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Foreword: Tribute to Professor Joseph Webb McKnight

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Oxford, 1947: Professor McKnight punting on the river.
Photo credit: Sir Guenter Treitel

TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR JOSEPH WEBB MCKNIGHT

*Jennifer M. Collins**

ON behalf of SMU Dedman School of Law, I am delighted to welcome you to this symposium issue of the SMU Law Review honoring the extraordinary life and career of Professor Joseph McKnight. Professor McKnight joined the SMU faculty in 1955. For almost 60 years, he served as a warm and dedicated teacher to generations of law students and as a generous mentor and role model for countless faculty colleagues. His scholarly impact in the fields of family law, community property, and legal history was enormous. He published more than 100 articles and books, including an important annual review of Texas law and numerous works on Texas history. But Professor McKnight's impact on the development of Texas law extended far beyond articles in law reviews; he is credited for being the principal drafter of the Texas Family Code and the Matrimonial Property Act of 1967, which recognized the property rights of married women, and the Texas Antiquities Code, designed to protect archaeological finds on the Texas coast, among other statutes.

Professor McKnight's love of legal history extended to his love of books. He established an invaluable collection of more than 6,000 rare legal history books, one of the largest of its kind in the nation, with the oldest book in the collection printed in 1481. He studied bookbinding and book conservation at the Dallas Craft Guild for more than 20 years, learning how to properly restore the antiquarian volumes he cherished. In December 2011, he generously donated his book collection to Dedman School of Law's Underwood Law Library, where it will be a resource for scholars for years to come.

We are very grateful to the judges, academicians, and friends for their contributions to this special Symposium Issue. The breadth of contributions is a reflection of the far-ranging impact of this remarkable scholar, teacher, book collector, and true Renaissance man. We are honored that Professor McKnight's legacy will forever be part of the special fabric of SMU Dedman School of Law.

* Judge James Noel Dean and Professor of Law at SMU Dedman School of Law.