

FOREWORD

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The idea of a law review and a section of the state bar teaming up to produce a themed journal is not a novel one. So let me get something off my chest—I stole the idea, twice. I first obtained it by stealing, and the second time I stole it from myself. However, the statute of limitations has run on that theft.

What am I talking about? You hold in your hands the first public interest law issue of the *Florida Coastal Law Review*. One of my goals this year as chair of The Florida Bar Public Interest Law Section was to affiliate with one of our state's law schools and publish an issue of this nature.

Where did this idea come from? Well, the Criminal Law Section has been publishing a criminal law issue of the *St. Thomas Law Review* for years. That tradition started when I began it during my year as chair of that section in the mid-1990s. So, I have stolen the idea from myself.

Now, the astute and diligent reader might go back to the introduction I wrote in St. Thomas's first criminal law issue. If so, the reader would discover that after first stating that the idea of a Bar section working with a law review to produce a subject-themed issue was a totally original and innovative one, I admitted that I had stolen the concept from the City, County & Local Government Section, which had a long tradition of publishing a local government issue of the *Stetson Law Review*.

While some might call this process "law review laundering," I prefer to focus on the principle that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. And, if our imitation can achieve the kind of results that the other two sections have realized, that flattery will create a forum for stimulating thought about important issues in the area of public interest law.

We hope that the forum we create will have legs and that this will be the first *annual* public interest law issue of the *Florida Coastal Law Review*. In fact, we are already lining up authors for the *second* annual issue, so we believe that our goal is well on its way to becoming reality. As Rick said to Louis at the end of *Casablanca*, “I think this is the start of a beautiful friendship” between the Section and the Law Review.

Of course, this issue would not be possible without the contributions of the authors and the editors. We have an outstanding array of contributors who have set quite the standard for the years to come. The articles in this issue and future issues will make you think, make you speculate, maybe even make you act. Perhaps they will inspire you. Perhaps they will anger you. Perhaps they will make you want to write an article for a future issue.

Regardless of how they affect any particular individual, the articles will cause discussion and raise awareness of issues. And, as the public interest law issue becomes established, and our members and others look forward to it, the effect of these articles will only intensify.

We are starting something here, purloined or not, that is going to have a positive impact. How much? Let’s take the optimistic view (I personally do not believe the glass is either half full or half empty—I think you have the wrong size glass) and suggest that, and as the old song goes, “This could be the start of something big.”