

Buffalo Law Review

Volume 69
Number 1 *Serious Fun: A conference with &
around Schlegel!*

Article 1

1-11-2021

Foreword

David A. Westbrook
University at Buffalo School of Law, dwestbro@buffalo.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/buffalolawreview>



Part of the [Legal Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

David A. Westbrook, *Foreword*, 69 Buff. L. Rev. 1 (2021).

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/buffalolawreview/vol69/iss1/1>

This Symposium Introduction is brought to you for free and open access by the Law Journals at Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law. It has been accepted for inclusion in Buffalo Law Review by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law. For more information, please contact lawscholar@buffalo.edu.

Buffalo Law Review

VOLUME 69

JANUARY 2021

NUMBER 1

Foreword

BERT (DAVID A. WESTBROOK)

Quite a few years ago now, my wife Amy suggested that I should hold a conference in honor of Schlegel, whom I call Jack for reasons I've never quite understood, some vague combination of rebellion and filial piety, perhaps. Be that as it may, Jack resisted. A conference "in honor of" smacked of the German tradition of the *Festschrift*, a book of articles written by and given to a senior professor, tellingly called a "Doctor Father," by his students at retirement. The *Festschrift* is thus double edged, both a celebration ("*Fest*") and a dignified way of ushering the old man out the door, making space for the next generation. If we gave a conference in honor of him, perhaps folks might think Jack was retiring from the profession and the world. Worse still, it might be boring, sitting around all weekend, listening to people read papers. Jack did not want those things.

I persisted. Not only was I right, my professorship had money that I wanted to spend lest it be taken away. As might be expected between law professors, the discussion became an argument, and as usual with Jack, over the phone, pacing. (In the days before cordless phones, he tells me, he acquired a phone with an especially long cord.) It would be fun to see your friends and interlocutors from hither and yon, I maintained, and we should be able to make it academically serious enough to pass the blush test. "That's it," said Jack, "you've just named the conference."

“What?” I asked, turning circles on the deck.

“‘Serious Fun,’ that’s what we’ll call it. But one condition: nobody reads a paper. All papers will be distributed beforehand, or we don’t pay airfare.”

Knowing when to consolidate a win, I acceded to the condition. Errol Meidinger and then Samantha Barbas, successive Directors of the Baldy Center for Law and Social Policy, were supportive, and the Baldy Center provided matching funding. The *Buffalo Law Review* graciously agreed to publish suitable contributions from the distinguished folks invited to “Serious Fun.” Jack gave me some names of people who might be interested, and I invited them. They almost all accepted, and the amazingly high yield created planning problems. (Suppose you give a party and everyone comes? It’s a nice problem to have, but a problem, and of course an honor to Jack.) The Baldy Center really knows how to give a conference, however, so we were in good hands. Our colleagues Samantha Barbas and Guyora Binder agreed to moderate (referee?) sessions. We had a new hotel booked, a cool happy hour and funky meals planned, and people were buying plane tickets. And then COVID-19 struck, and pretty much everything ground to a halt. Within a few weeks, we were forced to postpone “Serious Fun” indefinitely—but I still hope it happens.

Many of the invitees had already started writing, so the *Buffalo Law Review* soldiered on, pandemic notwithstanding, and produced this very fine Symposium. I am not going to speak to the particulars of these essays, but I will say that Jack’s friends are, unsurprisingly, very interesting, and have taken this occasion to write well indeed, another honor. Nor am I going to try and explain, or even list, what I have learned from teaching and talking with, reading and being read by, thinking vis-à-vis Jack, over several decades now. Perhaps on another outing. Instead, I will close with this: Jack has a playful mind. He has made it much more fun for me to be a law professor than it otherwise would have been, and for that, I am very grateful.