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## Letter from the Editor

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

In an era of growing distrust with law enforcement, police, policymakers, and community leaders alike have adopted forms of “community policing” by implementing specific programs and initiatives to better prevent and reduce crime. Police departments across the U.S. have used public surveys and data collection methods to evaluate the effectiveness of patrol and crisis response to reimagine how to provide support and resources. However, community policing strategies often focus on solving issues related to crime and criminal activity rather than addressing the underlying culture and decision-making processes within law enforcement itself that further perpetuate distrust.

To foster dialogue and encourage community engagement surrounding these issues, this year *The Pepperdine Dispute Resolution Law Journal* (DRLJ) hosted its annual symposium in collaboration with the Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution and the Weinstein International Foundation to explore how elements of alternative dispute resolution can apply to community policing strategies to prevent and deescalate crime. The symposium, “The Tactics of Resolution: Exploring International Innovation in Law Enforcement and Conflict Resolution,” brought students, law enforcement officials, academics, and policymakers together to engage in enriching conversations on how to establish safer and more harmonious global communities.

DRLJ’s Faculty Advisor and Director of the Straus Institute, Dr. Sukhsimranjit Singh, opened the event by highlighting the importance of building relationships based on trust between law enforcement entities and the communities they serve. Judge Danny Weinstein (Ret.) who serves as the founder of the Weinstein International Foundation and Distinguished Mediator in Residence at the Straus Institute then shared remarks on the utility of alternative dispute resolution practices in community policing. Judge Weinstein spoke about his tenure working in community relations, and how over time he started “holding [his] pistol in one holster, and [his] mediation skills in the other hostler.” For Judge Weinstein, the biggest cultural shift occurred when he started using his mediation hand more than his pistol hand when responding to disputes. He concluded by encouraging the audience to “get to work” by thinking critically about what each of us individually can do to improve community-police relationships.

Adjunct Professor Shaphan Roberts, who previously served as the director for the Los Angeles City Attorney’s Dispute Resolution Program, then introduced Matthew Hennessee, pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church in Portland, Oregon, who gave the keynote

address. In his remarks, Hennessee shared his transformative life story, explaining how his first steps were a miracle after enduring tremendous hardships due to physical defects. Having a unique lens as a father, grandfather, pastor, and community builder, Hennessee's optimism echoed throughout the auditorium as he explained how being "proximate to the issue" and getting "close to the problem" are the only ways we can come together to make a difference in reducing violence in our communities. Sharing his work in creating peace councils, Hennessee illustrated the ability to bring community stakeholders together to find common ground, reminding the audience that "[for] anything that needs to be solved, we've got the heart, the head, and the skills to get it done." Hennessee's ability to reduce homicides and gun violence in his community provided hope to the event's attendees at the outset of the day.

The first panel of the day, titled "Police Leaders Perspective: Leading from the Front," brought together chiefs of police and law enforcement specialists from across the country including Deanna Cantrell, a retired chief of police in Mesa, Arizona, as well as San Luis Obispo and Fairfield, California, Jerald Monahan, a retired chief of police for both Prescott Police Department and Yavapai College in Arizona, and Sandy Jo MacArthur, an adjunct professor at Pepperdine Caruso Law and retired assistant chief for the Los Angeles Police Department in California. Professor Roberts moderated this panel as each speaker discussed using dispute resolution techniques in practice, explained how culture has shifted over time by engaging with interventionists and specialists when responding to disputes, and ways we can bridge the gap between police and community members within a polarized climate. Themes of empathy, transparency, and accountability were discussed as the audience asked questions and conversed with the panelists on how peacemaking practices can be improved on both a local and national level.

The second panel of the day, titled "International Perspectives on Policing and Conflict Resolution: A Conversation with Weinstein International Foundation Senior Fellows," was moderated by Judge Weinstein and Ellen Bass, executive director of the Weinstein International Foundation. The discussion featured several distinguished academics and practitioners in the field of law enforcement from around the world, including Ehsan Sadiq, director general of the National Police Bureau in Pakistan, Etienne Martins, a federal judge for the District of Sao Paulo in Brazil and PhD candidate in criminology at the University of Oxford, Wendell Wallace, a criminologist, barrister, and certified mediator in Trinidad and Tobago, and Kyonghan Kang, senior superintendent and consulate general of the Republic of Korea. The panelists shared how policing is viewed in their respective international

communities, the various social, political, and economic factors that impact perceptions of law enforcement in their countries, and what dispute resolution tactics have been instrumental in reducing crime and redressing injustices for their localities.

The final panel, titled, “Emerging Ourselves in Community Perspectives,” was moderated by adjunct professor MacArthur and featured law enforcement officials, grassroots organizers, policy makers, and academics working to improve relationships between police and community members, including Lisa Broderick, executive director of Police2Peace, Matt Hennessee, Perry Bradley, assistant director of Public Safety at Lenoir Rhyne University in Columbia, South Carolina, Jody Armour, Roy P. Crocker Professor of Law at the University of Southern California, and Dale Bonner of the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners. Panelists engaged in critical conversations on the effectiveness of policy initiatives in reducing crime and violence, whether the allocation of resources and funding has been effective in addressing the intersectional needs of communities, and as Armour stated, “[How in order] to build trust, police departments . . . must be rooted in science, facts, and evidence,” where professionals are trained to be data-literate in making policing decisions.

Before closing the session, audience members were asked a series of questions via polling software to share their view on community policing, what they learned throughout the day, and how, if at all, perceptions were changed due to the dialogue. Words like empathy, safety, and optimism were common in the discussion and the audience positively rated the effectiveness of having such conversations in changing perceptions.

Pepperdine University president and CEO Jim Gash led the closing plenary for the day by highlighting how our shared understanding and appreciation for using alternative methods of dispute resolution equips us to “facilitate peace in our community and beyond.” President Gash added that the solution to almost all our global conflicts requires us to have conversations that treat each other with respect and dignity. Dr. Singh and Judge Weinstein also shared their vision for the future, emphasizing the need to continue to have such dialogue—highlighting how the day’s event was only the beginning of the work to be done to build trust in relationships between law enforcement and communities. Finally, the Straus Institute concluded by honoring Luann Pannell, a director of police training and education as well as a police psychologist at the Los Angeles Police Department, for her tremendous influence in infusing community perspectives into policing for more than a decade. Pannell shared her thanks, describing her work as “solving differences through communication.” She ended by providing the

words of Maya Angelou, reminding us that “We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.”

To commemorate the inspiring discussions we had during our symposium, we are fortunate to share the words and wisdom of Professor Shaphan Roberts and Dr. Wendell Wallace with our readers in Vol. XXIV. We hope these reflections serve as a catalyst for further conversations where we can not only empathetically listen to each other’s experiences regarding policing, but also forge innovative and effective solutions to make our communities safer going forward.

As I personally embark into my legal career, I’d like to thank Dr. Singh and the Straus Institute along with my Pepperdine DRLJ family for creating spaces to have these thoughtful dialogues and inspiring students, like myself, to go out into the world and serve as peacemakers.

With gratitude,

Reeve Lanigan  
Editor-in-Chief

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