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**Leading the Future: Symposium on Professional Leadership  
Education: Foreword**

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FOREWORD  
LEADING THE FUTURE: SYMPOSIUM ON  
PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

DOUGLAS A. BLAZE\*

*It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so.*

-Mark Twain

For most of my career, I was skeptical of the legitimacy of formal efforts to train and develop leaders. I clung to the unexamined assumption shared by many that “leaders are born not made.”<sup>1</sup> Then a series of events happened that seriously undermined that assumption.

First, I was put into a variety of increasingly demanding leadership positions, culminating with my appointment as dean. I quickly learned that I had several important leadership strengths but a far greater number of leadership flaws. At about the same time one of my colleagues convened an informal group of senior faculty to discuss a book on leadership and institutional improvement.<sup>2</sup> The book group experience exposed me to the extensive leadership literature I had previously ignored.

Second, just as I became dean, the job market for law graduates fell apart. As I worked with students over the next few years to help them deal with that challenge, I realized that many of our students had no clue how to get a job, much less how to succeed once they got a job. While wrestling with these challenges, my nephew was working on his MBA. I learned from him that most graduate business programs focus on leadership and professional development from the outset. We had lengthy discussions about the structure and content of those aspects of his program. Slowly it began to dawn on me—most law schools were missing the boat. We were not adequately providing our students with the tools necessary for them to fully succeed after graduation as effective leaders within their firms, organizations, and communities.

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\* Art Stolnitz and Elvin E. Overton Professor of Law, Director of the Institute for Professional Leadership, University of Tennessee College of Law.

1. See DEBORAH L. RHODE, *LAWYERS AS LEADERS* 24 (2013) (discussing prevailing attitudes about leadership development).

2. My colleague, Ben Barton, has over the years proved invaluable by introducing me to terrific books, articles, and even music. The faulty discussed the book, JIM COLLINS, *GOOD TO GREAT* (2001).

Then serendipity struck. Buck Lewis called me. Buck is a good friend, former Tennessee Bar Association president, and senior partner at Baker Donelson. He said he planned to take a sabbatical from the firm the next fall and wondered if he might be able to fill a teaching need. At first we talked about Pre-trial Litigation or Arbitration. Then I said, without really thinking it through, "or maybe you can help develop a leadership course." It was like the dam broke.

We started looking around at what other schools were doing. Buck started a conversation with Professor Deborah Rhode at Stanford Law School and researched the leadership programs at Elon, St. Thomas, and Ohio State. Ultimately a copy of the Santa Clara Law Review, *Symposium on Leadership Education for Lawyers and Law Students*, became a permanent fixture on my desk.<sup>3</sup> Within a couple months Buck had created a library of possible course materials, developed a tentative syllabus, and started lining up guest speakers. Buck and I co-taught the course, *Lawyers as Leaders*, for the first time in the fall of 2012.<sup>4</sup>

The first cohort of thirty students responded enthusiastically. Several commented that it was the first time that a law school classroom experience excited them about becoming a lawyer. The course also resonated strongly with alumni. Several expressed an interest in providing financial support. In addition, the course served to connect with and supplement the professional development aspects of the law school's career service program, student pro bono program, and its new mentoring program. That forced us to recognize a need to increase the connection and coordination of those largely separate efforts.

So in 2014, based on the work of a faculty working group, the University of Tennessee College of Law faculty voted to create an Institute for Professional Leadership, which was formally approved by the University in July, 2014. About the same time, we secured a major estate gift to support the Institute and that gift enabled us to raise additional funds for current operations.

The program has expanded rapidly ever since. Based on conversations with Professor Deborah Rhode and others, we decided to add a client service-focused experiential leadership course. In that course, described in detail by my colleague Brad Morgan in this

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3. *Symposium on Leadership Education for Lawyers and Law Students*, 52 SANTA CLARA L. REV. 685-1001 (2012).

4. Buck served, and continues to serve each fall, as the Larry Wilks Distinguished Practitioner in Residence. Larry Wilks, a friend of both Buck and myself, was a giant of a lawyer and leader whose untimely death resulted in a bequest that supported the creation of the leadership program at Tennessee.

symposium, students learn about leadership, group dynamics, and legal project management. Working in assigned groups, the students then plan and carry out service projects for a variety of entities and organizations.<sup>5</sup> Just this past year we added an international course in collaboration with the T.C. Beirne School of Law at the University of Queensland in Brisbane—Leading as Lawyers: Transpacific Perspectives, co-taught by Dean Sarah Derrington of UQ, Brad Morgan, and myself.<sup>6</sup> We taught the course in Brisbane between the fall and spring semesters to six law students from Tennessee and six law students from UQ. Based on the success of the inaugural course, the plan is to offer the course every year rotating locations between Knoxville and Brisbane. Finally, a new course—Lawyering and Professionalism—will be offered to the entire first year class beginning in the fall 2016 semester.

The reception to the Tennessee leadership program and its rapid growth are gratifying. But it is time, and has been for a while, to assess more carefully what we are doing, what is working, and what is not working. This symposium is a significant part of that effort. We hope to learn from a robust exchange of ideas with our colleagues from other law schools. As the relative newcomers, we look forward to learning from and contributing to the discussion. There is also a valuable source of knowledge and experience available from our colleagues from other disciplines and programs. Leadership training in law schools and the legal profession is a relatively recent development. In contrast, business schools have been engaged in leadership education for decades. Thus, this symposium also includes experts from business, business education, and athletics.<sup>7</sup>

Professor Deborah Rhode, who among many other duties is the director of the Center on the Legal Profession, has been a critical moving force behind the development of leadership education in the legal academy. Professor Rhode provides the framework for the symposium as lead author.

The rest of symposium is organized around three overlapping themes. First, we want to facilitate an exchange of information about existing leadership education efforts in law schools and bar associations. Contributors Faith Rivers-James and Garry Jenkins

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5. Students have handled projects for the Eastern Band of the Cherokee, UT McClung Museum, Southeast Tennessee Development District, UT Agricultural Extension, and the Cumberland Farmers' Market.

6. Brad Morgan is the Associate Director of the Institute for Professional Development and the primary architect of our experiential learning course, Leadership Practicum.

7. As is often the case, legal education is a bit behind leadership development and training.

have been leading the efforts at Elon and Ohio State respectively for nearly a decade. Michael Madison has developed a unique course at Pittsburg based on his own exposure to leadership training through volunteer work at his alma mater, Yale. Buck Lewis, as previously mentioned, has been instrumental in creating and supporting the Institute for Professional Leadership at Tennessee and is also heavily involved in leading and in leadership development through the Tennessee Bar Association and the American Bar Association.

Second, we want to provide an opportunity to learn from our more experienced colleagues in business and athletics. Professors Lane Morris and Cheryl Barksdale of the Haslam College of Business at Tennessee, both of whom have been invaluable resources to our new Institute, are important contributors to the symposium as well. Kent Vaughn, who directs leadership training for Franklin Covey, shares valuable insights from the business world on continual growth as leaders. Stephen Roth, Vice President and General Counsel for Jewelry Television, provides a unique perspective on the intersection of business leadership development and lawyers. Contributors Dr. Bob Rider, dean of the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences at Tennessee; Sally Parish, director of the Center for Leadership and Service; and Dr. Joe Scogin, director of the Thornton Athletics Student Life Center, have been instrumental in formalizing leadership development through sports and athletics at Tennessee.

Third, and perhaps most important, we hope to foster a meaningful discussion about where we should go from here. Contributors and thought leaders Professors Neil Hamilton, Jerry Organ, and Louis Bilionis share their most recent work on professional identity formation. My collaborator, Brad Morgan, examines the value of experiential learning for leadership development from the perspective of a course he developed at Tennessee. Professor Paula Schaefer examines the implications of gender for leadership and leadership development in the legal profession. The literal dean of leadership education in law schools, Don Polden, shares his insights on the future based on his work at Santa Clara and with the Center for Creative Leadership.

Our overall goal is fairly modest. We hope that this symposium will serve as a catalyst to ensure a regular and frequent convening of all of our colleagues involved in, or interested in, leadership education for law students, lawyers, and other professionals.