

EDITOR'S NOTE

As the flagship journal of the University of Denver Sturm College of Law (Sturm), the *Denver Law Review* (DLR) is an organization imbued with prestige and privilege. In recent years, DLR has committed to intentionally using this position of privilege to further our stated equity goals; to publish increasingly diverse viewpoints and uplift the voices of communities that have historically gone unheard.

When Professor Rashmi Goel, one of the Rocky Mountain Collective on Race, Place & Law (RPL) founders, approached DLR about working together to celebrate RPL's tenth anniversary, we were honored and suggested publishing a special edition celebrating RPL's work over the past decade.

RPL was formed in 2013 by a group of Sturm professors and legal academics rooted in critical theory and committed to “working together to identify and address racial inequities in the U.S. and around the globe.”¹ The scholarly work of RPL's members offers “a critical lens on the complex dynamics of power, locality, and law, and their impact on subordinated communities.”² Closer to home, the members of RPL actively create and teach curriculum which emphasizes the stated values and goals of the collective, curate and host various events aimed at fostering a sense of belonging among law students, and employ their “collective efforts and expertise to effect change and pursue social justice”³ within the law school and larger Denver community.

With great enthusiasm, members of RPL (many of whom were there to witness its founding a decade ago) authored a selection of six essays memorializing RPL's founding, describing RPL's purpose and value, and celebrating the positive impact RPL has had on its members and law students over the years. To honor and celebrate the tenth anniversary of RPL, this issue begins with those six essays.

First, Professor Goel discusses RPL's unique approach to building community and furthering social justice work—creating a space for “law school community members to coalesce formally around social justice values”—in *The RPL Effect*.⁴ Professor Goel describes the RPL effect as: “A little wave that becomes a series of waves,”⁵ eventually spreading beyond Sturm.

1. *Rocky Mountain Collective on Race, Place & Law*, STURM COLL. OF L., <https://www.law.du.edu/content/rocky-mountain-collective-race-place-law> (last visited Mar. 4, 2024).

2. *Id.*

3. *Id.*

4. Rashmi Goel, *The RPL Effect*, 101 DENV. L. REV. 447, 447 (2024).

5. *Id.* at 455.

Second, Professor Katherine Steefel reflects on the founding and creation of RPL and its principles in *From Whiteboard to Statement of Principles: The Development of the Rocky Mountain Collective on Race, Place & Law's Principles*.⁶ Through a series of interviews with founding members, Professor Steefel provides a thoughtful analysis of the meaning and intention behind the principles RPL members commit to respect and uphold.

Third, Dean Alexi Freeman reflects on the importance of fostering a sense of belonging in the law school, and RPL's efforts to do so, in *The Staying Power of RPL: Fostering Belonging Among Students*.⁷ Dean Freeman explains that, by offering meaningful opportunities to build community, "RPL fills a void by helping foster belonging."⁸

Fourth, Professor Lindsey Webb describes the coursework created and offered to law students by RPL members in *From a RPL in the Classroom to a Wave in the World: Coursework Focused on Race, Place & Law*.⁹ Professor Webb highlights the importance of cultivating a new generation of attorneys who have the "ability to undertake a clear-eyed and comprehensive interrogation of how community and individual problems are shaped by systemic power and discrimination"—a lofty goal RPL members strive to achieve by ensuring that at least one course "grounded in the RPL principles is taught at Sturm each year."¹⁰

Fifth, Professor Roberto L. Corrada reflects on his experience as the first Latino tenure-track professor hired at Sturm in *RPL, CRT, & LatCrit: "Finding the 'Me' in the Legal Academy*."¹¹ Professor Corrada explores the impact Critical Race Theory and Latina/o Critical Legal Theory has had on him as an educator and scholar, and the value of having a safe environment to explore critical race scholarship—an environment like the one RPL provides to its members and Sturm students.

Finally, Professor Tom I. Romero, II describes himself and his fellow RPL members as "Brown Buffalo," who believe they can "fundamentally change how courses should be taught, how lawyers should be trained, and how the law should work in service of the most vulnerable."¹² In his essay, *A RPL in Time: A Brown Buffalo's Observations on the On-Going*

6. Katherine Steefel, *From Whiteboard to Statement of Principles: The Development of the Rocky Mountain Collective on Race, Place & Law's Principles*, 101 DENV. L. REV. 457 (2024).

7. Alexi Freeman, *The Staying Power of RPL: Fostering Belonging Among Students*, 101 DENV. L. REV. 467 (2024).

8. *Id.* at 470.

9. Lindsey Webb, *From a RPL in the Classroom to a Wave in the World: Coursework Focused on Race, Place & Law*, 101 DENV. L. REV. 479 (2024).

10. *Id.* at 481–82.

11. Roberto L. Corrada, *RPL, CRT, & LatCrit: "Finding the 'Me' in the Legal Academy*," 101 DENV. L. REV. 485 (2024).

12. Tom I. Romero, II, *A RPL in Time: A Brown Buffalo's Observations on the On-Going Struggle of Civic and Racial Nationalism in Higher Education – Circa 2023*, 101 DENV. L. REV. 499, 502 (2024).

Struggle of Civic and Racial Nationalism in Higher Education – Circa 2023,¹³ Professor Romero argues that in this “age of confusion,” revolutionary groups like RPL are increasingly necessary to oppose “institutional and systemic forms of inequity in higher education.”¹⁴

We then return to our bread and butter and conclude with three scholarly articles from Professors Anne Marie Lofaso and Martin H. Malin, Professor Peter Margulies, and Professor Miyoko Pettit-Toledo.

With great appreciation and gratitude, we dedicate this issue to the members, both past and present, of the Rocky Mountain Collective on Race, Place & Law. Thank you for trusting us to uplift and celebrate this accomplishment with you.

Rachel Gärlick
Editor in Chief, Volume 101

13. *See generally id.*

14. *Id.* at 502.