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Note from the FHQ Editors

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by Connie L. Lester and Daniel Murphree

The publication of the 2012 Symposium celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United States District Court of the Middle District of Florida has been a two-year project. Attorneys Richard S. Dellinger and T. Michael Woods first approached the University of Central Florida Department of History for assistance in organizing the symposium in 2011. In the course of discussions on the format of the symposium, the idea of publishing the papers as a special issue of the *Florida Historical Quarterly* emerged.

The publication of the papers represents a new chapter in the history of the *Quarterly*. It has been an intellectual and editorial challenge, but one that we believe is enormously rewarding for the readers of the *FHQ*. Publishing legal comments is unlike historical publication and readers will notice an immediate difference in the presentation and footnote styles. The second difference can be seen in the format. Typical issues of the *Quarterly* contain three or four articles which, on occasion, are thematically organized. This issue includes the work of twenty-six authors, not counting the "Note" by the *FHQ* editors. The text is organized around the significant cases heard before the Middle District Court: Segregation/Integration Cases, Civil Cases, and Criminal Cases. Each section begins with an introduction by a judge or judges who reminisce about the cases and outline their significance. Attorneys and law students provide case comments on individual cases that came before the court.

As we worked through the papers, Dr. Murphree and I came to appreciate the intellectual depth of the Federal Court system. The comments guided us through the issues that come before the court

and demonstrated the organic nature of the federal government. Textbooks emphasize the separation of powers, but the case comments demonstrate the ways in which the legislative and judicial branches inform one another: conflicts that are decided in the courts can become the subjects of new or clarifying law and *vice versa*. We believe that this issue of the *Florida Historical Quarterly* will contribute to new scholarship on Civil Rights, social history, political history and the history of law in Florida. It has been a pleasure to work with the Historical Society of the U.S. District Court of the Middle District of Florida on this important project in Florida history.