Sexual Harassment Law
To the people who help to prevent and prosecute sex-based harassment and for all the brave survivors who have announced #MeToo.
Jennifer Ann Drobac

To my students. You give me hope for the future.
Carrie N. Baker

To Griffin and Shennie: The future is yours. May it be better.
Rigel C. Oliveri
# Contents

Table of Cases ........................................... xv
Preface ..................................................... xix
Acknowledgments ........................................ xxiii
About the Authors ........................................ xxv

Chapter 1 · The Early History and Development of U.S. Sexual Harassment Law 3
   1. Introduction ........................................ 3
      A. Defining Sex ..................................... 4
      B. Defining Sexual Harassment ..................... 7
      C. Prevalence and Impact of Sexual Harassment .... 8
   2. Early Cases .......................................... 10
      A. Private Matters, Not Workplace Discrimination ... 11
         *Corne v. Bausch & Lomb, Inc.* .................. 12
         *Tomkins v. Public Service Electric & Gas Co.* .... 13
         Notes and Discussion .............................. 16
      B. African-American Women Led the Way .......... 19
         *Williams v. Saxbe* ................................ 20
         Notes and Discussion .............................. 21
   3. The Tide Turns: *Barnes v. Costle* ................. 22
      *Barnes v. Costle* .................................... 23
      Notes and Discussion .............................. 25
   4. Early Sexual Harassment Legal Theory .............. 26
      A. Catharine MacKinnon’s *Sexual Harassment of Working Women* ............. 26
         Notes and Discussion .............................. 30
      B. Nadine Taub’s *Keeping Women in Their Place: Stereotyping Per Se as a Form of Employment Discrimination* .......... 33
         Notes and Discussion .............................. 35
   5. Hostile Work Environment Harassment .............. 35
      EEOC Guidelines on Sexual Harassment ............ 37
      Notes and Discussion .............................. 38
      *Bundy v. Jackson* .................................... 39
      Notes and Discussion .............................. 42
   6. Formulation of the Prima Facie Case ............... 43
CONTENTS

Henson v. City of Dundee 43
Notes and Discussion 47
Meritor Savings Bank, FSB v. Vinson 49
Notes and Discussion 54
7. Application of Law and Ethics 56
Hypothetical #1 56
8. Review: The Prima Facie Cases 58

Chapter 2 · Intersectionality 61
1. The Intersection of Sexism and Racism 61
   Testimony of Clarence Thomas 63
   Testimony of Anita F. Hill 66
   Testimony of Clarence Thomas 70
   Notes and Discussion 75
   Testimony of Witnesses in Support of Anita Hill:
   Ellen M. Wells, John W. Carr, Judge Susan Hoerchner, and Joel Paul 79
   Testimony of Witnesses in Support of Clarence Thomas:
   J.C. Alvarez, Nancy E. Fitch, Diane Holt, and Phyllis Berry-Myers 84
   Notes and Discussion 90
2. Intersectionality Theory 95
   A. Defining Intersectionality 95
      Notes and Discussion 99
   B. The Discourse of Exit 100
      Notes and Discussion 104
3. Applying Intersectionality Theory 104
   A. Vulnerability of Farmworkers and Restaurant Workers to Sexual Abuse on the Job 104
      Notes and Discussion 110
   B. Interlocking Systems of Oppression 111
      Notes and Discussion 117
4. Intersectionality in the Courts 118
   Hicks v. Gates Rubber Co. 119
   Notes and Discussion 121
5. Application of Law and Ethics 121
   Hypothetical #2 121

Chapter 3 · Refining the Prima Facie Case 125
1. Elements One and Three: Membership in a Protected Class/Harassment Based on Sex 125
   A. Definition of Terms as Applied 125
   B. When Is Conduct Based on Sex? 126
      Notes and Discussion 127
   Robinson v. Jacksonville Shipyards, Inc. 129
Notes and Discussion 135
C. Same-Sex Harassment as Discrimination Based on Sex 136
   Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services, Inc. 136
   Notes and Discussion 139
D. Sexual Orientation Discrimination as Conduct Based on Sex 142
   Nichols v. Azteca Restaurant Enterprises, Inc. 144
   Notes and Discussion 146
E. Gender Identity and Transgender Discrimination as Conduct Based on Sex 148
   Schroer v. Billington 149
   Notes and Discussion 153
2. Element Two: The Unwelcomeness of Sexual Harassment 154
   A. Definition, Purpose, and Critiques 154
   Notes and Discussion 155
   B. Evidentiary Issues in Proving Unwelcomeness 159
      Burns v. McGregor Electronic Industries, Inc. 160
      Notes and Discussion 164
3. Element Four: Conduct That Affects the Terms, Conditions, or Privileges of Employment 172
   A. Defining a Hostile Work Environment 173
      Rabidue v. Osceola Refining Company 173
      Notes and Discussion 179
      Ellison v. Brady 182
      Notes and Discussion 188
      Harris v. Forklift Systems, Inc. 190
      Notes and Discussion 193
   B. The Reasonableness Standard 196
      Notes and Discussion 198
4. Application of Law and Ethics 199
   Hypothetical #3 199
5. Review 201
Chapter 4 · Employer Liability for Workplace Sexual Harassment 203
1. Who Should Be Responsible? 203
   A. Three Types of Harassers 204
   B. Targets Bear the Burden 205
2. Legal Background 206
   A. Early Case Law Regarding Employer Liability 208
      Barnes v. Costle 208
      Henson v. Dundee 211
      Notes and Discussion 212
   B. Supreme Court Guidance? 213
      Meritor Savings Bank, FSB v. Vinson 214
Notes and Discussion 218
3. More Recent Developments Regarding Supervisor Harassment 219
   A. Supreme Court Cases That Changed the Title VII
      Standard for Employer Liability 220
         Burlington Industries, Inc. v. Ellerth 220
         Notes and Discussion 230
         Faragher v. City of Boca Raton 235
         Notes and Discussion 240
   B. Post Faragher and Burlington Interpretations 243
         Todd v. Ortho Biotech, Inc. 243
         Notes and Discussion 246
   C. Theoretical Responses to Burlington and Faragher 249
         Joanna Grossman’s The Culture of Compliance: The Final
         Triumph of Form Over Substance in Sexual
         Harassment Law 253
         Notes and Discussion 256
4. Constructive Discharge 259
   Pennsylvania State Police v. Suders 259
   Notes and Discussion 265
5. Retaliation as Title VII Harassment and Discrimination 265
   Title VII Retaliation Provisions 265
   Crawford v. Metro. Gov’t. of Nashville and
   Davidson Cnty. Tenn. 266
   Notes and Discussion 270
6. Application of Law and Ethics 271
   Hypothetical #4 271
7. Review 273

Chapter 5 · Title VII Remedies, Attorneys’ Fees, and Costs 275
1. Equitable Remedies 275
   Title VII Enforcement Provisions 275
   Hansel v. Public Service Co. of Colorado 277
   Notes and Discussion 282
2. Compensatory and Punitive Damages 284
   Title VII Damages Provisions 284
   Notes and Discussion 285
3. Punitive Damages 291
   Kolstad v. American Dental Association 291
   Notes and Discussion 298
4. Attorneys’ Fees and Costs 301
   Weeks v. Baker & McKenzie 302
   Forshee v. Waterloo Industries, Inc. 305
   Shea v. Galaxie Lumber & Construction Co., Ltd. 306
CONTENTS

Notes and Discussion 309
5. Application of Law and Ethics 309
   Hypothetical #5 309
6. Review 311

Chapter 6 · Sexual Harassment at School 313
1. The Prevalence of Sexual Harassment 314
   A. In High Schools by Peers 314
   B. In High Schools by Adults 317
   C. At Colleges and Universities 318
2. Title IX's Debut and Application 319
   A. Defining Sexual Harassment under Title IX 320
   B. State Statutory Rape Laws, Title IX, and the Unwelcomeness Requirement 322
   C. Borrowing from Title VII and the Unwelcomeness Requirement Pertaining to Youth 324
   Notes and Discussion 325
3. Court Treatment of the Unwelcomeness Requirement Under Title IX 325
   A. Mary M. v. North Lawrence Community School Corp. 326
   B. Chancellor v. Pottsgrove School District 328
   C. Benefield v. Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama 330
   Notes and Discussion 330
4. Supreme Court Analysis of Sexual Harassment Under Title IX 331
   A. Supreme Court Analysis of Teacher-Student Harassment under Title IX 331
      Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent School District 331
      Notes and Discussion 340
   B. Supreme Court Analysis of Peer-Student Sexual Harassment under Title IX 344
      Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education 345
      Notes and Discussion 360
5. Off-Campus Harassment 364
   A. Online Harassment 365
      Feminist Majority Foundation v. Hurley 365
      Notes and Discussion 375
   B. Harassment of Student Interns 377
      O’Connor v. Davis 377
      Doe v. Mercy Catholic Medical Center 381
      Notes and Discussion 386
6. Recent Title IX Developments and The GenZ Student Movement 388
   Notes and Discussion 396
7. Application of Law and Ethics 396
   Ethics Hypothetical #6 396
Chapter 7 · Title VIII—Sexual Harassment in Housing 399

1. Introduction to Sexual Harassment in Housing 399
   Notes and Discussion 402

2. Introduction to the Law 403
   A. Denials of Housing: Section 3604(a) 403
   B. Discriminatory Terms and Conditions: Section 3604(b) 404
   C. Discriminatory Statements: Section 3604(c) 404
   D. Intimidation and Interference: Section 3617 404

3. Title VIII Cases and Title VII Precedent 405
   Shellhammer v. Lewallen 405
   Notes and Discussion 412
   Dicenso v. Cisneros 413
   Notes and Discussion 416
   Honce v. Vigil 419
   Notes and Discussion 423
   Title VIII Harassment in Housing Regulation 423

4. Additional Issues 424
   A. “In connection with the sale or rental of a dwelling” 424
      Post-Acquisition Claims 424
      United States v. Koch 425
      Notes and Discussion 429
   B. The Independent Utility of § 3617 429
      Title VIII Prohibitions Regulation 431
      Notes and Discussion 431
   C. Damages 432
      Quigley v. Winter 433
      Notes and Discussion 439
   D. Other Legal Provisions 439

5. Application of Law and Ethics 441
   Hypothetical #7 441

Chapter 8 · Sexual Harassment in Prisons and the Military 445

1. Sexual Harassment in Prison—Harassment by Inmates 445
   James E. Robertson’s Cruel and Unusual Punishment in United States Prisons: Sexual Harassment Among Male Inmates 447
   Notes and Discussion 462

2. Sexual Harassment in Prison—Harassment by Prison Guards 463
   Barney v. Pulsipher 464
   Newby v. The District of Columbia 470
   Howard v. Everett 473
   Notes and Discussion 473

3. Sexual Harassment in the Military—Introduction 477
   Notes and Discussion 482
4. Sexual Harassment in the Military — Case Law
   and Further Comment 483
   Becker v. Pena 483
   United States v. Castillo 484
   Notes and Discussion 485

5. Gender Panic, Backlash, and Responsibility in Segregated
   Environments — Common Themes and New Approaches 486
   A. Gender Panic and Resegregation 488
      Martha Chamallas’s The New Gender Panic: Reflections on
      Sex Scandals and the Military 488
      Notes and Discussion 496
   B. Accepting Not Blame But Responsibility 498
      Diane H. Mazur’s Women, Responsibility, and the Military 498
      Notes and Discussion 508

6. Application of Law and Ethics 509
   Hypothetical #8 509

Chapter 9 · Continuing Controversies and New Developments
   in Sexual Harassment Law 511
1. Harassment in Other Physical Settings 511
   A. Sexual Harassment in Youth Athletics and
      Volunteer Organizations 513
   B. Sexual Harassment in Public 516
2. Online Harassment 518
   A. Terminology and Prevalence 518
      Notes and Discussion 521
   B. The Legal Response 523
      Notes and Discussion 525
   C. Extralegal Remedies and Their Limits 527
3. The First Amendment Defense 528
   Robinson v. Jacksonville Shipyards, Inc. 529
   Notes and Discussion 531
   DeAngelis v. El Paso Municipal Police Officers Assoc. 532
   Notes and Discussion 536
4. The Plaintiff’s Sexual History 538
   Rodriguez-Hernandez v. Miranda-Velez 539
   Excel Corp. v. Bosley 543
   Sanchez v. Zabihi 545
   Notes and Discussion 548
   West’s Annotated California Codes, Code of Civil Procedure 550
   West’s Annotated California Codes, Evidence Code 551
   West’s Annotated California Codes, Evidence Code 551
   Socksbrunot v. Hirschvogel Inc. 555
   Notes and Discussion 561
CONTENTS

5. Publicity 562
   Paul Rogers’s Software Firm Founder Accused of Sexual Harassment 563
   Paul Rogers’s Another Worker Targets Mitchell: An Ex-Aide Charges Him with Sexual Harassment 564
   Paul Rogers’s 2 Agencies Investigating Ex SCO Chief 565
   Notes and Discussion 566

6. Application of Law and Ethics 567
   Hypothetical #9 567

Chapter 10 · The Future: #MeToo and Legal Reform 569
   1. Introduction 569
   2. #MeToo and Cross-Sector Organizing 572
      Notes and Discussion 573
      Linda Burstyn’s The Weinstein Effect 573
      Notes and Discussion 580
   3. Legal Reform 581
      Maya Raghu & Joanna Suriani’s #MeTooWhatNext: Strengthening Workplace Sexual Harassment Protections and Accountability 581
      Notes and Discussion 591
      Chai R. Feldblum & Victoria A. Lipnic’s EEOC Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace Report of Co-Chairs 595
      Notes and Discussion 621
   4. Conclusion 621

Table of Names 625

Index 631
# Table of Cases

**-A-**
- Adkins v. Rodriguez, 451
- Agarwal v. Johnson, 232
- Alexander v. Yale, 320
- American Booksellers Ass’n v. Hudnut, 531
- Anderson v. Deluxe Homes of PA, Inc., 257
- Andrews v. City of Philadelphia, 196

**-B-**
- Baldwin v. Foxx, 143
- Banks v. Housing Authority of Bossier City, 400
- Barnes v. Costle, 11, 22, 23, 26, 208, 227
- Barnes v. Train, 11
- Barney v. Pulsipher, 464
- Barta v. City & County of Honolulu, 557
- Baynard v. Malone, 342
- Becker v. Pena, 483
- Beliveau v. Caras, 418
- Blake v. MJ Optical, Inc., 157
- Bloch v. Frischholz, 429
- BMW v. Gore, 291
- Boddie v. Schnieder, 453
- Bostic v. Smyrna Sch. Dist., 343
- Bostock v. Clayton County Board of Commissioners, 147
- Bowers v. Hardwick, 142
- Boxer X v. Harris, 476
- Brooks v. City of City of San Mateo, 194
- Brown v. Board of Education, 23, 61, 95
- Bundy v. Jackson, 39, 276
- Burlington Industries, Inc. v. Ellerth, 220, 239, 243, 260, 269
- Burns v. McGregor Electronic Industries, Inc., 159, 160, 236
- Burton v. Livingstone, 452

**-C-**
- California v. Green, 393
- Cannon v. University of Chicago, 333, 385
- Carr v. Allison Gas, 167
- Chaloult v. Interstate Brands Corp., 256, 257
- Chinery v. American Airlines, 524
- Christiansburg Garment Co. v. EEOC, 302
- City of Burlington v. Dague, 306
- Colston v. Cleveland Public Library, 31
- Corlett v. Oakland University, 538
- Corne v. Bausch & Lomb, Inc., 11, 12, 16, 212, 242
- Crawford v. Metro. Gov’t. of Nashville and Davidson Cnty. Tenn., 266–269

**-D-**
- Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education, 345, 538
- DeAngelis v. El Paso Municipal Police Officers Assoc., 196, 532–536, 537
- Delgado v. Stegall, 343
- DiCenso v. Cisneros, 413
- Dillon v. Frank, 143, 242
- Doe v. Baum, 393, 394
- Doe v. Green, 343
- Doe v. Mercy Catholic Medical Center, 381
- Dufresne v. J.D. Fields and Co., Inc., 552
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EEOC v. Danka Industries, 189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEOC v. R.G. &amp; G.R. Funeral Homes, Inc., 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEOC v. Sunbelt Rentals, Inc., 193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellis v. Meade, 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellison v. Brady, 182, 191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epic Systems Corp. v. Lewis, 593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estelle v. Gamble, 454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excel Corp. v. Bosley, 543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fahnbulleh v. GFZ Realty, LLC, 432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faragher v. City of Boca Raton, 220, 235, 241, 243, 284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer v. Brennan, 453, 458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farrar v. Hobby, 302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Majority Foundation v. Hurley, 361, 365, 525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Majority Foundation v. University of Mary Washington, 365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feres v. United States, 483, 485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzgerald v. Barnstable Sch. Comm., 386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzpatrick v. QVC, Inc., 549, 550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forshee v. Waterloo Industries, Inc., 305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools, 333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresenius USA Manufacturing, Inc., 537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garcetti v. Ceballos, 537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardinella v. General Electric Co., 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent School District, 331, 344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Electric v. Gilbert, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald v. University of Puerto Rico, 195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert v. General Electric, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilson v. Cox, 452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonzalez v. Department of the Army, 483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goss v. Lopez, 353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffith v. Keystone Steel &amp; Wire, 592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griggs v. Duke Power Co., 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halprin v. Prairie Single Family Homes Ass’n, 424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hansel v. Public Service Co. of Colorado, 277–282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hargrave v. Brown, 554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartleip v. McNeilab, Inc., 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris v. Forklift Systems, Inc., 190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawkins v. Anheuser-Busch, Inc., 195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haworth v. State of Nevada, 308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helling v. McKinney, 454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henson v. City of Dundee, 43, 48, 407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herrick v. Grindr, LLC, 526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hicks v. Gates Rubber Company, 118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hively v. Ivy Tech Community College, 143, 146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holman v. Indiana, 31, 141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honce v. Vigil, 419, 440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hovater v. Robinson, 468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard v. Everett, 473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard v. Historic Tours of America, 557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUD v. Krueger, 430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudson v. McMillian, 454, 455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffee v. Redmond, 189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan v. Clark, 184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katz v. Dole, 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaytor v. Electric Boat Corp., 193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolstad v. American Dental Association, 291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kopp v. Samaritan Health Sys., 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotteakos v. United States, 561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakoski v. James, 386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lam v. Curators of UMKC Dental School, 384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lapka v. Chertoff, 193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeGrand v. Area Resources for Community and Human Services, 194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipsett v. University of Puerto Rico, 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lopez v. Aramark Uniform &amp; Career Apparel, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power v. Manhart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loving v. Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutz v. Secretary of the Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-M-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin v. White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martini v. Federal National Mortgage Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary M. v. North Lawrence Community School Corp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McClean v. Seco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McWilliams v. Fairfax County Board of Supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medlin v. American Airlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendoza v. Borden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meritor Savings Bank, FSB v. Vinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller v. Bank of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miranda v. Arizona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-N-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neudecker v. Bosclair Corp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey v. T.L.O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newby v. The District of Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nichols v. Azteca Restaurant Enterprises, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nichols v. Frank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Haven Board of Education v. Bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-O-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Connor v. Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Rourke v. City of Providence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odina v. Westin Tucson Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogden v. Wax Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oncal v. Sundowner Offshore Services, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ortiz v. Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-P-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parrish v. Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul v. Northrop Grumman Ship Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh Press Co. v. Human Relations Comm’n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollard v. E.I. DuPont de Nemours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porm v. White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPG Industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press v. Lucky Stores, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priest v. Rotary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Q-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quigley v. Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinn v. Green Tree Credit Corp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-R-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabidue v. Osceola Refining Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rankin v. McPherson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redd v. New York State Div. of Parole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reed v. MBNA Marketing Systems, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reed v. Shepard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reeves v. Carrollsburg Condominium Unit Owners Ass’n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renton v. Playtime Theatres, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberts v. United States Jaycees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson v. Sappington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodriguez-Hernandez v. Miranda-Velez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogers v. EEOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotary Int’l v. Rotary Club of Duarte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruich v. Ruff, Weidenaar &amp; Reidy, Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-S-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanchez v. Zabihi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasaki v. Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxton v. American Tel. &amp; Tel. Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scher v. Engelke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schroer v. Billington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott v. Sears Roebuck &amp; Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaphus v. Lilly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seltzer-Bey v. Delo, 473
Settle v. Dickson County School Board, 538
Shellhammer v. Lewallen, 405
Shepherd v. Comptroller of Public Accounts of Texas, 194
Smith v. Wade, 294
Sotoj v. Nashville Aquarium, Inc., 258
Stackhouse v. DeSitter, 432
Starrett v. Wadley, 469
State v. Carmichael, 553
Steiner v. Showboat Operating Co., 31, 48
Stinner v. Safeway, Inc., 197
Stigurs v. Benoit, 431
Swentek v. USAir, 166
Swinton v. Potomac Corp., 31

-T-
Tagliaferri v. Winter Park Housing Authority, 417
Tesoriero v. Syosset Cent. Sch. Dist., 343
The Boeing Company and Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, IFPTE Local 2001, 537
Tidwell v. American Oil Co., 211
Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School Dist., 348
Todd v. Ortho Biotech, Inc., 243
Tomkins v. Public Service Electric & Gas Co., 13, 16
Turner v. The Saloon, Ltd., 195

-U-
Ulane v. Eastern Airlines, Inc., 148
United States v. Castillo, 484
United States v. Clark, 492
United States v. Galloway, 553
United States v. Kloberdanz, 437
United States v. Koch, 425
United States v. One Feather, 553
United States v. Paradise, 530
United States v. Shearer, 484
United States v. Shoulberg, 530
Uphoff v. Elegant Bath, Ltd., 308

-V-
Valentin-Almeyda v. Municipality of Aguadilla, 196
Vance v. Ball State University, 584
Vanderbilt v. Town of Chilmark, 189
Vinson v. Meritor Savings Bank, 4, 43, 55, 78, 163, 191, 579
Vinson v. Taylor, 50
Virginia v. Black, 372

-W-
Waheed v. Kalafut, 431
Waid v. Merrill Area Pub. Schs., 386
Waltman v. International Paper Co., 181
Watkins v. Bowden, 196
Watson v. Jones, 453, 473
Watts v. United States, 372
Wheeler v. Snyder Buick, Inc., 282
Williams v. Bell, 11, 20
Williams v. Poretsky Management, Inc., 418
Williams v. Saxbe, 11, 20
Wilson v. Brinker Int'l, 291, 298
Wilson v. Seiter, 454
Wisconsin v. Mitchell, 535
Wolak v. Spucci, 552
Wood v. Beauclair, 476
Woods v. Foster, 400
Wrightson v. Pizza Hut of America, Inc., 140

-Y-
Young v. Southwestern Savings & Loan Association, 46

-Z-
Zarda v. Altitude Express, Inc., 147
Preface

SEXUAL HARASSMENT LAW: HISTORY, CASES & PRACTICE is the second edition of Professor Jennifer Ann Drobac’s SEXUAL HARASSMENT LAW: HISTORY, CASES & THEORY. That book was the first comprehensive textbook to explore sex-based harassment law for a full-semester law school course. For this second edition, Professors Carrie N. Baker and Rigel C. Oliveri join Professor Drobac. Together, we bring our unique scholarly talents, professional experiences, and shared dedication to civil rights to create a textbook accessible to college students, graduate students, and others.

This new edition traces the development of American law, practice strategies, and legal reasoning concerning sexual harassment in employment, education, housing, prisons, and the military, updated with recent cases. This edition also explores the #MeToo movement, which has made sexual harassment a much-discussed topic everywhere. In its discussion of statutory law, case law, and legal reasoning, this edition acknowledges the usefulness of traditional legal analysis of sex-based oppression. It also, however, recognizes the experiences, perspectives, and creativity of parties and lawyers involved in sexual harassment litigation and remediation. It considers how the law successfully curbs abuses or how and why it fails to address sex-based abuses of power.

In addition to careful analysis of relevant law, this book also examines topics such as street harassment, online harassment, press coverage, extralegal responses to misconduct, and mandatory arbitration, among others. Ethics hypotheticals at the end of each chapter incorporate the study of professional responsibility into this examination of sexual harassment law.

This book is divided into 10 chapters. Chapter 1 examines the legal and theoretical developments of sexual harassment law in the 1970s and 1980s. It covers the early interpretation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the initial rejection of the notion that Title VII prohibits sexual harassment. It follows the shifting tide that resulted in the understanding that sexual harassment constitutes discrimination “because . . . of sex.” It credits, in part, early feminist activists and scholars who facilitated that shift and the necessary recognition of the plight of many female workers. Chapter 2 introduces the concept of intersectionality—how gender, race, class, and other aspects of identity intersect to shape people’s experience of sexual harassment—through the examination of the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas hearings in 1991. It
also reviews contemporary examples of the intersectionality of sex-based oppression, such as immigrant farmworker women and low-wage restaurant workers.

Delving into law and practice, Chapters 3 and 4 explore each element of the plaintiff’s prima facie case. Chapter 5 explains liability damages. These chapters demonstrate how courts have interpreted the law narrowly to deny relief to many harassed individuals. Chapter 6 surveys sexual harassment law in the educational context under Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments to the Civil Rights Act, which courts have interpreted even more narrowly than Title VII. Chapter 7 addresses sexual harassment law in housing under the Fair Housing Act and Chapter 8 covers sexual harassment in the highly regimented environments of prisons and the military.

Introducing new topics, Chapter 9 examines street harassment and online harassment. Chapter 9 reconsiders traditional defenses, analyzing defendants’ assertion of First Amendment free speech protection and the exploitation of plaintiffs’ sexual history. This Chapter also highlights how media coverage of sexual harassment cases can influence the course of litigation. Finally, Chapter 10 explores the rise of the #MeToo movement and calls for reform of sexual harassment law to expand coverage, close loopholes, and make the law more effective.

We offer this textbook because we believe that sexual harassment law merits full semester coverage. The pervasiveness of sexual harassment, as well as the many substantive law fields that influence its redress, prompts in-depth analysis. This edition reflects the evolution of the study of sexual harassment law. Because we also see a continuing need for ethics education, in this edition we place an ethics hypothetical at the end of each chapter. These hypos are based on real experiences from our years of sexual harassment law practice. We have also retained selected theoretical excerpts and quotes that provide a variety of different perspectives regarding sexual harassment and the legal response to it. This book necessarily reflects our philosophy that one cannot separate the “law” from legal theory or from practical application. Only an integrated approach to legal problems produces the most effective tool for managing our society and personal relations. Thus, we incorporate legal theory and practice considerations into every chapter. We debated calling this book *Sex-Based Harassment: History, Cases, and Practice* because sexual harassment law was originally a common law creation from the sex-based discrimination prohibition in Title VII. In the end, we chose to stay with the more common appellation to avoid confusion and because sexual harassment law has evolved to become a substantive legal field in its own right, distinct and distinguishable from other types of antidiscrimination law.

We thank the many contributors to both editions of this textbook. For this edition in particular, we want to thank the Indiana University McKinney Law Library Faculty: Professors Miriam A. Murphy, Susan David deMaine, and Benjamin J. Keele. We are also grateful for the excellent research assistance we received from Kristen Coffey, Jessica Dickinson, Alexia Lopez, Deborah P. Morton, Nick Moscalick, and
Emma Seymour. Finally, we thank Julie C. Ardelean and Rachel Renee Mitchell for their careful editorial work and Emma Seymour for her help on the index.

In the edited cases, articles, and other materials, ellipses indicate omitted footnotes and citations. We omitted most footnotes and citations. When we retained footnotes from original sources, original footnote numbering was preserved.

Finally, we invite comments and suggestions regarding this book. You can reach us through Professor Jennifer Drobac, Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law, 530 W. New York St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-3225, (317) 278-4777, jdrobac@iu.edu.

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Since the beginning of October 2017, Professor Drobac has given more than 120 interviews to media outlets concerning sexual harassment, #MeToo, and a number of high-profile cases. Her comments have appeared in *The Washington Post,* *The New York Times,* *Vox,* and *MarketWatch,* to name just a few.

From 1992 to 2001, she practiced law in California, focusing on sexual harassment law litigation, and from 1997 to 2000, she served as a lecturer at Stanford Law School. Following law school, she clerked for the Honorable Barefoot Sanders, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas.

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Professor Oliveri is a nationally recognized expert on fair housing law. Her scholarship focuses on housing discrimination, residential segregation, zoning and property rights, and sexual harassment. Her published work has appeared in a number of law reviews, journals, and books. She was recently featured in a national program put on by the Department of Housing and Urban Development on sexual harassment in housing. She currently serves as a Commissioner for the Columbia, Missouri, Public Housing Authority.

Following law school, Oliveri served as a law clerk to the Honorable Stephanie K. Seymour on the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. Prior to joining the Missouri Law faculty, she served as a trial attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice through the Honors Graduate Program. She practiced in the Civil Rights Division, Housing and Civil Enforcement Section, where she litigated and tried a number of significant cases involving housing discrimination and sexual harassment in housing. In 2003 she was awarded a Special Commendation from the Attorney General for outstanding service.