

MICHIGAN STATE LAW REVIEW TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM SMITH

THIS “LITTLE RASCAL”

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A dedicated group of students, an inspired advisor, and a man with an entrepreneurial spirit. These driving forces came together in the fall of 1973 to restart the Law Review at the Detroit College of Law. On the conclusion of our fortieth anniversary of renewed publication, the *Michigan State Law Review* recognizes the honorary Editor-in-Chief of the Law Review from 1973–1974, William Smith.

The *Detroit Law Review* was first published in June of 1931, with an initial article that belies the thoughts of the time, *The Effect of War Upon Contracts of Life Insurance*.¹ A natural progression from the school’s prior publication, *The Brief Case*, the Law Review was created as a necessary outlet for legal research at the Detroit College of Law and in Detroit. The journal was published three times a year, including articles, editorials, case notes, book reviews, and notes on recent legislation. With a final issue in June of 1938, the Law Review ceased publication on the eve of World War II. The Detroit Law Review published three more issues following the end of the war;² however, the journal did not continue on after the final publication in March 1948.

While searching the library racks at the Detroit College of Law, William Smith, an ambitious law student, noticed the abrupt end of *Detroit Law Review*. The dean of the Detroit College of Law called a meeting of students to discuss resuming publication of the Law Review in the fall of 1973. A steering committee was formed to lay

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1. Fred H. Aldrich, *The Effect of War Upon Contracts of Life Insurance*, 1 DET. L. REV. 1 (1931).

2. The Detroit Law Review was published in December 1947, March 1948, and June 1948.

the groundwork to restart the journal with Mr. Smith as the chairperson—the Editor-in-Chief.³

Mr. Smith felt a great “drive to get this little rascal going.”⁴ This small, dedicated group of students worked to inspire other students, encouraging them to engage with the journal and facilitate its restart. The committee worked to get the word out to students and authors with mailings, postcards, notices, and postings in the school’s newsletter. Mr. Smith met with other law reviews and journals to understand the publication process. The advisor to the Law Review, Anthony Sapienza, played a crucial role as an outside voice, meeting with students to help resume publication. In 1975, the dreams of Mr. Smith and this steering committee were made reality. The first issue of the *Detroit College of Law Review* was published under the leadership of Editor-in-Chief Rosemary K. Wolock in 1975.

True to his entrepreneurial spirit, Mr. Smith graduated from the Detroit College of Law in 1974 and continued on to have an illustrious career. Prior to law school, Mr. Smith served with the army in Vietnam and continued his service following graduation with a reserve commission in Naval Intelligence. He then became a partner in a small firm before traveling to Russia on an international information exchange program in 1993, looking at the Code of Commercial Conduct and the business practices of professionals in Russia. His desire to continue learning has led him to study African studies at Howard University, as well as be the recipient of a Fulbright Scholar grant to study the supply chain of the domestic rice industry and teach courses in business management and entrepreneurship. Mr. Smith is a professor emeritus at Ferris State University. He embodies the advice that he gives students today: To use the intellectual abilities they have and to pass on their knowledge through writing and publications—“Keep those thoughts alive.”

In honor of Mr. Smith’s dedication and commitment to the Law Review, the *Michigan State Law Review* includes him as an Editor-in-Chief of the fifth and final issue of our 2015 publication year.

3. Other students on the committee were John Calahan, James Heckman, Mark Meadows, and Lawrence Morse.

4. Telephone Interview with William Smith (Feb. 25, 2016).