FROM THE EDITORS

You wags that judge by rote, and damn by rule.
— Thomas Otway, Prologue to Titus and Berenice

Anthropologists use the word 'hypertrophy' to describe the tendency of human beings to mindless elaboration of social practices. The pyramids in Egypt are the hypertrophy of burial. The hypertrophy of law is A Uniform System of Citation... 

The Uniform System of Citations was welcomed by legal writers as a twenty page pamphlet to promote consistency in citing sources of authority. Sixty-six years later and in its fourteenth edition the "Bluebook" has become a 255 page treatise to be diligently memorized by journal editors and meticulously adhered to by legal scholars. With its expansion the focus in legal writing has shifted from the art of exposition to the art of proper citation format.

Amongst the Bluebook’s most offensive rules is that which denies student author’s recognition in citations. Rule 16.1.2 provides that student-written law review materials should be cited “by the designation used in the periodical, such as ‘Note,’ ‘Comment,’ or ‘Special Project,’” ... although there is a proviso that “[t]he student author’s name may be indicated parenthetically.” With few exceptions (i.e. the Chicago Manual of Legal Citations), neither the legal nor the academic community has questioned the notion that a student written article should be cited without reference made to the author.

We fail to see why distinguishing between student and non-student written material — if need be done at all — must be accomplished by the anonymity of the former. The Board of Editors of this legal periodical will continue to ignore this unjustified distinction created by a form manual; all sources are cited to the author regardless of his/her status. In the Public Interest recognizes both the desirability of cite consistency and the futility of needless formal requirements. We believe that we must in this, and every instance, be able to think beyond the arbitrary constraints imposed by legal formalism if we are ever to truly serve legal needs in the public interest.

IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST