

Editor's Note

The spring of 1997 proved eventful for policy-historians. The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, in Washington, D. C., through its United States Studies Division under Michael Lacey and his able assistant George Wagner, hosted a day long conference on "Politics and Policy in the 1970s." The meeting was organized in association with the *Journal of Policy History*.

In early June, the Policy History Program at Bowling Green State University hosted the first national policy history conference. The three day meeting drew approximately 300 participants. The program revealed the breadth of research currently being conducted by policy historians today, which portends well for the future of the field. Surely, policy history has emerged as one of the exciting fields in the social sciences today by offering scholars an opportunity to share their work across disciplines, while integrating social history, political history, and institutional history.

The journal seeks to convey this intellectual excitement through its articles, book reviews and features. In this issue, Colin Gordon challenges previous interpretations of why national health insurance failed, by emphasizing the importance of corporate business in blocking reform. Helene Silverberg places the abortion debate in the United States within a state building perspective to explain the persistence of the issue in American politics.

In order to involve our readers in the journal, we continue in this issue our new feature, "Critical Perspectives in Policy History." In his essay, "Policy History and the Sublime Immodesty of the Middle-Age Professor," Guy Alchon attributes the decline of interest in political history to an indulgent "post-empire" generation of historians. For those of us who

like our mocha-latte, an indulgence of the modern age, Alchon's essay invites response, and we encourage our readers brew up some espresso and discuss their differences with him around the journal's coffee-table. In the forthcoming issues, Robert Zieger will discuss historians and the U.S. industrial relations regime, and Daniel Fox will suggest new ways of writing the history of medicare and health insurance policy. We invite other scholars to submit essays appropriate for this periodic feature of the journal.

One final word on future special issues. Next year we will publish a special issue on "Loss of Confidence: Politics and Policy in the 1970s." We have invited Otis Graham, a historian, to edit a special issue on environmental policy in historical perspective and Hugh Hecllo, a political scientist, to edit a special issue on religion, politics, and policy in the United States. If authors are interested in contributing to these issues, please contact the editors directly or through our editorial offices.