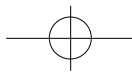
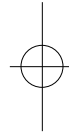
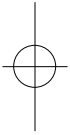
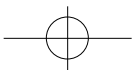
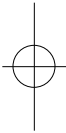
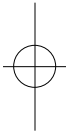


# A Law Enforcement Officer's Guide to Testifying in Court





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James M. Vukelic

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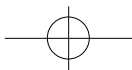
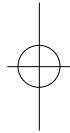
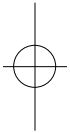
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To my wife, Pam



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## Foreword

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Have you been to court lately? Most law enforcement officers will have the experience sooner or later, usually sooner. More than thirty million cases were pending in our state and federal courts last year.

My goal in writing this book is to help law enforcement personnel testify more effectively in court. This book will take the mystery out of court proceedings. It offers the reader concrete advice on how to be a persuasive witness. Tricks and traps used by lawyers are exposed. Suggested ways of dealing with them are offered. Numerous examples are used to demonstrate key points, many of them taken from real trials.

Officers do not make a living in the courtroom and many are terrified at the prospect of taking the witness stand. While this anxiety is natural and expected, it can interfere with the primary objective of trials: to reach the truth. Even the seasoned trial veteran will admit, if candid, that being questioned by a quick-witted, sharp-tongued trial lawyer can be difficult.

If a witness is too nervous to communicate effectively, valuable information that should be presented to the judge or jury may never be revealed. This is lamentable, not only from the perspective of the party relying upon that witness's testimony, but for society. The stability of any civilization rests, in large part, on a fair judicial system for the enforcement of society's rules and regulations.

When witnesses fail to present evidence adequately, the quality of the judicial system suffers and the confidence placed in it by the public is diminished. Ultimately, the system may be abandoned in favor of other methods of conflict resolution. As a society, we have worked hard to establish, maintain, and improve our court system. While im-

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perfect, our system resolves conflicts and maintains an ordered society while protecting rights better than any other in the world.

It is my hope that, by incorporating the lessons in this book, officers will learn how best to help a judge or jury reach the right decision. That, in turn, can only enhance the judicial system and benefit society. Then, we all win.