Louisiana Legal Research

Second Edition

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to Chris, Elizabeth, Maggie, and Christopher Algero
and Joan and Walter Garvey.
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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.
Preface

This book is written to assist attorneys, law students, paralegals, librarians, and others in researching legal materials effectively and efficiently. While focused on Louisiana law, the book also provides the reader with information necessary to research federal law as well as the law of other jurisdictions.

In addition to discussing research techniques, sources, and strategies, the book highlights the unique characteristics of the Louisiana legal system, including the State’s reliance on the Civil Code and statutory law and the value of precedent. The book also provides specific information on both print and electronic sources for locating law and provides legal citation information.

Discussion of research using electronic sources is meant to introduce basic features that researchers will encounter, not to exhaustively discuss all features of all electronic sources. As with most technologically based products, platforms for electronic research are always developing and changing. Fortunately, the vendors of online, commercial services provide training and tutorials to keep researchers up to date on their products. One of the decisions made in writing this book was to discuss basics regarding databases/sources selection on Westlaw and LexisNexis, even though these selections need not be made on WestlawNext and Lexis Advance. Decisions about what sources are best to use for research of particular issues must be made by the researcher at some point in the research process; thus, source selection is discussed for print and electronic research, even though the selection of types of sources to consider on WestlawNext and Lexis Advance may be made after a search is run.

Most citations in the book conform to the citation format for practitioners set out in the nineteenth edition of The Bluebook: A Uniform
System of Citation. Any variations from The Bluebook, such as to con-
form to Louisiana custom or rule, are noted within the text. Addi-
tionally, Appendix A compares the citation formats set out in The
Bluebook, the ALWD Citation Manual: A Professional System of Cita-
tion, and Louisiana rules and customs.

Louisiana has a rich legal history, with its private law rooted pri-
marily in French and Spanish traditions, many of which stem from
ancient Roman law. In 1803, the United States purchased the terri-
tory of Louisiana, which included the land that is now the State of
Louisiana. In that one year, this territory was governed successively
by Spain, France, and the United States. The legal system that exists
today has grown and has been most influenced by the traditions of
these three nations.

Throughout this book, the reader will find text boxes that include
historical notes of interest and quotes about Louisiana law and the
Louisiana legal system. These additions are referred to herein as
Louisiana Lagniappe (lanyap). Lagniappe derives from the Spanish la
ñapa, which means the gift. Lagniappe was given its French spelling
in southern Louisiana where the word is frequently used and refers
to something extra or a bonus or unexpected gift. Enjoy this lagniappe
while you learn!
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