

Criminal Justice Basics and Concerns

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Criminal Justice Basics and Concerns

Edited by

William G. Doerner

COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY



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*To my sweetheart and best friend, Judy—
I can't thank you enough!*

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Preface

There was a lot of anticipation and excitement a few years back when Carolina Academic Press first unveiled its line of state-specific criminal justice books. This series took deliberate aim at a fundamental concern. The major drawback with many introductory criminal justice texts is that they ignore the local landscape. Instead, these books paint a picture of a generic “American” criminal justice system which really exists only on paper. What our students needed was a more realistic, concrete approach that would enable them to understand how exactly justice is administered and delivered on a daily basis in their home towns and communities.

Most students will remain in their home state after graduation and launch their careers in local or, maybe, state criminal justice agencies. Despite lofty goals and aspirations, the average college graduate is not likely to land a coveted position with a federal agency. College graduates simply lack sufficient hands-on experience. Even after four years of college, they have gained very little exposure to the “real world” and how justice is delivered in their locales. The need for a much more grounded approach is very apparent. As a result, the entries in the Carolina Academic Press state-specific series are designed to combat this problem of “criminal justice illiteracy.”

Those of us who adopted this approach quickly realized that although we were conveying essential materials to our students, we still needed a broader canvas that would integrate conceptual basics and concerns. This way, our students would be able to link what was going on at the local level with corresponding national trends and issues.

Criminal Justice Basics and Concerns is a primer that instructors can use alongside each state-specific introductory criminal justice book offered by the Carolina Academic Press. This companion text is intended to augment the state-specific books by providing a backdrop and overarching view of the field. This way, students can better appreciate the various issues that have arisen within their own state and local criminal justice systems.

The chapters are written by a select group of notable scholars. Many of these authors have had actual hands-on experience working in the criminal justice field. Best of all, in a day and age where escalating textbook costs are a mounting concern, this primer is attractively priced to be a very affordable and economical alternative to the expensive textbooks that populate the existing market.

Series Note

Carolina Academic Press' state-specific criminal justice series fills a gap in the field of criminal justice education. One drawback with many current introduction to criminal justice texts is that they pertain to the essentially non-existent "American" criminal justice system and ignore the local landscape. Each state has its unique legislature, executive branch, law enforcement system, court and appellate review system, state supreme court, correctional system, and juvenile justice apparatus. Since many criminal justice students embark upon careers in their home states, they are better served by being exposed to their own states' criminal justice systems. Texts in this series are designed to be used as primary texts or as supplements to more general introductory criminal justice texts.

