

From the Editor

You're holding a one-of-a-kind volume — transcripts of Bryan Garner's interviews with Supreme Court Justices on legal writing and advocacy.

These pages contain a rich lode of quotable nuggets. While reading, I started to jot down some examples and wound up with three dozen. Here is just a small sampling:

- “I have yet to put down a brief and say, ‘I wish that had been longer’” (p. 35).
- “What the academy is doing, as far as I can tell, is largely of no use or interest to people who actually practice law” (p. 37).
- “I love *But* at the beginning of a sentence . . .” (p. 60).
- “[G]ood counsel welcomes, *welcomes* questions” (p. 70).
- “So the crafting of that issue . . . Man, that's everything. The rest is background music” (p. 75).
- “[T]he genius is having a ten-dollar idea in a five-cent sentence, not having a five-cent idea in a ten-dollar sentence” (p. 100).
- “I can't bear it [legalese]” (p. 141). “Terrible! Terrible!” (p. 156).

It's all here, from thoughtful responses to pointed questions about writing and oral argument, to fascinating facts about the Justices and their interests. (Justice Ginsburg took a class from Vladimir Nabokov. Justice Breyer likes Stendahl.) And while the

Justices naturally disagree on some things, you'll find themes that run through their answers — themes about clarity and simplicity, honesty and accuracy, overlong briefs (and opinions), rewriting and re-rewriting, attending to grammar, anticipating the other side's arguments, the primary importance of briefs in decision-making, and the professional need to cultivate strong writing skills.

Scribes is grateful to Bryan Garner for furnishing these interviews and to the Justices for allowing us to print the transcripts in the *Scribes Journal*.

Scribes is also indebted to the *Journal's* sponsor, Thomas Cooley Law School, for its continuing generosity — and its commitment to better legal writing.

— Joseph Kimble