

**45 years of Clinical Education on Morningside Heights¹
Philip G. Schrag, Georgetown University Law Center**

**Let us reflect, as now we celebrate,
On how things stood in 1968.
Even in that year of revolutions
Law schools were quite boring institutions.
Students couldn't just accept that norm.
In their eagerness to get reform
They petitioned for some law school clinics
But the faculties were staffed by cynics--
"Volunteer, if serve the poor you must;
Credit is for tax and antitrust."
Every year the students grew more weary
Of that routine: no practice, just more theory.**

**In those days, the founts of innovation
Were folks with millions, at the Ford Foundation.
They knew how to change things in a flash:
All they had to do was offer cash.
Ford's most important social justice backer
Was famous in his time, Paul Ylvisaker.
He was a man who loved to be inventive
And knew that money was a fine incentive.
He wrote a memo, signed his autograph
And called Bill Pincus, who was on his staff.**

**Legal education they'd enhance
By giving law schools handsome matching grants.
From bank accounts the law school deans could draw
If only they'd let students practice law.
So Ford created CLEPR, Bill directed,
And almost all the law schools were infected,
Competing to employ some lawyer-scholars
Or at least to grab those CLEPR dollars.**

**Columbia, like others, you were smitten.
A resolution for your faculty was written
By George, who headed a committee
And saw a role for clinics in this city.
What he proposed was nothing less than super
Just what we could expect from author Cooper.
And even though to him this seemed so foreign
It got a signoff from Dean William Warren,
And went to CLEPR for its funding cycle.
Within a year this faculty snagged Michael.**

¹ Partially derived from my William Pincus Award acceptance speech, 2013, which itself was inspired by George Cooper's work with CLEPR in creating the clinics at Columbia Law School and by my years of clinical work there with Mike Meltsner and Harriet Rabb.

CLEPR's deal was funding for two years
After that, the gravy disappears.
I came next, while CLEPR paid the tab.
Columbia kept going, adding Rabb.

Fast forward now by ninety-one semesters
Regard this clinic family that's Dean Lester's:
We may have been the school's first stalking-horses
Now twelve professors teach ten clinic courses.
Those clinics come in many shapes and sizes:
One helps to found new start-up enterprises,
One advocates to honor human rights,
Another focuses on gigabytes,
One clinic's mission deals with immigration,
Two seek to limit mass incarceration
One clinic is the planet's great defender
Another's specialty is sex and gender
While still another works with adolescents
(For clinics, there's no risk of obsolescence).

Some students learn the art of mediation
Other clinics work on litigation
Teachers with experience in practice
Show students how elusive every fact is.
They encourage action and reflection
Through a method known as non-direction.
Students learn, once they have been so mentored,
That interviewing can be client-centered;
That legal practice, while both art and science,
Depends as well on empathy for clients;
That when a case seems lost, they still can save it
With a truly awesome affidavit;
That they must practice and acquire patience
Before attempting cross-examinations;
That judges who are looking for the beef
Shouldn't have to hunt within a brief;
That what is often hardest but most wise
Is urging that a client compromise;
And sometimes organizing or the press
Is how a client best can get to yes.

So now it's time for us to give three cheers
George's project lasted all these years.
It's headed for another forty-five.
I'll come back then if I am still alive.