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Focusing On The United States Supreme Court

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FOCUSING ON THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the first of four issues of Volume 33 of the *Tulsa Law Journal* celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the University of Tulsa College of Law. This issue features articles by three present Justices of the United States Supreme Court and a review of the major Supreme Court decision of the 1996-97 term. The final issue of Volume 33 will be a *festschrift* honoring our distinguished Chapman Professor Bernard Schwartz.

On June 4, 1996, the Honorable Sandra Day O'Connor participated in a three day symposium on Native American issues, co-sponsored by the College of Law. In her formal remarks, included in this issue, she described in detail the history, impact and future of the tribal courts. Tribal courts, Justice O'Connor stresses, are developing in large numbers and present an opportunity to integrate the best aspects of customary law and traditional Anglo-American practice. They also can be a vehicle to show how different systems can all be models for the administration of justice.

On May 2, 1997, the Honorable Clarence Thomas visited the College of Law and also made formal remarks to the Tulsa Chapters of the American Inns of Court. In his comments, reprinted here, he expressed his concern about the loss of civility in our society, including sports, politics, academia, and particularly the legal profession. A civil society is essential to ensure the existence of an active private sphere of human interaction. In fact, the future stability and success of our nation depends on according respect to others and their opinions. Justice Thomas is quite optimistic that we can return to a more civil society.

In August of 1997, the Honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg visited the College of Law while in Tulsa to participate in the Oklahoma Bar Association Women in Law Conference. In one of her talks to the participants of that Conference, reprinted here, she described women's progress in the legal profession. Using examples from her personal experience, Justice Ginsburg described how society made judgments and policy based on gender and how the law became a vehicle to lessen those distinctions. She concluded, optimistically, about the trend for shared—and equal—roles for men and women.

Also included in this issue of the *Tulsa Law Journal* is our third annual review of the decisions of the United States Supreme Court. As indicated by the Honorable Sven Erik Holmes, the 1996-97 term was the most significant in recent years. Deciding issues ranging from assisted suicide to separation of church and state, the Court seemed willing to address fundamental issues. Perhaps of most significance was the Court's willingness to overturn previous precedents, reassert its power over Congress, and articulate its new version of states' powers under the Constitution.

Dean Martin H. Belsky

