In these days of the “vanishing trial,” when there are ever-fewer opportunities to learn at the feet of masters, this book will be invaluable to guide trial lawyers—but especially those with fewer times at bat—to focus, prioritize, and prepare for that morning when they are called upon to say “Ready, Your Honor.”

Whether one is counsel for plaintiff or the defense, in a larger case or a smaller one, the essential process of preparing in the final months before trial is the same, notwithstanding the fact that every case is unique, every court has different rules, and every judge has personal preferences. In recent years, detailed trial rules have proliferated in our jurisdictions, just as the tolerance, by courts and judges, of ignorance (or knowing non-compliance) of those rules has lessened. When these facts are coupled with client expectations, there is precious little room for “learning by doing” in preparing a case for trial.

You need this book to systematize your approach to the final weeks before trial, to assure there are no loose ends in your case, and to limit the stress of a very stressful time.

Bruce Felmly has been there. He has tried scores of cases in courts across the country in a career that has spanned more than 40 years. His text is spiced with personal anecdotes that demonstrate his humanity and provide you the reader with some comfort that another person has experienced the highs and lows of life as a trial lawyer.

I have gotten to know Bruce as a member of a remarkable fellowship of courtroom lawyers from across the continent. Bruce and I, along with others in that group, also share a passion for fly fishing. This pursuit has taken us from the salmon rivers
of Labrador to Tierra del Fuego in Argentina. The demands of trial work and the intensity, laughter, camaraderie, and tall tales of the fish camp blend well, all adding to the perspective Bruce brings to this book.

In the course of his four decades as a trial lawyer, Bruce has been honored by his peers for his accomplishments as a trial lawyer. Among many accolades, he has been elected to Fellowship in the American College of Trial Lawyers and is a perennial Super Lawyer. He serves as head of the trial department of McLane, Graf, Raulerson & Middleton, P.A., the largest law firm in New Hampshire.

—Paul Fortino