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EDITOR'S COMMENT

Same-Sex Marriage Symposium Issue

The issue of marriage used to be simple and clear. A man was either married to a woman or not and vice versa. This issue has captivated the nation as evidenced by media coverage and policy arguments. This is not coincidental because marriage continues to have a preeminent and prominent place in the lives of millions of people in the United States. Marriage is not only a national issue, but it is indeed a global concern.

Marriage—the institution and its purpose—has not been publicly, politically, and legally debated to the current extent and depth since the days of polygamy in the 19th Century and the anti-miscegenation laws of the 20th Century. Because marriage and the institution for which it stands is such a big part in the lives of the people for personal, social, religious, civic, historic, and economic reasons, the issue is complex, highly emotional, and of utmost importance.

On August 29, 2003, a group of leading scholars gathered at the J. Reuben Clark Law School, on the campus of Brigham Young University, to discuss and debate the history, trend, importance, legality, and role of marriage. The *BYU Journal of Public Law* has published some of the papers presented at the symposium in this special issue. In it the reader will find varying perspectives on the role of marriage in the American legal system and society in general, paying particular attention to homosexual marriage and the legal issues associated with it.

The purpose of the symposium was to address the social importance of marriage from a legal perspective. The purpose of this issue is to inform the reader why marriage, as the world has historically known it, continues to deserve meritorious consideration while at the same time shedding light on alternative institutions. Marriage in general, and its various permutations such as civil unions and domestic partnerships in particular, will continue to grab national attention as long as people fall in love with one another and want to express that love by some legal means. In the meantime, the legal debate will continue, whether through litigation, legislation, or democratic election.

This issue is the result of hundreds of man-hours and the tireless effort of many willing student editors. I would like to express my gratitude to all the editors who read, reviewed, criticized, and analyzed the articles being published here. The publication of this issue is a culmination of hard work, dedication, and, in some cases, personal sacrifice.

J. Simón Cantarero
Editor-in-Chief

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