

# FOREWORD

## A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Significant developments are taking place at the *Journal* as we move into our third year of publication. I want to take this opportunity to outline these developments for our readers.

First, we have decided that beginning with the next issue of the *Journal* (Spring, 1977) we will publish quarterly rather than twice a year. There will be Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter editions; the Spring 1977 issue is targeted for an April 15 mailing. With quarterly publication, the *Journal* will be more up-to-date. Important developments in law and medicine occur almost daily, and we must strive to keep up.

The second development—one which has made the first development possible—is that we have reached an agreement with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press (MIT Press) whereby it will publish the *Journal* for the American Society of Law & Medicine. MIT Press, which is a department of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will be responsible for marketing, printing, and mailing the *Journal*, and will handle all matters concerning subscriptions. We are pleased that MIT Press has added the *Journal* to its family of prestigious journals. Dues-paying members of the Society will, of course, continue to receive the *Journal* as one of the many benefits of membership.

The third development is that two universities have graciously offered to provide office space for the *Journal's* editorial department, and to make their faculties available to assist us in the evaluation, selection, and editing of manuscripts. A decision on this matter will be made shortly.

Fourth, there have been some recent additions to our editorial staff. I have appointed Jim McMahon, J.D., as the *Journal's* Managing Editor. Mr. McMahon is a writer and editor in the health field who has assisted me in the production of the *Journal* almost from its inception. He now will assist me in the evaluating, selecting, and editing of manuscripts on a full-time basis. In addition, several distinguished persons have recently joined our Board of Editors. They are Mark D. Altschule, M.D., of Harvard University; Jay Katz, M.D., of Yale University; Sydney C. Schweitzer, LL.B., Editor

of *Lawyers' Medical Journal*; and Dean Robert B. Shira, D.D.S., of the Tufts University School of Dental Medicine.

I view all of these changes as signs of the *Journal's* coming of age. Our history is brief but exciting. The *Journal* was founded as the result of discussions involving Dr. Elliot Sagall, a cardiologist and President of the American Society of Law & Medicine; Douglas Danner, my law partner; and me, an attorney and consultant in health law. Conscious of the dramatic worldwide increase in problems and issues around which law and medicine come together, we felt that the Society could perform a much-needed service by publishing a scholarly—yet practical—journal focusing on major medicolegal concerns. The *Journal* has now published four issues, drawing wide respect and response, and our confidence in ourselves as innovators is growing. The changes I described above are intended to ensure the stability, usefulness, and long term success of our enterprise.

The success of the *Journal* in its formative period has been achieved though dedicated volunteer effort. Dr. Sagall and his wife Annette have handled subscriptions and mailings (and much more), and Dr. Sagall's and Harvey Pies' extensive contributions to the Medicolegal Reference Materials have given the *Journal's* readers a regular source of vital information. I want to thank the distinguished members of our Board of Editors for their invaluable assistance, and to call attention to the Research Associates—Jim McMahan, Monti Scribner, Pamela Anderson, Winfield Swanson, Jay Gold, Jim Holzer, and Serena Domolky—who have helped the *Journal* on its way. Lana Lasanti, Nancy Marks, Lee Blandy, and Helen Calihan have provided essential administrative aid.

What about the future? We will continue to address the needs of those persons and organizations—members of the three branches of government, lawyers, physicians, nurses, medical and legal researchers, consumers of medical and legal services, hospitals and their administrators, insurance companies, and many, many others—who have medicolegal interests.

We are especially concerned for the future that we express ourselves in a manner that can be understood by the general reader as well as by the specialist. This will not always be easy, since lawyers and doctors have a language all their own. But we will try. Perhaps the following words by Dr. Albert Einstein will clarify my meaning:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> LINCOLN BARNETT, *THE UNIVERSE AND DR. EINSTEIN*, Foreword by Albert Einstein, at xviii (1948).

Anyone who has ever tried to present a rather abstract scientific subject in a popular manner knows the great difficulties of such an attempt. Either he succeeds in being intelligible by concealing the core of the problem and by offering to the reader only superficial aspects or vague illusions, thus deceiving the reader by arousing in him the deceptive illusion of comprehension; or else he gives an expert account of the problem, but in such a fashion that the untrained reader is unable to follow the exposition and becomes discouraged from reading any further.

If these two categories are eliminated from today's popular scientific literature, surprisingly little remains. But the little that is left is very valuable indeed. It is of great importance that the general public be given an opportunity to experience—consciously and intelligently—the efforts and results of scientific research. It is not sufficient that each result be taken up, elaborated, and applied by a few specialists in the field. Restricting the body of knowledge to a small group deadens the philosophical spirit of a people and leads to spiritual poverty.

I share Dr. Einstein's view, and I welcome the reader's suggestions for ways to make the *Journal* accessible to all.

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*Editor-in-Chief*