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Introducing Fiat Justitia: An Online Forum

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Dear Reader,

If you were to speak to a law student at the UDC David A. Clarke School of Law, you would be rewarded with a refreshing perspective regarding the nature of their legal education. As a public interest law school, UDC-DCSL places a unique focus on the symbiotic relationship between legal advocacy skills and social justice principles. This focus is the common thread linking UDC-DCSL students and it is upon this foundation that we shape our clinical experiences, internships, and subsequent careers. As such, UDC Law Review's yearly publication is consistently devoted to scholarship regarding essential social justice issues that are ripe for discussion and, most importantly, for action.

However, the law is not static—it is constantly growing and changing in ways that tangibly impact our daily lives. As trustees of justice, attorneys must recognize the fluidity of law. In recognition of this sentiment, the UDC Law Review Editorial Board is excited to introduce *Fiat Justitia*, the virtual companion to our annually published law review.¹ The driving force behind establishing *Fiat Justitia* was to memorialize conversations within the legal field between practitioners, scholars, and students regarding current legal trends, both locally and nationally. Furthermore, *Fiat Justitia* will serve as the platform for responses to articles published in the UDC Law Review, while also providing a space for student reflections on their clinical experiences. Ultimately, *Fiat Justitia* will strive to be an invaluable forum for those who seek to use the evolving legal system as a means to enact social change.

Fiat Justitia translates to "Let Justice Be Done"² and this phrase powerfully illustrates the mission of the David A. Clarke School of Law.³ As an institution dedicated to public interest, we perceive zealous legal advocacy as a professional responsibility. Such advocacy

¹ Available at www.udclawreview.com/fiat-justitia.

² "Fiat justitia", *Black's Law Dictionary* (9th ed. 2009), available at Westlaw BLACKS.

³ Available at <http://www.law.udc.edu/?page=Facts>.

is apparent in our clinics, where UDC-DCSL actively seeks to remedy the disproportionate distribution of legal services that inherently disadvantage low-income and minority individuals. Students learn to utilize their legal training as a means to ensure justice by providing access to legal services that such individuals would otherwise be denied. In keeping with this goal, the UDC Law Review is proud to present Volume 17 of the University of the District of Columbia Law Review. This volume compiles articles that emerged from the 2013 UDC Law Review Symposium, *Expanding the Civil Right to Counsel: 50 Years After Gideon*.⁴ By examining current efforts to provide legal services for those who are most in need of it, Volume 17 is an exceptional iteration of the UDC Law Review's unwavering motivation to publish outstanding legal scholarship that speaks to the principle of equal justice.

Special thanks are due to the 2012–2013 Editorial Board, who began the process of compiling this volume of the law review and whose dedication to the public interest mission of the UDC Law Review is reflected in the high quality of its contents. We also sincerely appreciate the inspirational support and guidance we received from the faculty and administration of our law school, particularly Dean Shelley Broderick and our dedicated faculty advisor, Helen Frazer. Final thanks are due to the law review's staff of senior and associate editors, whose tireless efforts made this publication a reality.

In closing, we leave you with the words of Justice Lewis Powell, who magnificently explains the essential element of justice that underlies the legal profession.

Equal justice under law is not merely a caption on the facade of the Supreme Court Building, it is perhaps the most inspiring ideal of our society. It is one of the ends for which our entire legal system exists...it is fundamental that justice should be the same, in substance and availability, without regard to economic status.⁵

⁴ 2013 UDC Law Review Symposium, *Expanding the Civil Right to Counsel: 50 Years After Gideon* (March 29, 2013), video recording available at <http://www.udclawreview.com/symposia>.

⁵ Justice Lewis Powell, Jr., Address to the ABA Legal Services Program, ABA Annual Meeting (August 10, 1976).

It is our hope that you find this publication to be illustrative of a symbiotic relationship between scholarship and activism, as well as an enlightening response to Justice Powell's demand of justice for all.

Sincerely,

Amanda Utterback

On behalf of the 2013-2014 UDC Law Review Editorial Board