WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

“Tell the Client’s Story is an indispensable guide for lawyers and other professionals to the challenging and important work of developing and presenting mitigation evidence in criminal and especially capital cases. The individual chapters are authored by many of the top experts in the field, whose combined litigation experience totals many decades. This well-organized and readable volume offers step-by-step guidance on how to theorize, collect, and present mitigation evidence. Chapters cover crucial topics such as conducting voir dire, developing case theories, building successful client relationships, pursuing investigation and discovery strategies, presenting neuroscience and other expert evidence, and dealing with the media. The authors include several helpful appendices, including a sample “Capital Case Review Form,” “Mitigation Timeline,” and “Sample Social History,” among other useful templates. The authors incorporate references to legal cases and standards, legal scholarship, and social science in a clear, concise, and accessible fashion. No mitigation team should be without this volume, which is destined to become an instant “go-to” reference work for lawyers, mitigation specialists, and those who train or work with them.”

Carol Steiker, co-author, Courting Death: The Supreme Court and Capital Punishment, Faculty Co-Director, Criminal Justice Policy Program, Harvard Law School

“Tell the Client’s Story: Mitigation in Criminal and Death Penalty Cases is an inspiring collection of insights and lessons learned over decades of hard fought representation of those our society has sought to condemn. It is a must have, must read, resource for anyone taking on the defense of those facing the death penalty – as well as a remarkably helpful resource in non-capital cases. This book reminds us of the critical importance of discovering and telling the true narrative of our client’s lives, and provides very practical advice on working with our clients, and understanding what shapes all of our lives. We all have something to learn from this book.”

Judy Clarke, San Diego, California

“One of the most important advances in criminal defense work over the last 40 years has been the evolution of skills, tactics and techniques to contextualize criminal behavior through mitigation narratives. Not only has this work been critical in dramatically reducing the number of death sentences imposed in this country, it’s provided lawyers with an important way to think about their clients and the lives of the poor and marginalized who are so over-represented in our system. This new book is an essential guide to help 21st Century criminal defense lawyers learn a skill that is just as important as mastering the rules of evidence, effective cross-examination or persuasive summation. Well organized, well written and thoughtfully presented, this terrific book should be read and at the ready in every effective criminal defense lawyer’s library.”

“Sentencing a human being to death imitates the violence such an act claims to abhor. Allowing our government to kill citizens compromises the deepest moral values upon which this country was conceived: the inviolable dignity of all human persons. I am not an attorney but I know good lawyering when I see it. The good news is that Tell the Client’s Story is the Bible of good lawyering for capital clients. If you are on a criminal defense team, I pray that you study this testament that reveals the innate humanity of capital clients and our connectedness to them as fellow human beings, and that you use the wisdom it communicates. Thank you, Defenders, for your ministry of mercy.”