



Meet Nick Bell



The editor-in-chief's job at a law school journal is never easy, but this past year has proven that it is even more demanding in the midst of

a global pandemic. Yet, 3L Nicholas "Nick" Bell, with the assistance of the 2020-21 editorial board of the *Arkansas Law Review*, persevered to produce an outstanding volume of the publication, now in its 73rd year. Bell used critical thinking skills learned from law professors to navigate hurdles and make the last few months of his 2L year, and the entirety of his 3L year, successful. In addition to engineering new processes to move the journal's operations online, Bell adapted to virtual learning, completed two clerkships, an externship, and even took up a new social distancing-friendly hobby.

Originally from Little Rock, Bell is a 2013 graduate of Little Rock Catholic High School. From there, he enrolled at the University of Central Arkansas and in 2017 earned a Bachelor of Arts in communications. Law school at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville was a natural next step.

"My role models and mentors were all attorneys, even if they were not still practicing law," Bell said. They spoke to

me about how a legal education trains you to take on any impediment you may face. Law school's focus on logic and reasoning, as opposed to firm right and wrong answers was interesting to me. Arkansas is my home. I hope to make a life and career here and to have a positive impact on my community. Staying in Arkansas for law school just felt right."

Bell's hard work and talent for writing secured a spot for him as one of the staff editors of the 2019-20 *Arkansas Law Review*. His article, "Against the Defendant": Plea Rule's Purpose v. Plain Meaning," appeared in Volume 72, Number 2. After a successful stint as staff editor, Bell learned of his selection as the next editor-in-chief, just weeks ahead of the World Health Organization's declaration of the pandemic.

"Upon learning of my selection, I quickly got together with the team to chart out the year ahead, hoping to plan fun events and invite guest speakers to the law school. Of course, everything changed a month later. Our focus then shifted to moving all journal operations online."

Armed with a mentor-cultivated ability to view barriers as challenges, Bell seamlessly transitioned all operations to a virtual environment. The only noticeable casualty of the 2020-21 year was the annual in-person *Arkansas Law Review* Symposium. The

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Bell enjoying a day of socially-distanced golf

event, a perennial favorite, normally brings a nationally recognized expert to campus as the keynote speaker.

“Nick has been an immense editor-in-chief amid unprecedented challenges for the *Arkansas Law Review*,” Alex Nunn assistant professor of law and the journal’s faculty advisor said. “The pandemic forced Nick and his team to operate entirely online, yet the journal has had one of its most successful years to date. Nick’s leadership has impressed his peers, the faculty, and the broader Arkansas School of Law community.”

“Serving as editor-in-chief is without question the highlight of my law school experience,” Bell said. In law school, almost everything you do is a solo effort. Sure, you have friends and study groups, but at the end of the day, it is you, and only you, who sits down to take an exam or write a paper. *Law Review*, on the other hand, is a team effort through and through.”

As with most law students in Arkansas, Bell’s legal education has been supported by the generosity of the state’s bench and bar through scholarships, clerkships and externships. Bell was one of the 2019 recipients of the Judge Thomas F. Butt Legal Excellence Scholarships for Civil Procedure and he subsequently received the Charles R. Garner Legal Scholarship and the Anna McGee Scholarship. His work as editor-in-chief of *Arkansas Law Review* was recognized with the 2020 Rose Law



Bell signing end-of-the year *Arkansas Law Review* certificates

Firm Scholarship. Additionally, Bell received a wide array of invaluable experience clerking at the Little Rock-based firms of Cullen & Co., Anderson Murphy & Hopkins, and Quattlebaum Grooms & Tull PLLC. He also clerked in the Fayetteville office of Kutak Rock LLP. During the spring semester of 2020, he was a criminal prosecution extern for the U.S. Attorney of the Western District of Arkansas. Bell is grateful to the lawyers at each of these organizations for the effort they put into making certain he had interesting assignments while working virtually. “That experience, working during a pandemic, really showed a difference between people who view barriers as challenges to be overcome and those who see excuses not to do something,” Bell said.

The next few months of Bell’s career are mapped, and he has a clear idea for the future. Of course, the summer will be devoted to studying for, and taking,

the Arkansas Bar Exam. A clerkship with the Hon. Lee Rudofsky of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas is on the horizon for the fall, and a clerkship for the Hon. Andrew Brasher of the United States Circuit Court for the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals is to follow. His long-term goal is to practice trial and appellate advocacy so that he can work on a wide array of cases dealing with a variety of real-world situations. Bell hopes to find time to hone his golf skills—a hobby he took up in March of 2020 when the global pandemic made it difficult to partake in any physical activity.

“I do not have a particular interest in one substantive area of the law — far from it. I hope to end up in a role where the types of cases that come across my desk are constantly changing,” Bell said. “I believe a legal education opens many doors and provides career flexibility. That is extremely attractive and valuable to someone like me who wants to experience many different roles and responsibilities over the course of my career.”