

# Wyoming Legal Research

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Suzanne E. Rowe, Series Editor



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## Series Note

The Legal Research Series published by Carolina Academic Press includes titles from states around the country as well as a separate text on federal legal research. 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 jurisdiction. 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.



# Foreword

*Michael Golden*

Justice (Ret.), Wyoming Supreme Court

As one whose initial formal legal education occurred in the mid-1960s when legal research instruction was in the stone-age in comparison to today's technologically rich environment, I am most grateful to these accomplished authors for making the instructional resources within these pages available to such a wide audience. I wish it had been available to those of my generation, but the good news is that my generation and the more recent ones may now benefit immeasurably from it.

I believe *Wyoming Legal Research* is a “must have” resource that should be in the library or on the desk of every judicial officer, lawyer, paralegal, law student, or informed citizen in Wyoming who needs a ready, reliable, and comprehensive guide for thoroughly investigating any legal issue.

The most valuable research tools are all here in one easy-to-use volume: from the first chapter on the process of research and analysis; through the middle chapters covering both the older and new commercial electronic databases of Lexis and Westlaw; on to the chapters covering the numerous secondary “explanatory” sources and the precedential primary authority sources (decisional, constitutional, and statutory) and citators; and concluding with the much-needed and long-overdue chapter on the legislative process and legislative history research. Interspersed within each chapter are visually arresting explanatory figures, tables, and examples that will readily assist the researcher in any given project.

Co-authors Debora A. Person, administrative law librarian, and Tawnya K. Plumb, electronic services law librarian, both of whom teach legal research to first-year law students, are eminently qualified to provide this valuable instructional resource. Each has authored helpful articles and delivered interesting presentations in the legal research field that are available online in their respective faculty profiles on the University of Wyoming College of Law web site. I commend those materials to all.

With this publication the authors have made a valuable and lasting contribution to the continuing study and development of Wyoming law. I congratulate them on a labor well done.

## Preface and Acknowledgments

The intent of this book is to instruct in Wyoming legal resources. The book covers the initial stages of research, such as setting up the issue and approaching the variety of materials that are available. It would be appropriate for law students at an introductory level, paralegal students, and the general public seeking to investigate their own legal problems. At the same time, the book will benefit experienced legal practitioners because it incorporates search techniques in the major legal databases, discusses free internet sources, and explains how to access lesser-used tools in the research process.

As the major commercial legal research vendors are currently moving from their classic products to new Google-style platforms, we made selections on which tools to highlight. This book covers new and older platforms, hoping to bridge the transition.

In Wyoming, the lack of certain expected tools can be frustrating for legal professionals. There is no state encyclopedia or form book. There are only limited state-specific treatises. As a low-population state, Wyoming's case law is not extensive, and researchers from out of state have expressed surprise at the brevity of the state statutes. Our response is usually an attempt to emphasize the benefit of working in a legal system where attorneys have so much opportunity to affect the state's law. Still, in instances such as these, it serves researchers well to know what does not exist so that they can focus their attention on what is available. We hope this information is an added value of this text.

We have collaborated on a number of publications over the years, and we feel especially lucky to have an excellent working relationship. It was a great pleasure, then, to realize a similar rapport in working

with the series' editor, Suzanne Rowe. Her direction, suggestions, editing, and support throughout the process were extremely important to the finished product and very appreciated by the authors. We acknowledge her further substantive contribution in providing us with the text of the introductory chapter and the legal citation appendix from her book, *Oregon Legal Research*, 2d ed. We would also like to recognize our student research assistant, Leora Hoshall, for her extensive work on the manuscript. These contributions significantly improved the final work.

We extend our thanks to the University of Wyoming College of Law and the George W. Hopper Law Library for support of our project. Finally, we thank our families for their encouragement and patience.

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