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# BERKELEY WOMEN'S LAW JOURNAL

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## ATTENTION

This is Part 1 of the two-part Volume 6 of **Berkeley Women's Law Journal** 1990-91. It contains the symposium, "Black Women Law Professors: Building a Community at the Intersection of Race and Gender." See Part 2 of this Volume for the three additional articles which complete Volume 6.

1990-91

Volume 6



## BERKELEY WOMEN'S LAW JOURNAL

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The sixth volume of the *Berkeley Women's Law Journal* demonstrates the membership's renewed commitment to the *Journal's* original mandate: to publish articles which address the special legal issues affecting traditionally underrepresented women (poor women, women of color, lesbians, and disabled women). While consistently discussing issues of critical importance to women, recent volumes of the *Journal* have not always succeeded in fulfilling that specific mandate. In preparing to publish Volume 6, therefore, this year's editors departed from past practice. We gave the mandate priority in evaluating submissions, actively solicited articles that met the mandate, and worked with authors and prospective authors to ensure that each piece gave attention to relevant differences among groups of women. In the process, we came to realize that beyond representing a philosophical/moral position, the mandate helps us identify good scholarship by eliminating vague, overbroad, and universalist or essentialist writing from consideration.

Volume 6 appears in two parts. Part 1 is a collection of reflections, observations, chronicles, and commentaries written by members of the Northeast Corridor Collective of Black Women Law Professors about their experiences in law teaching and practice. The *Journal* is especially proud to have been given the opportunity to publish this compelling collection of writings. Individually and as a group, the pieces reveal the unique strengths and contributions of this largely overlooked segment of the legal community, while also documenting the extreme personal, professional and social obstacles these women have faced (and continue to face). Not only does this collection fill a gap in representation, it also adds a crucial set of perspectives to the debates about faculty diversity and affirmative action in general: here, women of color are vital participants in the debate, not mere topics of discussion.

Part 2 of Volume 6 represents the "regular" issue of the *Journal*, of which we are equally proud. Bernida Reagan's Commentary and the articles by Caroline Forell and Taunya Lovell Banks are each vastly different in tone and content, yet each is valuable feminist scholarship. Ms. Reagan's Commentary examines the impact of the Bush Administration's "War on Drugs" on low income communities, and especially on poor women; Ms. Forell's article advocates mandatory arrest policies for men who batter women; and Ms. Banks' article exposes the real and symbolic implications of "toilets as a feminist issue."

By focusing on a specific group of women or giving serious consideration to differences among women, each piece in Volume 6 reflects commitment to the mandate. Of course, further progress at the *Journal* remains to be made. In addition to the reinvigorated mandate, this year we count among our achievements a renewed commitment to open and frank discussion, shared information, and group decision-making and consensus at all levels. Among our as-yet-unattained goals are greater

diversity in membership and stronger connections to other alternative law journals at Boalt Hall and to feminist law journals elsewhere. Graduating *Journal* members feel a sense of accomplishment for the much-needed improvements made to the *Journal* in the past year. Continuing members rightfully emphasize the progress that remains to be made to bring the *Journal* closer to its ideal. We all look forward to the day when students, professors, practitioners, employers, and tenure committees routinely value progressive and feminist law journals at least as much as they respect more traditional and mainstream law reviews for their contributions to social progress, public debate, and legal scholarship.



# BERKELEY WOMEN'S LAW JOURNAL

1990-91

Volume 6, Part 1

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## BLACK WOMEN LAW PROFESSORS: BUILDING A COMMUNITY AT THE INTERSECTION OF RACE AND GENDER, A SYMPOSIUM\*

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\*It is the policy of the *Berkeley Women's Law Journal* not to draw a distinction between student pieces and the work of scholars, practitioners, and community workers.

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