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EDITOR'S NOTE

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RACE AND ETHNIC ANCESTRY LAW DIGEST

Washington and Lee University School of Law

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The *Race and Ethnic Ancestry Law Digest* was founded to analyze the legal issues affecting racial and ethnic groups in the United States today and to assist the legal community in understanding their impact on the legal system in the future. It has been a great honor to serve as the Digest's first editor-in-chief, and I am grateful to all those who contributed to this very fine issue.

Nineteen hundred and ninety-four marked the fortieth anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the case that ended legal segregation. *Brown* effectively overturned nearly seventy years of social and legal policies which segregated blacks and other minorities from the rest of society. Professor Charles Hamilton Houston started challenging legal segregation for the NAACP. After his death, the strategy was continued by his pupil, Thurgood Marshall. In 1954, Marshall, appearing before the Supreme Court of the United States for the *Brown* plaintiffs, asked the Court for "simple justice" and the Court responded. As the notes, articles and case comments in this issue demonstrate, the Supreme Court and society are still grappling with the difficult question of what justice is in the context of racial integration.

Unlike *Brown* the Voting Rights Act (Act) has been widely debated. Conservatives, liberals and moderates are split on how to interpret the Act regarding voting districts. And once again, as can be seen with the recent Supreme Court opinions on the issue, the spectre of race and ethnicity remains relevant to the political process, as the case comments on the Voting Rights cases indicate.

The issue which has a more immediate and tangible effect on the minority community is crime. The problem is the interplay between one's civil liberties and government's role in fighting drugs. As our student articles and case comments make clear, the federal government has weakened Fourth Amendment standards in prosecuting drug related violations and has left many in the minority community questioning whether black males are prosecuted disproportionately. However, some citizens of our nation's urban areas are willing to forgo their civil liberties in order to fight drug dealers and "gang bangers" in their neighborhoods.

It is my hope and that of the Editorial Board that the contents of this digest, its articles, notes and comments, will help shape, as Charles Hamilton Houston and Thurgood Marshall did in years past, the winning legal arguments of the future.