

## JLAS Farewell



Roughly seven years ago I wrote my first introduction for an issue of the *Journal of Legal Aspects of Sport (JLAS)*. In that introduction, I wrote about how proud I was to edit the first peer-reviewed journal that's exclusively dedicated to the study of sports law. I also noted my history with the journal, which published the first of six research papers within *JLAS*, roughly 20 years ago.

Next, I addressed my vision for *JLAS*, which was to improve its impact in the field by growing the journal's reach, while emphasizing the importance of quality sports law research that extends existing knowledge through theoretical and practical contribution. I believe that this happened, although I place credit for the journal's growth with my Editorial Board, reviewers, and the authors who contributed.

Keep in mind that the *JLAS* I inherited as editor was at a crossroads. Submissions were very low and we needed a new publisher. But with the suggestions and support of the Editorial Board (in particular John Grady), we were able to find our current publisher and transition the journal online and open access, ahead of other journals in our field that have since done the same. In terms of moving *JLAS* forward, we even added a Best Paper award, something that I pushed forward as a reward for the authors who contributed important research to *JLAS*.

I can go on and on about the advances made during my tenure as editor, but instead I want to transition to focusing only on one contribution—the selection of my associate editor. I admit that Dr. Natasha Brison was not my first choice for the position. This was not because she wasn't talented or capable—we'll discuss more on that later. The problem with Natasha's initial appointment to the role involved the fact that she was a brand-new assistant professor and I did not want to weigh her down with editorial work that would slow or limit her growth as a scholar.

Fortunately, my primary targets for the associate editor job turned the position down. I say fortunately because their doing so motivated me to push Natasha's name forward. I always knew that she was the best person to work with me on the journal because of her experience, skill set, and the fact that we had a shared vision for *JLAS*.



Together, I think we made our shared vision come to fruition. Please notice the use of “we” and “our” in the last sentence because any gain or accomplishment made in my time as editor was made possible because of Natasha.

In fact, I recall a few years back laughing at a conference with Natasha about concerns expressed by one person on her role within the journal. We laughed because if they knew the reality of the situation, they would appreciate how Natasha was integral in absolutely everything. Her ideas, her voice, and her actions have made *JLAS* into what it is today. I am so honored to have worked alongside of her.

So now, as I transition to editor emeritus, I could not be more confident in the future of *JLAS* under Natasha. I am also comforted in knowing that she has the full support of the Sport and Recreation Law Association as well as the Editorial Board. I wish her luck in the appointment of a new associate editor.

Now, I have an important request to ask of the reader. I ask that you also support Natasha through submissions and reviews. Our journal needs the involvement of our entire community of scholars if it is to continue to grow. We need submissions, we need reviewers, and we need you to cite articles published in *JLAS*. With those requests out of the way, I will end this farewell and my time as editor by thanking everyone who helped me throughout the years, especially Natasha and all of the members of the Editorial Board.

Sincerely, thank you all.

Thomas A. Baker III

