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**Commentary: Critical Race Theory: A Commemoration:  
Commentary Introduction**

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## Commentary Introduction

There are those who believe that in 2011 we finally live in a post-racial, colorblind society. But since the election of President Barack Obama in 2008, events have shown that there is nothing “post” about the country’s consciousness of race. We have seen unprecedented questioning of Obama’s birth certificate, even though his white opponent in the 2008 election was not born in the United States and faced no such gauntlet of scrutiny. We have seen Congressman Joe Wilson yell “You lie!” in a never-before-seen display by a congressman at a sitting President during Obama’s healthcare address. We have seen Shirley Sherrod forced to resign over a speech given at a NAACP event because a blogger deceitfully edited her words beyond recognition. We have seen Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates arrested while entering his own home as if he were a burglar. And if those events were not enough to convince us that race still permeates the very structure of our country, still others continue to spring from the country’s racialized ground. What of the recent media attention focused on First Lady Michelle Obama’s recent dance performance at a Washington D.C. area middle school where she “did the dougie”? And what of the conservative press’s seeming obsession with the Obamas’ hosting of rapper Common at the White House where he was visiting for a poetry reading?

In this Commentary Issue, we feature *Twenty Years of Critical Race Theory: Looking Back To Move Forward* by lead author Professor Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, a law professor at both Columbia University Law School and the UCLA School of Law, and co-founder of the African American Policy Forum. Crenshaw eloquently lays out her vision of the founding of the Critical Race Theory (CRT) movement, which began as an effort to seek a voice in the old guard legal world, which was, and arguably still is, dominated by old white men. According to Crenshaw, CRT began in the shadows of the Critical Legal Studies movement as a way to approach racial injustice in the legal arena and in society generally. From her history of the CRT movement, Crenshaw asks us to consider what

CRT's role should be today. She challenges us to confront the fact that despite the ideas of meritocracy, colorblindness, and post-racialism, that there are still systemic racial injustices which we must strive to recognize and correct. Crenshaw's piece pushes us to evaluate what CRT should be(come) in order to continue to focus our attention on racial injustice in the study, practice, and teaching of the law as well as in our greater society. In addition to Crenshaw's lead article, this issue is rich with comments by academics from many disciplines who thoughtfully weighed in on Crenshaw's version of the history of CRT and on CRT's future. On behalf of *Connecticut Law Review*, I would like to thank Professor Crenshaw and all of our commentators for their timely and thought-provoking pieces. We are honored to publish their Articles in this Commentary Issue and feel privileged to amplify academic voices vital to this country's future.

JESSICA H. STEIN, JUNE 2011\*

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