Preface

It seems that every day brings more alarming news about troubles in the U.S. economy and stock markets. Due to the ongoing difficult economic climate, many employers are now freezing, modifying, or eliminating their pension and benefit plans. The prolonged economic slump also is making it increasingly difficult for Congress to address the deteriorating financial condition of the Social Security and Medicare programs. Thus, a thorough understanding of pension and benefits law and related issues is now more critical than ever. *ERISA and Employee Benefits Law: The Essentials* offers the most up-to-date, expert information on the full spectrum of pension and benefits topics—from easy-to-understand explanations of ERISA and other laws regulating employee benefits plans to detailed descriptions and definitions of private retirement and welfare plans as well as public programs, such as Social Security and Medicare. It also includes a comprehensive historical tour of milestone legislation, regulations, and case law that have significantly impacted the many plans available in the United States private and public sectors today.

*ERISA and Employee Benefits Law: The Essentials* is designed to help lawyers, students, and other professionals who need to understand the complex issues involved in the administration of pension and benefit plans. It is also designed to assist individuals in planning for retirement and for optimal use of employee benefits available to them, and to provide a straightforward yet thorough explanation both for those individuals and for their professional advisors. The authors, David Pratt and Sharon Reece, who has a master of law degree in taxation from New York University School of Law, are both law professors with decades of experience teaching students in the area of pension and benefit issues. Professor Pratt continues to advise clients on a wide array of pension and benefit issues. They have crafted a thorough, well-organized, and readily accessible discussion of all the information that a practicing attorney, plan advisor, plan administrator, or individual is likely to need to know in order to operate successfully in this increasingly complex environment.

The authors welcome comments and suggestions, both general and specific, from readers. This feedback will be taken into account in pre-
paring future editions of this book. Please address any correspondence to David Pratt at dprat@albanylaw.edu or to Sharon Reece at sreece@law.umaryland.edu.

We hope you enjoy the book and find it useful.

David Pratt, Albany, New York
Sharon Reece, Baltimore, Maryland
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