

PERSPECTIVES

Teaching Legal Research and Writing

FROM THE EDITOR: A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

Yes, change is inevitable. It has been our great fortune to have the multitalented Frank Houdek as editor of *Perspectives* for six stellar years. Authors and columnists know firsthand Frank's fine judgment and gentle editorial touch; readers appreciate the quality and diversity of pieces he has selected and published. Frank decided earlier this year to step down with the completion of Volume 8. His wise counsel and deft manner will not be lost, however: fortunately, Frank will continue to serve on the *Perspectives* Editorial Board.

When Frank Houdek invited me to edit *Perspectives* I was both delighted and overwhelmed. Delighted because *Perspectives* is one of my favorite journals and overwhelmed because he has set such a high standard. As a member of the teaching community, and formerly the library community, I know that *Perspectives* is held in high regard. Frank took a fledgling journal and established it as *the* place to publish articles on teaching legal research and writing. As of July 2000, *Perspectives* is distributed in print to more than 3,000 subscribers. Recent issues are available both on the Web (in PDF) at <<http://www.westgroup.com/librarians/perspec/perspec.htm>> and on Westlaw®, in the PERSPEC database. And in 2001, we plan to issue a "Best of *Perspectives*," a selection of articles that have stood the test of time. This is particularly important because the legal research and writing community experiences higher turnover than other segments of law teaching. Such an anthology could be especially useful to newer teachers.

When Steven M. Barkan, the founding editor, launched *Perspectives* in 1992, his goal was to provide a balanced forum that encouraged collaboration among teachers of legal research and legal writing, whether librarians or law teachers. During their editorial terms, Steve established and Frank cultivated *Perspectives* as that crucial forum.

While *Perspectives* has always been supported and printed by West Group as a service to the legal community, the editor and Editorial Board are independent. The journal is committed to "maintain[ing] neutrality in its presentation of research materials, tools, and theories."¹

In Frank's inaugural issue in 1994, he noted that "*Perspectives* is primarily author-driven."² The journal reflects the thoughts and concerns of those who teach legal research and writing. During Frank's tenure, and with the assistance of the Editorial Board, regular columns have

¹ Steven M. Barkan, "From the Editor: Introducing *Perspectives*," 1 *Perspectives: Teaching Legal Res. & Writing* 1 (1992).

² Frank G. Houdek, "From the Editor: A New Perspective," 3 *Perspectives: Teaching Legal Res. & Writing* 1 (1994).

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Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Editor, the Editorial Board or West Group. Readers are encouraged to submit brief articles on subjects relevant to the teaching of legal research and writing. Manuscripts, comments, and correspondence should be sent to Mary A. Hotchkiss,

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evolved. The content notes for these columns illustrate the depth and variety of our teaching concerns:

- “Brutal Choices in Curricular Design” is designed to explore the difficult curricular decisions that teachers of legal research and writing courses must make in light of the realities of limited budgets, time, personnel, and other resources. The column editors are Helene Shapo, Northwestern University School of Law, Chicago, and Mary Lawrence, University of Oregon School of Law, in Eugene.
- “Legal Research and Writing Resources: Recent Publications” includes references to books, articles, bibliographies, and research guides that could potentially prove useful to both instructors and students. The column editor is Donald J. Dunn, Dean and Professor of Law at Western New England College, in Springfield, Mass.
- “Our Question—Your Answers” is a column of reader-prepared answers offered in response to a specific question posed by *Perspectives*. The column editors are Judy Meadows, Montana State Law Library, in Helena, and Kay Todd, Paul Hastings Janofsky & Walker, in Atlanta.
- “Teachable Moments for Students” is designed to provide information that can be used for quick and accessible answers to the basic questions that are frequently asked of librarians and those involved in teaching legal research and writing. These questions present a “teachable moment,” a brief window of opportunity when—because he or she has a specific need to know right now—the student or lawyer asking the question may actually remember the answer you provide. The column editor is Barbara Bintliff, University of Colorado Law Library, in Boulder.
- “Teachable Moments for Teachers” is designed to give teachers an opportunity to describe a special moment of epiphany that changed their approach to presenting a particular topic to their students. It is a companion to the “Teachable Moments for Students” column that provides quick and accessible answers to questions frequently asked by students and other researchers. The column editor is Louis J. Sirico, Jr., Villanova University School of Law, in Villanova, Pa.

- “Technology for Teaching” is designed to introduce and describe the ways in which teachers of legal research and writing are using technology to enhance their teaching. The column editor is Christopher Simoni, Northwestern University School of Law, in Chicago.
- “Writing Tips” is designed to provide teaching concepts related to the process and techniques of legal writing. The column editor is Helene Shapo, Northwestern University School of Law, Chicago.

Each of these column editors would be delighted to hear from you if you have an idea or manuscript that might fit a column’s niche. I am also happy to receive manuscripts. Articles of any length will be considered for publication, but the preferred submission will fall between 5 and 15 typewritten, double-spaced pages. Please contact me at hotchma@u.washington.edu for a copy of the *Perspectives* Author’s Guide and Style Sheet.

I want to acknowledge the wonderful work of past members of the Editorial Board who worked with Frank Houdek: Kathy Garner, Barbara C. Holt, Christina Kunz, and Kathleen H. McManus. They too played a role in developing a stronger, more vital journal. A source of support and continuity for me is the present Editorial Board: Barbara Bintliff, Ellen Callinan, Donald Dunn, Penny A. Hazelton, Frank Houdek (!), Mary S. Lawrence, Judith Meadows, Helene Shapo, Christopher Simoni, Louis J. Sirico, and Kay Todd. They bring to the table years of teaching and writing experience.

Of course, the vitality of *Perspectives* is dependent on the contributions of the legal research and legal writing communities. The strength of *Perspectives* is that it weaves together great ideas from both librarianship and law teaching. My hopes are that it continues to be a reader-friendly forum for a lively exchange of ideas and opinions about issues in teaching legal research and writing. I am pleased to be the new editor of *Perspectives*, and I look forward to your support, contributions, submissions, comments, and suggestions for improvement!

Mary A. Hotchkiss
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