Here's to 50 More!

R. Lawrence Dessem
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One of the congratulatory letters that I received upon being selected as Mercer’s dean back in 1995 was from a friend who stated that, while he was not generally familiar with the Walter F. George School of Law, he knew that Mercer had an outstanding law school because of the conflicts of law symposium published by the Mercer Law Review in 1983 and 1984. A few years later, I was informed that, at the initial meeting of the American Bar Association Commission on Separation of Powers and Judicial Independence, an ABA staff member distributed copies of the Mercer Law Review’s 1995 symposium issue on federal judicial independence. More recently, the Law Review’s 1997 symposium on the independent counsel statute has become the starting point for serious discussion about the re-authorization of the federal independent counsel statute, as this statute is debated in Washington and across the country. I therefore am proud to join William Tyson and Charles Adams in saluting the fiftieth anniversary of the Mercer Law Review.

In his article “Lest We Forget”: The History of Mercer Law Review, Charles Adams very deftly describes the Law Review’s founding and its growth and development over the past fifty years. The editorial board members mentioned in his article read like a Who’s Who of outstanding Law School alumni. Over the past fifty years, the men and women who
have served on the Mercer Law Review have more than realized the
hopes and dreams of individuals such as Dean Hodge O'Neal, Professor
James Quarles, and students Bill Tyson and Frank Jones, who were,
literally, “present at the creation” of the Mercer Law Review.

The Mercer Law Review is an indispensable part of the Walter F.
George School of Law for several reasons. First of all, as any who have
served on the Law Review can attest, membership entails a great deal
of hard work. While the hours are long, this work is excellent prepara-
tion for the practice of law. As is the case in legal practice, there are no
time clocks to punch in the Law Review office. Instead, students do as
much work as is necessary to produce an outstanding review. There is
no substitute for this hard work, for the essential attention to detail, or
for the conscientiousness and dedication that outstanding law review
service—and legal practice—demand. Service on the Law Review also
requires a real team effort, which is essential to any successful legal
practice. In addition, successive editors and members of the Law Review
have set an extremely high standard of excellence for those who follow.
All students are expected to give their very best, and they respond in
kind.

The publication of the Mercer Law Review is also one important way
in which the Law School serves the legal profession and works to
maintain and strengthen the ties between the Law School and the bench
and the bar. The Law Review has been known since 1950 for its Annual
Survey of Georgia Law, a project that was the brainchild of Frank Jones
and that was brought into existence by Bob Hicks, the first Georgia
Survey editor. The Georgia Survey has become an indispensable
resource for not only judges and lawyers within Georgia, but also for
others who need to understand Georgia law. More recently, the Law
Review has added its Annual Eleventh Circuit Survey, which contains
the same helpful and straightforward survey of federal law for which the
Georgia Survey has been known for so many years.

As is noted at the outset of this Article, the Mercer Law Review
continues to serve as an extremely important means of advancing the
Law School's reputation in the world beyond Mercer. Outstanding
judges, lawyers, and law professors have graced the pages of the Law
Review with their writings over the years, and these articles have been
read, cited, and relied upon by individuals across the nation. The
annual Law Review symposium, too, has brought outstanding judges and
lawyers to the Law School, so that students, faculty, and others are able
to enjoy “live” symposia even before they have been published in hard
copy in the Law Review or posted electronically on the Review's web
page.
Finally, the Mercer Law Review is an extremely important way by which significant traditions of the Law School and of the profession are passed from one generation to the next. The Law Review's 1983 and 1984 choice of law symposium was reprised in a 1996 Law Review symposium. At this symposium, Professor David Currie and others discussed and debated the choice of law theories of Professor Brainerd Currie, one of the Law School's best known graduates and professors. The recent independent counsel symposium included among its participants former Attorney General Griffin Bell, who recently celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his graduation from the Law School. It is important that our current students hear from, and about, those who have gone before them at the Law School and within the profession. The Law Review provides one of the important links by which such traditions are passed to the newest generations of law students.

The Mercer Law Review has set a standard of excellence that will be hard for future generations of student editors to match. However, building upon the traditions established by prior members of the Law Review, I am confident that the students of today and of the future will rise to this challenge. Here's to fifty more years of the Mercer Law Review!

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