

DANIEL M. KOLKEY

Foreword

Law and society are constantly changing, often as the result of both experience and experimentation. That is why the California Supreme Court Historical Society’s journal of *California Legal History* is so valuable. Its articles can help guide the future based on perspectives of the past.

But this particular issue of *California Legal History* marks a transition for the journal in two different respects.

First, with the retirement of our longtime and indefatigable editor-in-chief, Selma Moidel Smith, the reins of the journal have been handed to retired Associate Justice George Nicholson, who served 28 years on the California Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District.

Second, while this issue of the journal contains the usual array of articles on legal topics, including the oral history of a retired California Supreme Court justice and articles written by the winners of our student writing competition, this issue offers some surprises:

With crime on the minds of many who live in California’s urban centers, this issue also contains several articles that provide detailed, historical perspectives on the evolution of criminal justice policy in California over the past 50 years. Contrasting perspectives will be offered in next year’s journal.

This issue also includes a remembrance of the 45-year tenure on the bench of Justice Norman Epstein, whom the State lost on March 24, 2023.

Another article describes the disorganized state of the law in California after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo while California remained a U.S. territory.

And readers will also discover the delights and highlights of the results of the Society’s oral history project regarding Bernard Witkin – whom Justice Epstein called the “Justinian” of California law.

But our journal aspires to do one more thing: Demonstrate *an appreciation* for the legal contributions of the judges who have served California. As centenarian Henry Kissinger recently observed, “No society can remain great if it loses faith in itself or if it systematically impugns its self-perception.”¹

¹ Henry Kissinger, *Leadership: Six Studies in World Strategy* (Penguin Press 2022), p. 415.