

BY SCOTT W. CAMERON



PATTERN

OF TIMELESS MOMENTS

*A people without history is
not redeemed from time, for history
is a pattern of timeless moments.*

—T. S. ELIOT

“Little Gidding,” *Four Quartets*

THE J. REUBEN

CLARK LAW

SOCIETY AT 30

The J. Reuben Clark Law Society, an organization for lawyers of faith overseen by the BYU Law School, is now 30 years old. Its anniversary provides us an opportunity to pause and evaluate “a pattern of timeless moments” in the development of what is now a robust organization of more than 15,000 members in 272 student and attorney chapters in 26 countries.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TRACY WALKER



A PATTERN OF INSPIRATION

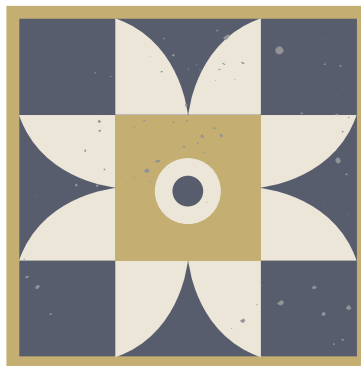
The J. Reuben Clark Law Society was not officially organized until 1988, but its origins can be traced back to 1975. Prior to the Law Society’s inception, there was no gathering point to bring LDS lawyers together.¹

In 1975 attorney Ralph Hardy was in the audience for President Marion G. Romney’s dedicatory address and dedicatory prayer of the new J. Reuben Clark Law Building. President Romney explained why the J. Reuben Clark Law School was established, why it was an important development, and something of the vision of President J. Reuben Clark Jr.

Hardy recalls, “It was for me an epiphany. . . . Although the idea was not firmly planted in my mind at the time, I gradually began to think about this wider group of Latter-day Saint lawyers and how their association together could be a positive development both in their practice of law and for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”² Hardy nurtured that idea for more than a decade.

Years later, on a Sunday afternoon in 1987, Hardy met with BYU Law dean Bruce C. Hafen in Washington, DC. He explained his idea for an association of LDS lawyers to Dean Hafen, who agreed that as LDS attorneys joined in support of the Law School and its students, all would be blessed.

In the fall of 1988, a group of 17 lawyers who represented several major regions of the United States formally organized the J. Reuben Clark Law Society. They drafted articles of incorporation and bylaws and decided that the Law Society would be an affiliated organization of Brigham Young University.³



A PATTERN OF LOCAL CHAPTERS

The Law Society started small but quickly began to grow. In 1989 Dean Hafen was appointed provost of the university by BYU president Rex E. Lee, and H. Reese Hansen became dean of the Law School. He filled that position for more than 15 years. Dean Hansen was dedicated in his support of the Law Society, and under his leadership, the Law School administration and staff⁴ prepared a directory of lawyers, connected the *Clark Memorandum*—the official publication of the Law School—to the Law Society,⁵ and set in place a pattern of annual leadership meetings.

The greatest growth of the Law Society, however, was in the creation of local chapters. Within the Law Society’s first four years, 15 chapters were established, and they had far-reaching effects. When Tom Sutcliffe was admitted to the bar in New Zealand, he was unaware of any other Latter-day Saint lawyers in the country. Later he discovered that there were several of them scattered around, and they began meeting under the name of the Matthew Cowley Society. When they learned of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society, they became the Matthew Cowley Chapter of the Law Society.

Sutcliffe states: “To discover others was a real blessing, and it has led to enduring friendships. Having an association at a professional level with likeminded individuals whose spiritual perspective is a common denominator is very comforting, [as is the blessing of]



attending devotionals with senior Church leaders, who have addressed and reinforced the necessity of public and private service to our communities, of upholding the rule of law, and of the need for nations to defend the right of religious freedom. [All of these things] have made me feel more comfortable in my own skin as a lawyer and a deeply religious man.”

John Christensen remembers a “small band of ‘pioneer’ attorneys, law students, and professors from Kansas and Missouri meeting at the LDS visitors’ center in Independence, Missouri, to form the Midwest Chapter” on April 16, 1994. A year later, as Dean Hansen spoke at the Midwest Chapter’s annual meeting, he noted the appreciation that had been expressed by lawyers of faith and their spouses from Kansas City, Topeka, Tulsa, and Omaha. The Law Society had helped them overcome feelings of isolation and had encouraged them to make new friends and reach out to colleagues with whom they could discuss ethical dilemmas in the practice of law.⁶

The new Midwest Chapter even passed along an idea for improvement and growth to the Law Society. Because there are 11 law schools within a 260-mile radius of Kansas City, Missouri, the chapter recommended that law students be admitted as “potential members of the Law Society.” As a result, the National Committee amended the bylaws to allow student members.

There are now 272 student and attorney chapters organized under the umbrella of the BYU Law School, all of which have their own founding stories.

**We strive through
public service
and professional
excellence to
promote fairness
and virtue founded
upon the rule of law.**

—BYU J. REUBEN CLARK
LAW SOCIETY
MISSION STATEMENT

A PATTERN OF ASSISTANCE

After the founding of the Law School, the BYU Board of Trustees stayed involved in its unfolding mission and often sought opportunities to speak to students and Law Society members. A personal story about my own interaction with President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency is indicative of Church leaders’ ongoing interest in the Law Society.⁷

In February 1998, President Oaks (then Elder Oaks) was scheduled to speak at the organization of the California Ventura Chapter, and I had been assigned to attend the meeting. The dinner and fireside were to be held on a Friday night. That year Northern California was experiencing near-torrential rains, and upon arriving at the San Francisco airport earlier that Friday, President Oaks and I discovered that our flight to Santa Barbara had been cancelled.

I was waiting in line to determine what to do when President Oaks approached me and indicated that his secretary had found a flight leaving in 50 minutes from the Oakland airport to LAX. We left the line and were marching double-time toward the taxi when President Oaks was stopped by Church members. He interacted with them graciously and then excused himself, and we continued on our way.

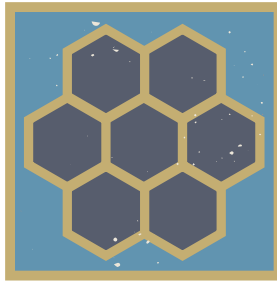
Having lived in the Bay Area for some time, I didn’t think it was possible to get to Oakland in a torrential rain storm in 50 minutes. When I mentioned this to President Oaks, he merely responded, “If we are supposed to be there, we will find a way.”

As we entered the Oakland airport, we found out that the flight to LAX was delayed two hours. Then President Oaks was paged on the loud speaker; his secretary had booked a ticket for us on a flight leaving almost immediately for Burbank. We jogged through the airport and onto the plane and sat in two seats on the last row.

We arrived at the venue just before dinner was to be served. President Oaks ate quickly so that he could address the audience. I still remember his remarks regarding how the Savior always answered the right question even when the wrong question had been asked.

Over the years I have observed similar care and concern as the general authorities and general officers of the Church have written, edited, and presented their speeches for Law Society meetings and for publication in the *Clark Memorandum*.





A PATTERN OF COMMUNICATION

The decision by the Law School in 1988 to allow the Law Society to be the joint publisher of the Law School's new magazine, the *Clark Memorandum*, had a marked effect on the publication itself and a positive effect on the Law Society. BYU Publications & Graphics⁸ was recognized at the time as producing some of the finest publications in the industry and has since collaborated with the Law School editorial staff in producing the award-winning magazine.⁹

The level of care that goes into the *Clark Memorandum* is typified in the effort put forth to find an illustration for the article "Humor in Law Teaching" in the spring 1991 issue. The editors and designers decided they wanted a portrait painted of J. Reuben Clark winking. When I initially approached Dean Hansen, he said no. Then he softened and said, "Well, you can go to Provost Hafen and see what he thinks."

Provost Hafen said he would have to see the portrait to decide, so a winking President Clark was painted by Wilson Ong, then a BYU student. It looked exactly like the official portrait of President Clark painted by Alvin Gittins, except for the mischievous wink.

Photographs of both portraits were made and given to Provost Hafen, who said, "I will ask President Lee."

President Lee said, "I am on my way to the NCAA tournament in Salt Lake City, and I will be seated with President Thomas S. Monson. I will ask him for permission."

When President Monson saw the two portraits, he chuckled and said, "I better ask President Gordon B. Hinckley."

When President Hinckley was shown the portraits, he smiled and asked President Monson if he thought the Clark family would be offended. When President Monson said he did not think they would be, President Hinckley replied, "Well, don't say we gave them permission, but if they decide to use the winking portrait, we won't stand in their way."

The *Clark Memorandum* has published poetry, creative nonfiction, book reviews, and articles as diverse as "Humor in Law Teaching"¹⁰ and "Christianity and the Mad Dog Litigator."¹¹ In addition to focusing on the Law School, it has taken on the needs of Law Society members. Many of the Law School events it publicizes and reports on are of interest to members of the Law Society; reciprocally, law students and alumni benefit from the publication of speeches that have been given at Law Society events.



A PATTERN OF CONNECTION

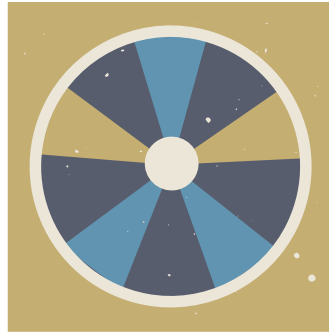
Since its inception, the Law Society has provided opportunities for BYU Law students to meet with attorneys from around the world. While this networking does not always lead to employment, it can lead to valuable friendships.

Bryan Jackson graduated from BYU Law School in 1986 and started his practice in Southern California. He became chair of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Law Society and, through his association with Bill Atkin, associate general counsel for the Church, was asked to become an area legal counsel (ALC) for the Church in the Africa Southeast Area. In the summer of 2016, Jackson attended the Annual Review of Religious Liberty, sponsored by the Law Society. It was there that he met Joe Moxon, '19. Moxon tells this story:

"As an admitted student to BYU, I enjoyed attending as many events as I was invited to, but the one that made the most difference to me was the Annual Review, hosted by the J. Reuben Clark Law Society.

"Admittedly, I missed a few of its sessions, but I certainly never missed any of its free meals. One of these meals was exclusive to admitted students and, as I soon discovered, the Church's area legal counsels. That was where I first met Bryan Jackson.

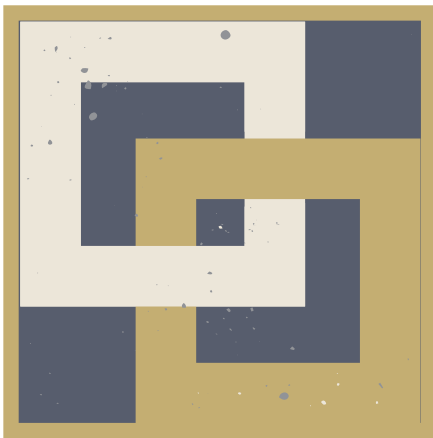
"When Bryan introduced himself as the ALC assigned to Johannesburg, we had an immediate connection. I served my mission in South Africa and naturally had many questions about what he did. He eventually suggested that I might enjoy doing my first-year summer internship with the Office of General Counsel (OGC), but he didn't want me to feel any pressure to apply. All I could think was, 'Are you kidding? That would be a dream!' Though interning for the Church wasn't even a blip on my radar when I sat down for lunch that day, I stood up knowing that I wanted to work with him, and I resolved to make it happen.



“To that end, I volunteered as often as I could with the ICLRS [International Center for Law and Religion Studies] that fall during the Law and Religion Symposium and was reintroduced to Bryan. I was every bit as impressed as I was before by Bryan’s humility, enthusiasm, and kindness and wanted to work with him even more. When it came time to interview with Professor Elizabeth Clark to be a summer OGC intern, she asked me where my top three choices to work would be if I was selected. I responded, ‘South Africa, South Africa, and South Africa.’ I was ecstatic when the offer to go to South Africa came.

“In my first year of law school, I came to realize that what I was most hoping for in an internship that summer was mentorship, and I felt hopeful that I would likely have that in Bryan. But that hope didn’t even begin to cover [my actual experience]. Along with his three incredible associate missionaries and the rest of the office, I received so much more than I bargained for. As my supervisor, Bryan gave me confidence that I would be successful in my career. As a mentor, he exemplified the kind of man I want to be: compassionate, humble, and ‘diligent [yet] temperate in all things.’¹²

“The blessings from meeting Bryan [through the Law Society] have, more than anything else, reinforced my determination to never pass up a free meal.”



A PATTERN OF COOPERATION

In addition to receiving support from Brigham Young University and the Law School, the Law Society has been the recipient of significant assistance from the Church’s Office of General Counsel. Bill Atkin has been a part of the leadership of the Law Society for more than 20 years.¹³

In addition, the ALCS who serve in the OGC under Atkin’s supervision have been responsible for organizing international chapters of the Law Society throughout the world. They participate in the Law Society Annual Leadership Conference and in regional and international conferences, where they are given opportunities to speak about the issues they confront when representing the Church in foreign countries. These reports are often considered to be highlights of the conferences.

One of these reports was given by John Zackrison, who served as international legal counsel¹⁴ in Frankfurt, Germany, and was assigned to prepare the way legally for the building of the Rome Italy Temple. In addition to receiving approval from the departments under the direction of the mayor of Rome, it seemed prudent to ensure that the Roman Catholic Church, headquartered in Rome, would not object to the construction of an LDS temple there.

However, neither Zackrison nor anyone else in the Europe Area knew how to gain an audience with someone in the Vatican who could assist them. As Zackrison was praying about the problem, the name of an attorney in Rome, Emanuele Turco, came to his mind. Turco had represented the Church in the 1970s and 1980s in Italy and had assisted the Church in obtaining the legal status necessary to own real property.

After he resisted calling Turco for several days, Zackrison finally phoned Turco and asked if he could take him to lunch. Turco agreed and then rather off-handedly asked Zackrison if he would like to attend a reception at the Vatican that Turco was scheduled to attend.

At the reception, Turco introduced Zackrison to Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, who was head of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, which oversees relations with

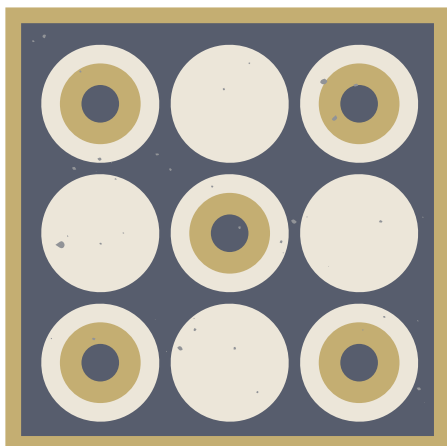
various non-Catholic religions for the Pope. This cardinal was the very person whom Zackrison needed to contact concerning the temple issue.

Zackrison obtained an audience with Cardinal Tauran, and Bishop Gérard Caussé, who was then in the Area Presidency of the Europe Area, was assigned to join him. As the audience commenced, it was discovered that Cardinal Tauran and Bishop Caussé were from the same town in France and that they had attended the same high school—although separated by several years. As a result of that audience, the Church was able to construct a temple in Rome without objection from the Roman Catholic Church. It was an answer to prayer.

This pattern of cooperation and support among the Law Society, the BYU Law School, and the Office of General Counsel of the Church has been a blessing.

**To the proud, the
applause of the world
rings in their ears;
to the humble, the
applause of heaven
warms their hearts.¹⁵**

—PRESIDENT EZRA TAFT BENSON



A PATTERN OF LEADERSHIP

The Law Society has been blessed with a strong set of leaders who have distinguished themselves through their service in local chapters, on committees within the Law Society, on the National Committee, and internationally. They have given hundreds of hours to ensure that the Law Society meets the needs of its members.¹⁶

This strong pattern of leadership is demonstrated in the service of Nancy Stevenson Van Slooten, '80. Van Slooten was among the first 17 attorneys who founded the Law Society in 1988; she worked with John Welch to establish the Los Angeles Chapter in 1989 and has worked tirelessly over the years to convince those who have left full-time practice that there is a home for them in the Law Society. Van Slooten served as an active part of the Atlanta Chapter while she took a hiatus from practicing law to raise her children. She returned to the national board of the Law Society in 1998 and in 2007 was asked to be chair-elect of the Law Society. In that role she joined with then international chair Brent Belnap in championing the establishment of the Women in Law Committee and overseeing the change to allow law students to be full members of the Law Society. In 2009 she became the first woman to serve as international chair.¹⁷ Recognizing that being legally trained is a benefit in all walks of life—from parenting to educating to influencing one's community—she has particularly encouraged women to serve.

Nan Barker spoke of her own unique journey within the legal profession and the role the Law Society played in that journey:

"I had the opportunity to attend law school at BYU. It was a surprise since I had never planned on attending either BYU or law school. I loved it. I loved the intense demands law school required. I planned on having an interesting legal career. After my second year I married an attorney [Daniel Barker, '81], moved to Arizona, and finished law school as a visiting student at Arizona State University. After [I had practiced] for a couple of years, our five children began to arrive. At that point, I put my legal training and practice aside. I thought my legal life had ended.

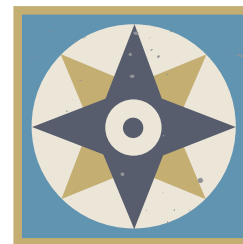
"Then one day, while attending a J. Reuben Clark Law Society event with my husband, the speaker, Bill Atkin, asked me to get involved with the Law Society. I had almost no interest—after all, I really wasn't a lawyer anymore. But he persisted and I agreed. Bill had asked me to start a Women in Law section within the Phoenix Chapter of the Law Society. I was scared. Who would listen to me—a woman who hadn't practiced in 20 years? Well, I was wrong.

"I can't express to you how much the Law Society has enriched my life. It helped me to realize for myself that, as President Dallin H. Oaks has said, 'Most of us will conclude our formal activity in the legal profession before we die. But the skills and ways of thinking we have acquired as lawyers will remain—for better or for worse. And when properly applied, those skills and ways will still be a source of blessing to many.'¹⁸

"Working with the Phoenix Women in Law group led me to serve with the International Women in Law Committee. I truly came to not only believe but *know* that whatever path a woman's legal training takes her down, it is what is right for her. The Law Society helped me recognize and use skills I thought were long gone. It helped me feel part of an organization that is filled with good and caring people. It changed and enriched me in the most amazing ways!"

A PATTERN OF TIMELESS MOMENTS

T. S. Eliot's observation that "history is a pattern of timeless moments" seems to hold true for the J. Reuben Clark Law Society. After 30 years it has made a creditable start in becoming an organization worthy of that initial inspiration. It has blessed the lives of more than 15,000 lawyers of faith and their families by providing new friends, colleague connections, concrete advice, and enjoyable gatherings. This vibrant organization stays abreast of the changing needs of the Law School and its members and is becoming increasingly international in focus. Over the years the Law Society has not strayed from the fundamentals upon which it was organized; rather, it has magnified those ideals and found additional ways to encourage honesty, integrity, and service.



In 1973, during his address at the opening ceremony of the J. Reuben Clark Law School, President Romney expressed his vision that at BYU Law “[the] laws of . . . man’ [would be taught] in the light of the ‘laws of God.’”¹⁹ In 1987 President James E. Faust echoed President Romney’s idea and enlarged it with the hope that both “the study and practice of the laws of man” would take place “in light of the laws of God.”²⁰ The Law Society has endeavored to exemplify those ideals. The past 30 years of structural additions and refinements have strengthened the Law Society and made it more viable. These improvements have come through the service rendered by countless members at every level of the Law Society.²¹

Insofar as we as individuals embrace the Law Society’s goals and continue to build upon its founding patterns, we may become lawyers who embody the Law Society’s mission statement: “We strive through public service and professional excellence to promote fairness and virtue founded upon the rule of law.” [cm](#)

Scott Cameron served as the executive director of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society and an editor of the *Clark Memorandum* from 1989 to 2013. His close association with the Law Society has allowed him to observe the unfolding of these timeless moments.

NOTES

1 Groups of LDS lawyers had been meeting on an ad hoc basis in Seattle and Atlanta and perhaps elsewhere, and LDS law students at Columbia University, J. Reuben Clark’s alma mater, were organized under his name, but there were no formal LDS attorney associations.

2 Interview with Ralph W. Hardy Jr., recorded Feb. 12, 2010, at the J. Reuben Clark Law Society Annual Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. Jamie Askar and Joseph Bentley conducted the interview and prepared the transcription for the JRCLS History Committee.

3 In this initial meeting, the National Committee decided upon a three-pronged program to launch the Law Society: (1) identify lawyers and contact them; (2) prepare materials to introduce the Law Society, create a directory of contact information and areas of practice of each member, and jointly with the Law School publish the *Clark Memorandum* to unite the Law Society; and (3) develop a template to be used in organizing the local chapters.

4 This staff included Claude Zobell, Hal Visick, Katherine Pullins, Scott Cameron, Peter Mueller, Vance Everett, Gary Buckway, Mary Hoagland, Eileen Crane, Robin Shumway, Roberta Lawler, Tonya Fischio, Matt Imbler, and others who worked to fulfill the vision set by Ralph Hardy and Dean Hafen.

5 The *CM* has more than 50 published issues, allowing Law Society members to review scholarly work, articles on life and the law, and important speeches delivered to the Law Society and the Law School.

6 In a July 2017 interview by Jill Jaspersen of the History Committee, Dean Hansen referred to this event and a similar event at the Hyde Park Chapel in

London, at which attorneys from throughout Great Britain and Ireland had gathered to form a chapter of the Law Society. Dean Hansen commented, “It was impossible to participate in such events without sensing that the Law Society was very important in people’s lives.”

7 Elder Neal A. Maxwell was commissioner of education for the Church when the Law School was established, and he spoke twice to the Law Society. Elder Marion D. Hanks was on the BYU Board of Trustees, and he also spoke twice. President Dallin H. Oaks has spoken to more chapters and at more conferences than any other general authority.

8 Those from the BYU Department of Publications & Graphics warranting special thanks are Charles Cranney, Linda Sullivan, John Snyder, Bruce Patrick, Judy Garvin, Joyce Janetski, David Eliason, Bradley Slade, and Lena Harper. Jane Wise of the Law School, who served as associate editor and editor for 15 years, deserves significant praise, as do Katherine Pullins, Mary Hoagland, Lovisa Lyman, and Constance Lundberg.

9 The Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) has awarded the *Clark Memorandum* several medals “for its creative design, excellent use of resources, and substantive content.” The magazine was also deemed “the finest publication of its kind in the nation” and has received awards from the Society of Publication Designers and the Salt Lake City Chapter of the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA).

10 Jim Gordon is responsible for one of the most famous lines in the publication: “Law school has been compared to one of those movies in which

somebody wearing a hockey mask terrorizes people at a summer camp and slowly and carefully slashes them all to pieces. Except it’s worse, because the professors don’t wear hockey masks, and you have to look directly at their faces” (“Humor in Law Teaching,” *Clark Memorandum*, Spring 1991, 4).

11 Judge David Campbell did not let litigators off the hook when he opined, “When it comes to personal relations with others in the litigation process, there is nothing . . . that requires a lawyer to act like a jerk” (“Christianity and the Mad Dog Litigator,” *Clark Memorandum*, Spring 1991, 33).

12 Alma 38:10.

13 Bill Atkin served as international chair from 2001 to 2003 and on the Executive Committee until 2017, when his position representing the OGC was taken over by David Channer.

14 These positions are now area legal counsels.

15 Ezra Taft Benson, “Cleansing the Inner Vessel,” *Ensign*, May 1986.

16 The international chairs of the Law Society: Ralph Hardy (1988–92); Gary Anderson (1992–95); Charles E. “Bud” Jones (1995–97); Ralph Mabey (1997–99); Marshall Tanner (1999–2001); Bill Atkin (2001–03); Lew Cramer (2003–05); Joseph Bentley (2005–07); Brent Belnap (2007–09); Nancy Stevenson Van Slooten (2009–11); Doug Bush (2011–13); Jeremiah Morgan (2013–15); Ginny Isaacson (2015–17); Steve West (2017–present). Each international chair has reflected the same pattern while employing their individual talents to the task of leadership.

17 The international chair serves as the head of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society.

18 See Dallin H. Oaks, “The Beginning and the End of a Lawyer,” JRCLS Law Society Annual Fireside address, Salt Lake City, Utah, Feb. 11, 2005; see also Oaks, “The Beginning and the End of a Lawyer,” *Clark Memorandum*, Spring 2005, 11.

19 Marion G. Romney in *Addresses at the Ceremony Opening the J. Reuben Clark Law School*, Aug. 27, 1973, 20; quoting D&C 93:53.

20 James E. Faust, “The Study and Practice of the Laws of Men in Light of the Laws of God,” *Clark Memorandum*, Fall 1988, 18.

21 It is essential that an article prepared for lawyers should end with a caveat. While there have been individuals whose names have been mentioned in this short article, it has not been possible to name all those who are deserving of mention. I offer my apology to all those who are in this category. I trust that each will know of his or her sacrifice and be warmed by the knowledge that, but for their efforts, the Law Society would not be the strong organization that it has become.