

FOREWORD

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Within the past few years there has been a spate of studies on plea bargaining. A great deal of this research has taken place in disciplinary isolation and lacks a broad context and historical perspective. Separate scholars focus on isolated jurisdictions, talk past each other, define plea bargaining differently, and address only a portion of the problems; and though the best of this work is usually carefully qualified, the stucture of these studies invites overgeneralization.

To begin to remedy some of these shortcomings, to guard against premature generalization. and to shape the agenda for a second generation of plea bargaining studies, Albert Alschuler, Thomas Church, and I, acting under the auspices of the Law and Society Association, approached the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice about sponsoring a conference. The eventual result was the Conference on Plea Bargaining, held in French Lick, Indiana, June 14-17, 1978.

It was all that a conference of this sort should be: sufficiently small in numbers and long in duration to permit extended discussion; papers distributed in advance to allow reflection; commentators well prepared to raise specific criticisms and offer alternative interpretations; and a group of people congenial enough to speak with candor yet diverse enough to represent many perspectives from both scholarship and practice.

One outcome of the Conference is the publication of this special issue of the *Review* which contains papers presented at the Conference, substantially revised in light of comments made there, and several papers submitted subsequently. Though we decided not to print the transcript of the Conference, the quality of discussion is suggested by the several Comments contained in this volume, many of which are substantial papers in their own right.

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Manager in that Office, and Ty Hodanish of University Research Corporation, administrator for the conference, for their generous support and encouragement. Their aid, enthusiasm, and tolerance allowed us to develop the type and size of conference we wanted, and we hope the results justify that trust. Needless to say the views expressed in this volume are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of either the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration or the University Research Corporation.