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Foreword: Student Symposium on the Child and the Law

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STUDENT SYMPOSIUM ON THE CHILD
AND THE LAW

FOREWORD

On December 4 and 5, 1961, the University of Kansas Law School held its first Annual Law and Society Institute. For the first in the series, an exchange of ideas on the general topic: "The Child and the Law" was quite appropriately sponsored by the law school and other groups and individuals. The day-and-a-half program was divided into four sessions each covering a particular facet of a child's possible contact with the authority of the state: Adoption, Custody, Support, and Juvenile Delinquency.

The goal of the Institute was most eloquently stated in the program.

The failure of the law to react adequately to basic changes in the role of the family is often cited as the source of some of the most perplexing problems in modern society. The actual operation of the law as it bears upon the special problems of children will be examined and evaluated by experts in several fields whose professions bring them into daily contact with the child and the law. The underlying assumption is that each of the professions represented can gain increased understanding of the problems of the child and the law from the interchange of ideas and experiences, and that from this increased understanding, the law can be made to serve the needs of the child more adequately.

To accomplish this goal, at each session a principal speaker from among the disciplines represented—psychiatrists, social workers, district and juvenile court judges, law enforcement officers, attorneys, family life experts and representatives of the State Department of Social Welfare, presented his view of the adequacy of the law in a particular area. Two or three commentators from different disciplines then added new insights based upon their training and experience.

The Institute was also honored by an afternoon address by the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, Abraham Ribicoff, who spoke on the role of the federal government in meeting the needs of the modern child. The internationally known Dr. Edward D. Greenwood, Co-ordinator of Training in Child Psychiatry of the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kansas, spoke at the banquet on the determining factors in the child's view of law and the adult world.

In the symposium that follows, four student writers of the Kansas Law Review give their edited version of the remarks of the various participants at each session. Each student then expands upon the principal problems as raised in the remarks of the speakers in that session. Two special problems raised dur-
ing the Institute, jurisdiction for custody awards and the general consent in
adoptions, provide the subject for a 5th student symposium article and a case
note on general consent at page 607 in this issue. All the student writers have
re-evaluated the issues and, based on additional research, have suggested pos-
sible improvements in our existing law so that “the law can be made to serve the
needs of the child more adequately.”

The Kansas Law Review has, in its ten-year history, always taken a lively
interest in the work and knowledge of other disciplines, particularly as these
disciplines bear on the child and the family. The Review and its student
writers should once again be commended for their effort, in this symposium,
to bring to the law and the legal profession the insights of others so that the
law can more adequately serve society.

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