.”²¹

9. Tampa, Florida. Ms. Darsey was the first member of the Faculty Advisors Hall of Fame for Outstanding Editorial Achievement.

10. Nashville, Tennessee.

11. Tampa, Florida.

12. Tampa, Florida.

13. Orlando, Florida.

14. Atlanta, Georgia.

15. Tampa, Florida.

16. Orlando, Florida.

17. Riverview, Florida.

18. Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Mr. Miller was the second member of the Faculty Advisors Hall of Fame for Outstanding Editorial Achievement.

19. Jacksonville, Florida.

20. Search of WESTLAW, Allfeds, Allstates, Jlr, and Sh Databases (Feb. 17, 1999).

21. BLACK'S LAW DICTIONARY 854 (6th ed. 1990).