

## A TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR MELVIN G. SHIMM

When Melvin Shimm came to Duke in 1953, the new professor was asked if, in addition to a full teaching load, he would be interested in editing *Law and Contemporary Problems*. Professor Shimm accepted the position with the journal, at that time run entirely by the faculty, “out of respect for the publication,” which he had first encountered while a law student at Yale.

We are perhaps fortunate that Professor Shimm could not have known all that his position would entail. After two years as an associate editor, Professor Shimm spent six years as Editor, a position that encompassed all the work for which the present-day Faculty Editorial Board is responsible, with significant additional authoring responsibilities. When Professor Shimm recounts those days, he notes that he spent more hours in the confines of the law school during those years than any of today’s students can expect to bill in even the most grueling private firms. When it was discovered that the young professor might still have some free time remaining in his day, he was asked to assume editorship of a student-edited law journal, a project resulting in the creation of the *Duke Law Journal*.

Yet despite the long hours and his other obligations, Professor Shimm continued to run *Law and Contemporary Problems* almost single-handedly. Because each issue was a symposium, presenting an appropriately balanced assortment of articles was of special concern. Bias, or even the perception of bias, says Professor Shimm, was perhaps the first thing that could diminish the journal’s reputation. This made the rejection of submissions that did not satisfy the journal’s high standards even more problematic, because it left a void that needed to be filled. But under Professor Shimm’s watch, that void was always filled, and the journal flourished, becoming one of the most widely circulated legal journals in the country.

In 1976, Professor Shimm again took hold of the reins of *Law and Contemporary Problems*, and, noting the trend in law journals across the country, he realized that it was time gradually to turn over control of the publication to the students. This transition process lasted roughly two years, after which time Professor Shimm served as the journal’s first general editor for an additional two years. Since then, Professor Shimm has remained an active participant in the journal’s affairs, still serving as Chairman of the Faculty Editorial Board.

Melvin Shimm has invested an enormous amount of time and effort in *Law and Contemporary Problems*. It has gone neither unnoticed nor unappreciated. This journal is very much aware that it owes a very substantial amount of its success to a single person. To acknowledge this gratitude, the current student editors of *Law and Contemporary Problems* dedicate this issue to celebrate the 75th birthday of Melvin Shimm. Thank you, Professor Shimm!