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Our Publication Series

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Western Michigan University

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Our Publication Series

Joseph Ellin, editor

The publication you are reading ends the ninth year of the Ethics Center's publication series. I have had the good fortune to be the editor from the beginning, except for the year I was on sabbatical, when Paul Farber took over.

How did the series begin? After the programs of public lectures had run for a while, the Directors of the Center began to realize that we were sponsoring some pretty good work. Alas, the spoken word is less than the grass, disappearing into memory and eventual oblivion as soon as it leaves the mouth. We directors thought there should be a record of the best of the Center's programs, and being academics, that implied to us that they be published. This of course required an editor, resources, decisions to be made, time to be spent reading manuscripts and proofs, delicate judgments about editorial matters and negotiations with authors, negotiations with printing services about price and quantity, trips to printing services to deliver the goods, more trips to pick up the

finished product etc etc. No one could have foreseen exactly what and how much would have to be done; certainly if I had foreseen it, someone else might have had the honor of service.

Why me? Very simple. Mike Pritchard has always had the principle that if you think something ought to be done, you ought to be willing to do it yourself. I think that principle may have gotten him into trouble from time to time, but I know he's used it pretty effectively to teach ethics lessons to some people. Anyway, I was one who strongly expressed the view that our programs were good enough to immortalize in print. And so I became editor.

Not everything has gone smoothly. Some of the lectures we hoped to publish were not available. Some authors had second thoughts. Not all authors proved adept at meeting deadlines. Some manuscripts turned out to be less exciting in cold type than they appeared to be in spoken lecture. Typos and devilish errors crept in, even after material had been carefully proofread. (One of the most horrendous occurred in our very second publication, a lecture on academic ethics given to the Center by none other than President

Haenicke. His title, so stated on the cover, was "Ethics in Academia." But the title page boldly proclaimed the visionary message, "Ethics Is Academia.")

We have been most fortunate in our authors. Our very first publication in Oct. 1987 was by Rachele Hollander of the National Science Foundation. Subsequent authors, to name only a few, have included philosophers Richard DeGeorge, Bernard Gert, James Nickel, Laurence Mordekhai Thomas, Martin Benjamin, Adrienne Piper, Harriet Baber, Jan Narveson; religionist David Smith; sociologist Gilbert Geis; political theorists John Baker and Ann Saxenhouse; educationist Nona Lyons; lawyers Paul Denenfeld and Lucille Taylor.

Some notable local authors have been included, among them anthropologist Erika Loeffler Friedl, sociologist Sylvie Tourigny, Dr. John Hartline, philosopher Mike Pritchard, and myself. (A complete list of the series is printed in the back of every publication, including this one.)

Our publications are distributed free with membership, thanks to the generous support of a succession of Provosts and the former and present

Deans, Laurel Grotzinger of the Graduate School and Douglas Ferraro and Elise Jorgens of Arts and Sciences. All our authors are asked to include a bibliography for those readers who want to pursue the subject further. We hope those of you who receive these documents find them sometimes provocative, generally instructive, and always worth careful consideration.

I'd especially like to thank the graduate students, most but not all from philosophy, who have not only done all of the computer work and much of the leg work, but have contributed much patients, skill, and good sense as well:

Sue Coffey

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Lynn Osborn

Mariya Talib

Bev Van Reenan