

INTRODUCTION

The Williams Institute and the student editors at the UCLA School of Law are pleased to publish Volume 25 of the *Dukeminier Awards Journal*, which annually recognizes outstanding achievements in recently published legal scholarship that engages with pressing sexual orientation and gender identity issues. With this release, we are honored to recognize the following Dukeminier Prize winners:

The Michael Cunningham Prize awarded to **Ido Katri & Maayan Sudai** for the article: *Intersex, Trans, and the Irrationality of Gender-Affirming-Care Bans*, originally published at 134 YALE L. J. 1521 (2025)

The Stu Walter Prize awarded to **Ayodeji Kamau Perrin** for the article: *Decriminalization Matters: LGBTQ Transnational Litigation Networks and Movement Lawyering in the Global South*, originally published at 105 B.U.L. REV. 67 (2025)

The M.V. Lee Badgett Prize awarded to **Laura Portuondo** for the article: *Gendered Liberty*, originally published at 113 GEORGETOWN L.J. 707 (2025)

The Ezekiel Webber Prize awarded to **Kate Redburn** for the article: *The Equal Right to Exclude: Religious Speech and the Road to 303 Creative LLC v. Elenis*, originally published at 112 CAL. L. REV. 1879 (2024)

In addition, each year the Journal publishes the winner of the Williams Institute's Annual Student Writing Competition. With this release, we are hon-ored to recognize the following winner:

The Jeffrey S. Haber Prize for Student Scholarship awarded to **Kit Beyer** for the article: *Uncertain Science, Certain Harm: Skrmetti's Misguided Deference*, 25 DUKEMINIER AWARDS J. 285 (2025)

This is the 25th Volume of the *Dukeminier Awards Journal* and it is being published during the 25th anniversary of the Williams Institute's founding. At its start, the Williams Institute was the only center of its kind at any U.S. law school. Now, many schools have scholars focused on sexual orientation and gender identity law and policy, if not entire centers or institutes of their own. Additionally, over the last 25 years the scope of inquiry around LGBTQ legal issues has expanded dramatically: encompassing highs and lows from the historic overturning of anti-sodomy laws to the current attempted erasure of transgender identity by the federal government. From our founding, the Williams Institute and *Dukeminier* have been committed to highlighting academically rigorous, groundbreaking, and thought-provoking scholarship analyzing both the high-profile legal developments as well as the understudied areas of policy impacting the LGBTQ community. That commitment continues this year.

All four of our winning articles in this volume are authored by first-time Dukeminier Award-winning scholars. Once again, the number of presumptively eligible articles identified by our articles editors was larger than in any previous year. In last year's introduction, I wrote on the attempts to diminish our field's merit. This year's winning articles were published in the midst of attacks from governmental officials on academics, particularly those who study the LGBTQ community, and the universities that employ them. Despite these attacks, the award-winning scholars published within this Volume, and many more, all continued to pursue their important work through their research and teaching, elevating the discipline to new heights with each passing year. What all of this indicates is that sexual orientation and gender identity law and policy as an academic discipline is replete with brilliant scholars committed to their research in the face of powerful opposition.

Once again, as has always been the case, the articles published in Volume 25 of the *Dukeminier Awards Journal* represent a few of the many outstanding pieces published by a passionate community of scholars unafraid to research, teach, and debate some of the most contested legal issues of our time. The *Dukeminier Awards Journal* editors and the Williams Institute are thrilled to highlight these five pieces of sexual orientation and gender identity law and policy scholarship. As always, we hope that republishing these articles in our Journal helps their authors' work reach an even larger audience of practitioners, professors, policymakers, and the public.

Congratulations to this year's winners!

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ABOUT THE PRIZE SELECTION PROCESS

Eligible articles for this year's Dukeminier Prizes were published between September 1, 2024 and August 31, 2025 and engaged with sexual orientation and gender identity legal issues in a sustained way. In September 2025, the articles editors ran relevant search terms in legal scholarship databases to cast a wide net for eligible articles. The students then narrowed that large group to approximately 230 articles that students deemed presumptively eligible for this year's awards. At this stage, the students were not reviewing the articles for merit; instead, the students focused on the degree of attention given to relevant issues, broadly understood.

The Institute then invited nominations for articles through an open call and from over 50 law professors who regularly publish legal scholarship focused on sexual orientation and gender identity. We provided the professors with the students' list of eligible articles, but did not limit nomination to articles appearing in the list. Numerous law professors submitted nominations, as did the student editors and scholars affiliated with the Williams Institute. All

articles that received nominations were automatically sent to our prize committee. Student articles editors and Williams Institute legal scholars reviewed the remaining articles and selected a number to join the nominated articles and be considered by the prize committee.

The Institute convened a committee to select the winners from among those finalists in March 2026. Each Volume's prize committee is comprised of a group of Williams Institute legal scholars, former *Dukeminier Prize* winners, and *Dukeminier Awards Journal* senior editors. The Volume 25 Prize Committee was comprised of, in alphabetical order: Joshua Arrayales, Williams Institute Legal Fellow; Shane Ball, Editor-in-Chief of the *Dukeminier Awards Journal*; Noa Ben-Asher, Professor of Law at St. John's University School of Law; Victoria Calderón, *Dukeminier* Chief Articles Editor; D Dangaran, Assistant Professor of Law at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, William S. Richardson School of Law; Giam Nguyen, Judicial and Legal Education Director and Scholar at the Williams Institute and faculty advisor for the *Dukeminier Awards Journal*; Margot J. Pollans, Gilbert and Sarah Kerline Distinguished Professor of Environmental Law at Pace University, Elisabeth Haub School of Law; Dara Purvis, James E. Beasley Professor of Law at Temple University, Beasley School of Law; Will Tentindo, Staff Attorney at the Williams Institute and advisor for the Journal; and Ari Ezra Waldman, Professor of Law at UC Irvine School of Law.

Each year, the members of the selection committee decide the precise criteria for that year, guided by the goals of the *Dukeminier Awards Journal*. The winning articles embody the best in this year's sexual orientation and gender identity legal scholarship. We recognize these articles for their original arguments and intersectional approaches, timeliness and impact, academic rigor, and quality of research and writing. The Selection Committee also valued the idea of recognizing developing scholars and works covering a broad range of issue areas. We viewed each article holistically and extensively discussed the finalists in light of these criteria, and selected the above four articles for prizes this year.

For the student note competition, a committee comprised of *Dukeminier* Editor-in-Chief Shane Ball, Senior Editor Helena Stewart, Managing Editor Jessica Li, Chief Notes Editor Ambika Nuggihalli, and advisors for the *Dukeminier Awards Journal* Giam Nguyen and Will Tentindo selected the winner among entries received in the Fall of 2025 through an open call for submissions. To be eligible, articles must be authored by a student enrolled in a law school during the 2025-26 academic year, regardless of degree track or progress. In selecting the winner, we focused on originality, scholarly contribution, timeliness, academic rigor, and overall quality of the research and writing. All entries were reviewed blind by the student note selection committee.

