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The *Berkeley Women's Law Journal* is guided by an editorial policy which distinguishes us from other law reviews and feminist journals. Our mandate is to publish research, analysis, and commentary that address the lives and struggles of underrepresented women, such as women of color, poor women, lesbians, and disabled women. We believe that excellence in feminist legal scholarship requires critical examination of categories such as race, class, sexual orientation, and disability as well as gender. Therefore, discussions of "women's issues" that treat women as a monolithic group do not fall within our mandate. Articles may come within the mandate because of their subject matter, or because of their analytical attention to differences in social location among women. The truly broad scope of this mandate, and the diversity of scholarship it supports, is reflected in this volume of the *Berkeley Women's Law Journal*.

The majority of pieces submitted to this journal, however, do not fall within the mandate. There are far too few of us in legal education and practice committed to advocating for women, let alone focusing on those women least served by the legal system. Rather than abandon or modify our mandate in response to the limited pool of available scholarship, we hope to actively cultivate and support such scholarship by recommitting ourselves to the vision our mandate reflects. We need your help. This forum can only exist with the vigorous participation of thinkers and writers nationwide who share our vision and our commitment. We urge you, our readers and friends, to consider the issues raised in the *Berkeley Women's Law Journal* as you pursue your own work. Share your work-in-progress with us. Publish with us. Tell your colleagues, students, and teachers about us. If you read an unpublished paper, or hear a speech at a conference, that addresses the mandate of the *Berkeley Women's Law Journal*, refer it to us. Join us in nurturing and critically engaging the legal research, theories, and strategies required to serve the interests of underrepresented women, and thus serve the interest we all share in social justice.

Almost a decade ago, the founding members of the *Berkeley Women's Law Journal* had a particular mission: to move issues concerning traditionally underrepresented women from a marginalized position in legal discourse to the center of discussion. At that time, neither mainstream law reviews nor feminist legal journals were interested in the concerns of women of color, poor women, disabled women, or lesbians. Mainstream law reviews questioned the legitimacy of such scholarship, while the few existing feminist law journals essentialized women's experiences. Dedicated to preserving the diversity of women's voices and committed to social change, the *Journal* filled a crucial gap in legal scholarship.

Today, almost ten years later, the *Journal* remains on the cutting edge of feminist legal writing. We proudly fulfill the mandate of our founding members, publishing articles on race, class, disability, and sexual orientation as well as gender.

By providing a forum dedicated to those issues formerly on the fringe of legal discourse, the *Journal* has been instrumental in redefining what is considered "legitimate" legal scholarship. Today, increasing numbers of scholars and practitioners are engaging legal issues facing traditionally marginalized groups of women. Mainstream law reviews and other feminist law journals have become increasingly eager to publish works central to our mandate. As a result, the *Journal* now must compete for articles with these other legal periodicals. While we enthusiastically applaud this increased attention to the difference in social location among women, we encourage you, as potential authors, to maintain your allegiances to feminist journals, and in particular, to the *Berkeley Women's Law Journal*. For our ability to thrive depends on your continued support.

Volume nine of the *Journal* continues to push the boundaries defining "legitimate" legal scholarship, in both substance and form. We are particularly proud of our Commentary piece—a poem by renowned author and poet June Jordan. In addition to our regularly featured articles and book reviews, we are pleased to publish the comments of a *Journal*-sponsored symposium on the legal issues affecting underrepresented women in the AIDS pandemic. Finally, we inaugurate our Recent Developments section, in which we hope to bring you the latest case law and legislative developments involving mandate women for many years to come.

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