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Letter From The Editor

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**PUBLIC LAND & RESOURCES
LAW REVIEW**

Dear Reader,

We are honored to present you with this special edition. For students and practitioners of environmental law, our work relies upon bedrock legislation and constitutional provisions that we often take for granted. *To Make a Better Place* presents personal and political insights into the halcyon days when much of this law came into being in Montana.

Starting in the late 1960s, Montana entered a phase when anything seemed possible. People came together to pass some of the strongest environmental and human rights laws in the nation. Collected here, through the efforts of longtime state legislator and public servant, Dorothy Bradley, are firsthand accounts, written by the very people who ushered in this era through devotion to public service and desire to change the world.

Their accomplishments are extraordinary. Thanks to their efforts, we enjoy unique constitutional protections including the right to a clean and healthful environment; a comprehensive system for recording and adjudicating water rights; some of the strongest stream access laws in the country; robust mining reclamation standards; a financially-sound coal trust; clean air, both indoors and out; and some of the strongest right-to-know protections of any state. In addition to these few examples of their many achievements, their legacy is as important for what they did not leave us. Were it not for the vision and tireless work of these and other warriors, we would likely be dealing with the effects of a second “Berkeley Pit” of epic proportions at the headwaters of our beloved Blackfoot River.

These struggles made Montana what it is today. It is difficult to imagine a time when safeguarding the natural environment was not seen as a partisan issue, when vision and grit could so fundamentally alter our relationship with the natural world. In this time of pandemic, when we find ourselves socially isolated, let these stories serve as a coming-together, a reminder and celebration of the possible.

Sincerely,

Daniel Brister
Editor-in-Chief