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DEDICATION

This edition of *The John Marshall Law Review* is dedicated to Dean Patricia Mell who on July 1, 2003, became the law school's 11th dean. Dean Mell is the first female and first African-American to serve as dean at the law school. She succeeds Robert Gilbert Johnston who had served as dean from April 1995 through June 2003, and has returned to a faculty position.

Dean Mell began teaching law in 1984 as a visiting assistant clinical professor at Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio, and in 1985 was a visiting assistant professor at the University of Toledo College of Law. From 1986 to 1991, Dean Mell was an assistant professor and then an associate professor at Widener University School of Law in Delaware.

She moved to Michigan in 1991, joining the firm of Lewis White and Clay in Detroit, and was an adjunct professor at Wayne State University Law School. She joined the faculty at Michigan State University – Detroit College of Law in 1992, was promoted to full professor in 1996, and served as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs from 1998 to 2001. Immediately prior to coming to John Marshall, she was a visiting professor at the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law, teaching criminal law and a white-college crime seminar.

Dean Mell received a J.D. in 1978 from Case Western Reserve University Law School in Cleveland, Ohio, and in 1989 participated in the Economics for Law Professors, George Mason University Program at Dartmouth College. She received an A.B. degree with honors from Wellesley College in Massachusetts in 1975.

While Dean Mell's areas of expertise involve criminal law, the legal aspects of e-commerce, corporations, and agency and partnership, she eagerly began to learn more about tax law and employee benefits law after becoming dean. Already during her tenure as John Marshall's dean, she has embraced the employee benefits program, as well as the five other graduate programs. She encourages students to earn advanced specialty degrees because, she believes, they give students the skills they need to advance not only their careers but also the knowledge of these particular areas of law. The law school's graduate taxation program is one of the oldest in the country, and its graduate employee benefits program is the only one of its kind in the nation. Dean Mell promotes these unique specialty areas of law— realizing the importance of these areas in the daily lives of ordinary

citizens.

This edition of *The John Marshall Law Review* is devoted to employee benefits issues. Authors have selected timely topics, including cash balance plans, distribution planning for participants in qualified plans, and ERISA litigation issues, to name a few. Dean Mell enthusiastically supported an employee benefits symposium this spring at which the authors of the *Law Review* articles presented their papers to the legal community. As the baby boom generation begins to retire, issues such as the solvency of the Social Security Administration and the adequacy of health insurance will need to be addressed more deeply. Symposia such as these afford legal scholars the opportunity to dialogue with one another on solutions to the vexing problems so critical to employee benefits legal issues.

On behalf of the *Law Review* Editorial Board and the faculty, students, and staff at The John Marshall Law School, I thank Dean Mell for her leadership and support for the employee benefits graduate program and for the April 2004 employee benefits symposium.

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