I began my graduate studies a little later in my career, after working as a trial court administrator in Texas and Washington. I was interested in public administration as it applied to the courts. Unfortunately, I could find little written about the courts. I was therefore thrilled to come upon the seventh edition of *The Improvement of the Administration of Justice*. It was often my go-to resource. That is why I think this volume is so important. It is necessary to periodically set out the current condition of the administration of justice and attempt to point the way to new directions that the courts could take to make improvements. I hope that is what this volume will accomplish. The first edition of this work was published in 1938, and the Lawyers Conference has taken on the task of making certain that it is periodically updated.

When we first set out to create the new edition, our first instinct was to merely update the prior edition. However, the committee quickly realized that so much had changed over more than 15 years since the last edition, it was necessary to rethink the organization and structure of this new edition. The new edition is divided into six sections: The Judicial System, Judicial Officers, Court Operations, Case Presentation, Specialized Courts, and Serving the Community. While these topics could be construed as being very broad and each of the sections could be a volume of its own, an effort was made by each of the authors to bring the focus back to the administration of justice and how it can be improved. The first section of the book gives an overview of the system focusing on the importance of judicial independence; exploring how the courts can and should improve their governance; and the roles of courts, judges, and bar leaders in the improvement of the administration of justice. It closes with a look at the funding sources for courts and how they can be sustained. The second section looks at judges, focusing on their ethical responsibility and how they are evaluated, educated, and selected. It also
takes a look at magistrates and other types of appointed officers and their unique role. The third section is truly the meat of the book and attempts to cover every aspect of the operational side of courts. The fourth section focuses on what goes on in the courtroom and addresses issues such as the growth in self-represented litigants, e-discovery, the judge’s role in the admission of scientific evidence, jury trials, sentencing, and the importance of civility. Section five gives an overview of a number of different types of court. Every court does something unique and may provide insight on new ways of handling cases that can be borrowed by other courts. The final section is on serving the community—how we reach out and communicate and how we deal with the people we are serving through community correction and evaluations and treatment.

Our courts are going through a time of immense change. They have only recently emerged from a period of devastating budget cuts and underfunding brought on by the Great Recession. It is almost axiomatic that when court funding is being cut, there is so much turmoil within society that the workload of the courts increases. This is what most courts experienced. It creates more pressure on the courts to operate as efficiently and as effectively as possible, even when their staff is cut and their doors are even shattered. Many of those lessons are incorporated in this volume.

Our hope is that this work will continue to be a resource for judges, court administrators, lawyers, and others interested in the improvement of our justice system. I am overwhelmed by the level of support that we received from all of these authors. The countless hours that have been given in the writing of these chapters is an indication of the importance of this topic, and I cannot thank the authors enough. My special thanks to William Olivier for his constant help and assistance and his dedication to bringing the project to completion. A special thanks to Nicole Martinez for her excellent assistance in keeping track of everything that needed to be done, and seeing it through. Without her dedication this book would not have been possible.

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