

Massachusetts Legal Research

E. Joan Blum

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*This book is dedicated to Dorothy Blum, 1923–2009
May her memory be for a blessing.*

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Series Note

The Legal Research Series published by Carolina Academic Press includes an increasing number of titles from states around the country. The goal of each book is to provide law students, practitioners, paralegals, college students, laypeople, and librarians with the essential elements of legal research in each state. Unlike more bibliographic texts, the Legal Research Series books seek to explain concisely both the sources of state law research and the process for conducting legal research effectively.

Preface and Acknowledgments

Legal researchers have always benefited from advances in technology. These advances affect the way legal authorities are presented and distributed, and how we go about finding them. As this book goes to press, both LexisNexis and Westlaw have announced major developments to be introduced in the coming weeks or months. Bloomberg, until now primarily a resource for financial information, is testing a new legal research service—Bloomberg Law—at several law schools, including Boston College. Google Scholar now makes available, without charge to the user, a significant library of legal resources.

Legal research is a complex skill. Competent legal research requires ongoing analysis as well as mastery of a knowledge base and of techniques for using it. While some tools of legal research change—sometimes with breathtaking speed—the basics of legal research remain the same. An effective research process continues to include analyzing a problem carefully to identify issues to research, choosing research tools and using them efficiently to identify relevant legal authorities, and then analyzing and applying those authorities to the problem.

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