INTRODUCTION

A young lawyer entering into the practice of law can be overwhelmed by the amount of information he must necessarily obtain to create and maintain a productive and successful law practice. Most practicing attorneys know that the education received in law school is only a small portion of the knowledge that is needed, and needed as quickly as possible. Continuing education, new lawyer programs, and firm-sponsored training and mentoring all seek to provide new attorneys with the tools they need to succeed. This work is a compilation of articles, chosen by younger practicing lawyers, that seeks to guide young lawyers in their first days, months, and years in the practice of law.

This book is the final product of a project that began as an attempt to compile the numerous resources published for young lawyers by members of the American Bar Association Section of Litigation. Section of Litigation entities, First Chair Press, whose mission includes publishing books of interest to young lawyers, and the Young Lawyer Leadership Program, which develops future leaders for the Section, resolved to produce a book of great interest and worth to young attorneys. First Chair Press and the YLLP worked together to compile this set of articles originally published in various newsletters, journals, websites, and other sources by the committees and task forces of the Section of Litigation. First Chair Press saw the need to bring these works, written by many well-respected attorneys from around the country, into a single volume; the YLLP provided the manpower over several years to review, analyze, and select works from past Section publications. Hundreds, if not thousands, of articles were reviewed, and the best were chosen.

In deciding how to create the book most likely to be utilized by young lawyers, First Chair Press was forced to choose only a few great articles. The selections for this book, arranged under the topics of Writing, Trial Practice, and Client Development, are timeless and universal in their appeal. A litigator cannot fully succeed without the ability to gain and manage clients, write persuasively, and conduct a trial. Even in the world of decreasing jury trials, increasing ADR, and written communication by email or texting, these skills are essential. Whether at a large or small firm, in-house or outside counsel, rural or urban, and regardless of practice area, these three topics affect all litigators. For that reason, they were selected.

While this book was published with the young lawyer in mind, certainly there are very few attorneys who could not use a bit of a refresher on the topics covered herein. The goal of this book was not to become a definitive guide on the practice of law, but instead to be a forum for sharing viewpoints of successful practitioners on some of the most basic
concerns of the practice of law for any litigator. Any litigator is likely to find new or forgotten lessons in the articles contained herein.

Committees and task forces within the Section of Litigation are the groups who made this work possible. The Section’s committees do a marvelous job of encouraging their members to produce works of interest to litigators in a professional manner. The education received in reviewing the hundreds of articles considered was invaluable to those involved. The ongoing transition of the Section’s newsletters and journals to electronic format will create access to these great articles where it has not existed previously. The reader is encouraged to take full advantage of this new opportunity and take note of this tremendous resource available to members of the Section of Litigation. To the committee chairs, journal editors, and authors who made this possible, a great thank you! Your efforts are invaluable to the mission of this organization.

It is hoped that this will be the first in a series of similar publications. There are other topics of timeless appeal which can be included in future volumes including ethics, law practice management, and discovery. Additionally, articles of note to practitioners in specific areas such as products liability, constitutional law, commercial litigation, amongst many others, are in the Section’s vast library. The perspectives expressed by the many authors of these articles are invaluable, and a compilation thereof can help provide the additional base of knowledge and information all new lawyers (and many not-so-new lawyers) need to reach their full potential as successful litigators.

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