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Dedication

Kristin B. Cooper

First Lady of North Carolina

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Dedication

FIRST LADY KRISTIN B. COOPER*

As I begin this dedication, a cold, icy rain is pelting the windows. I expect that by the time I finish, the first daffodils will be coming up. Life changes very quickly and we have all seen many changes over the past year. Last year all of us had definite plans for our lives, but “Man proposes, God disposes.”¹

A year ago, I had just gotten back from a plane trip to see my parents and was planning my upcoming year. There were musical performances and festivals, finishing the 100-county tour, talks about flowers for the school tours that would be starting soon at the Executive Mansion. My family was planning a trip to Baltimore to see our daughter graduate in the spring. Then suddenly everything stopped. My staff and I were about to step into the car to visit Person County and found ourselves grounded. The house went dark and quiet. There would be no music. There would be no laughing children. At the time, it was all about our plans. Only a handful of people were sick, and it wasn't real to us yet. It would be a while before friends, family, and people in our communities started getting infected and dying and we would see the real horrors. At the time we were just dejected and sorry for ourselves. So, my entire staff, which consists of my chief of staff and communications director, and I, decided to take a walk around town. It was a lovely, warm, sunny day and we found ourselves walking down Hillsborough Street and staring up at the big brick building at the corner of Hillsborough and Dawson. A smiling, mustachioed man was on a top floor balcony waving at us. We thought, “What the heck, let's go visit Dean Leonard, he's bound to cheer us up.” After our stop at the law school, we went back to the Executive Mansion ready to take on this challenge.

So, I find it somewhat fitting to be writing the dedication for the *Campbell Law Review's* pandemic symposium issue. Campbell Law School is, in many ways, where I started my last year's journey. As we all quickly learned, the changes would start hitting us harder. My family and I watched our daughter graduate virtually, as a picture of her flashed on a TV screen. I know students and their families across the world had similar

*First Lady of North Carolina; Member of Campbell University School of Law's Board of Visitors; J.D., 1982, Campbell School of Law.

1. *Proverbs* 19:21.

graduation ceremonies. Those of you in school had a very different experience than you expected. Many of you have missed time with family and friends. I myself haven't seen my parents or sisters since pre-pandemic days. I know that I am not alone in that. Courts have closed, isolation and loneliness have been a struggle for some, internships were virtual or even cancelled, and probably most job interviews as well. The Bar Exam is a miserable experience at the best of times, and these were not the best of times. And yet you all persevered and learned valuable lessons that you have shared with others in this publication.

I don't believe in telling people undergoing hardship or tragedy that "everything happens for a reason." That may be factually true, but I don't think traumatic events are sent to test us and that they inevitably result in something better. My belief is that we will all suffer tragedy and hardship at some time in our lives. It is part of the human condition. Some of us will suffer more and some less. The longer you live, the more adversity you will encounter. What makes the difference is what we do with that suffering. Successful people learn that even the worst of times will pass. They find ways to learn from tragedy and use what they learn to make the world a better place for those who may not have their strength, intellect, or good fortune. The articles of this issue do just that. I would like to dedicate this symposium issue of the *Campbell Law Review* in two parts.

First, I would charge our state's law students to move forward from this tragic year. The good that may come from tragedy is that it can change us for the better. It can make us more patient, more empathetic, kinder, more competent, and even smarter. May you all be a light in the darkness throughout your lives and use your experiences from this past year to defend those who may have voices that are less powerful than yours. You have lived through interesting times, and I refuse to see that as the apocryphal curse it is said to be. I choose to see it as a blessing—maybe not just yet, but someday.

Second, I would like to dedicate this issue to the people of North Carolina, whose resilience this past year has truly embodied our state's motto, *esse quam videri*. In the past year, our state alone has had over 916,000 cases of coronavirus and has lost 12,000 lives to that disease.² As North Carolinians, let us remember those lives lost and honor them by diligently performing our duty to be good fellow citizens, especially in times of crisis.

2. *COVID-19 Cases and Deaths*, N.C. DEP'T HEALTH & HUM. SERVS., <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard/cases> [<https://perma.cc/8ULY-XFSH>].