

Shattering glass mastheads

The nation's top-ranked law journals have joined together to produce a special-edition law review commemorating a milestone in legal education: For the first time ever, all of the flagship law reviews at the top 16 law schools are led by women editors-in-chief.

The collaborative journal issue, titled *Women & Law*, features 14 essays and is available at scholarship.law.duke.edu/journals/. “The idea was sparked in part by the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, but also by all the editors-in-chief being women this year,” said *Duke Law Journal* editor-in-chief Farrah Bara, who initiated the project.

The milestone also coincides with the 150th anniversary of the first women graduating from law school, earning admission to the bar, and securing appointment to a judicial position. Editor-in-chief is a coveted leadership position for law students, and while women

already outnumber men enrolled at accredited law schools, they have never before held all of the top positions.

“There is such a profound value — both real and symbolic — in having the top of the masthead of the top law journals occupied by women,” said Duke Law Professor Marin Levy. “We are not far removed from a time when very few women attended law school and

when those who did attend were not always welcome. So to have a moment, now, when women are universally holding such a crucial student leadership role is exhilarating and inspiring.”

To commemorate the historical moment, the 16 editors-in-chief also collaborated to host a special daylong program in Washington, D.C., featur-

two small women in the crowd. It's an enormous change to see women in numbers on law reviews and heading law reviews. It's one of the things that makes me optimistic about the future.”

Judge Pamela Harris of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and Judges Nina Pillard and Sri Srinivasan of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit participated in a panel moderated by Duke Law Professor Neil Siegel. They discussed how they had each benefitted from new attention to judicial diversity as well as the ways in which diversity improves the quality of decision-making.

“It's hard to be what you can't see,” Srinivasan said, recounting his path from becoming a U.S. citizen at age 23 to federal judge at age 46. “And when you see it, you feel that you can be it.” He credited Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court, with helping him overcome “impostor syndrome” as a clerk.

He said that in hiring, “I'm cognizant of getting a mix of people who are going to challenge each other.”

Harris said that her male colleagues on the bench have learned through her experiences that even women at the highest levels of achievement are sometimes treated as inferiors. “[They've] seen me be treated differently because I'm a woman,” Harris said. “And it's



TOP: THE EDITORS-IN-CHIEF OF THE TOP 16 LAW REVIEWS FOR 2019-20. BELOW: JUDGES NINA PILLARD, SRI SRINIVASAN, AND PAMELA HARRIS; JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG; PROF. NEIL SIEGEL. PHOTOS BY LEIGH VOGEL/DUKE LAW.

ing Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and a number of judges and leaders in the law.

Justice Ginsburg called the women's editor-in-chief sweep “a good beginning,” and recounted how, when she entered Harvard Law School in 1956, the law review included only two women. “I have a picture of my second year, and it shows all these men — and

important to me that they see it because it's a surprise to them, sometimes, to see that we're not always entitled to the same presumption of competence. And it has changed the way they might understand what is a credible or plausible claim of sex discrimination."

Justice Ginsburg noted that last year was the first time the Supreme Court had equal numbers of male and female law clerks and praised Justice Brett Kavanaugh for hiring all woman clerks.

When she was seeking a clerkship as a new law school graduate and young parent, she recalled, "there were precious few who would take a chance on a woman. No one would take a chance on the mother of a four-year-old. Now it's not at all unusual for law clerks to be parents, both women and men. And my colleagues have seen that they can do the job perfectly well. That change has been important."

Several of the editors-in-chief discussed the challenges they faced in overcoming stereotypes of law review leadership, comparisons to previous editors, differing communication and leadership styles between men and women, and gender-based expectations.

"At the time that our journals were created, they were run entirely by men," said Bara. "This event celebrates the fact that at least that much has changed. But it's also not a secret that a lot of us sit on top of mastheads that are deeply unbalanced in terms of race, gender, and ethnicity, that a lot

of us have had elections for next year already, and that our successors will be white males. So while we have achieved a significant milestone, it's clear that there is still a lot of work that remains. What we need are continuing and consistent efforts."

She added: "This job is a lot about giving, but if you're too much of a giver it may be associated with your role as a woman as opposed to your role as a leader, and that is a tension I've seen."

Those expectations are amplified for women of color, some panelists noted. "Finding that balance of making myself available without having all of my time taken up with mentorship conversations, or just the additional uncompensated labor that people expect from women and from women of color was a very difficult balance," said Noor-ul-ain Hasan, who heads the *California Law Review*.

Gabriella Ravida, the editor-in-chief of the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, noted that she is only the second African-American woman to hold that post in the journal's 169-year history.

"While this celebration felt so momentous and wonderful, with it came this responsibility of making sure that this door can continue to open the same way for people like me," Ravida said. "What can we do to challenge the status quo and use this moment to do that? What better time to ring the alarm for other women to something similar?"

- **JEANNIE ANNE NAUJECK** is senior writer in Duke Law's communications office.

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— JUSTICE GINSBURG

PART OF THE CHANGE

Law students face a professional world that is often unkind to working women. Every day, we hear reminders of the difficulties that women face when simply trying to excel at their jobs. But there is progress, too. We have seen all-female partner classes and increasing numbers of women entering law school. Gender discrimination in large firms is being called out. A slow-but-steady sea change seems underway.

Seven classmates and I became a small demonstration of this change last February when the *Cornell Law Review* elected the first all-female editorial board – not just in the history of Cornell Law School, but in the history of the top 14 law schools. Our election coincided with the election of all women editors-in-chief at the nation's top 16 law schools' flagship journals.

After our election, the question I heard most was whether our class had planned the result, as if this milestone was accomplished for its own sake. I am happy to report that each member of our board was elected not because of her gender, but because the *Law Review*, after a six-hour election, decided she was the best candidate for the position.

In running our law review, we are committed to giving a platform to diverse voices. We are taking active steps to increase inclusion within our masthead and within our journal's pages. We owe a debt to women who came before us, and we intend to pay it forward.



LAUREN KLOSS

is editor-in-chief of the *Cornell Law Review*, Vol. 105. She will join Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP later this year.