

Preface

This book, the sixth edition of *Just Memos*, sets out the materials that are in Books I, II, and III of the eighth edition of *The Legal Writing Handbook*: It helps students make the transition from other types of writing to legal writing; it provides students with an introduction to the U.S. legal system and legal analysis and reading; it introduces legal research; and it walks students through the process of writing predictive memos, e-memos, and advice letters.

As you work through the materials in this book, keep in mind that writing a memo or letter is a complex task. To do a good job, you must understand our legal system; you must know how to locate, select, and read the applicable statutes and cases; and you must be able to construct and evaluate each side's arguments. In addition, you must be a good writer. You must be able to use the conventional organizational schemes to present the law, the arguments, and your predictions clearly, precisely, and concisely. Finally, writing a good memo requires the exercise of judgment. You must exercise judgment in deciding when to stop researching, in determining what information the attorney needs, and in evaluating each side's arguments.

Instead of presenting each of these skills in isolation, *Just Memos* presents them in context. Chapter 11 shows four sample memos. The next set of chapters walks you through the process of writing a formal memo: Chapter 13 focuses on drafting the heading and statement of facts; Chapter 14 on drafting the issue statement(s) and brief answer(s); Chapter 15 on drafting the discussion section; Chapter 16 on drafting the formal conclusion; and Chapter 17 on revising, editing, and proofreading. In Chapter 19, we change the focus from drafting a formal memo to an informal memo, also known as an e-memo.

As you read through these chapters, keep your goal in mind. Instead of working to get an "A" on a particular assignment, use your assignments to learn how attorneys think and write about legal issues. By learning how to think and write as a lawyer, you will be a good student, and you will develop the skills that you need to be a good attorney.