

Connecticut LAWYER

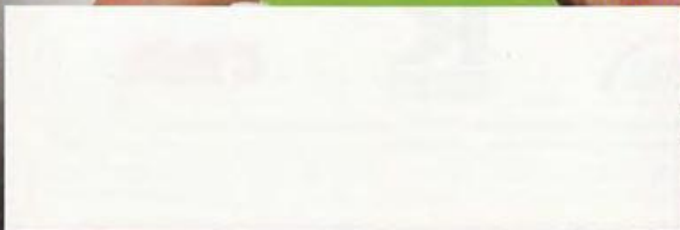
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Meeting

2008 Pro Bono
Honor Roll

Special Annual
Meeting Program
and Registration
Form Inside



LawFirst Publishing Premieres Two New Books at the Annual Meeting

LawFirst Publishing, the CBA's publishing division, will premiere two new books at the Annual Meeting-The Ultimate Guide to Solo and Small Firm Success and Controversial Court Cases, Part II.

Renee C. Berman's *The Ultimate Guide to Solo and Small Firm Success* is a major source of inspiration and direction for any lawyer who considers solo practice or who wants to work at a small firm. In this engaging and insightful guide, Attorney Berman shares her experience with establishing her own solo practice, focusing on the role of the lawyer as entrepreneur and risk taker. *The Ultimate Guide to Solo and Small Firm Success* offers a range of practical topics to help you set up shop and maintain and grow your practice: office management, planning, business plans, hiring staff or partnering, accounting, organizational development, intellectual development, marketing methods, selecting insurance, selling yourself and your skills, and advocacy of being a lawyer. You will discover that Attorney Berman's "50 Tips to a Successful Practice" and "5 Mistakes That Could Cost You Your Practice" are essential reading. Sample documents, checklists, and charts that any lawyer will find helpful are also included.

Regina Forker's *Controversial Court Cases in Connecticut, Part II* continues where her previous book left off. *Controversial Court Cases in Connecticut, Part I* (2008) was a LawFirst Publishing blockbuster. Her new book covers six important cases in Connecticut legal history that spring right from newspaper headlines. Well-documented with thorough research, they include the trials of Peter Reilly, a juvenile convicted of killing his mother only later to be proven innocent; Michael Ross, a convicted serial killer who haunted death row, waiting for execution; Richard Crafts, the infamous woodchipper murderer; and Michael Skakel, whose trial caught the glare of national attention. Other chapters focus on James Tillman, who wrongfully served 18 years in prison before being set free due to DNA evidence, and *Kerrigan v. Department of Public Health*, the recent case that set legal precedent with its same-sex marriage ruling.

How did you become interested in becoming a lawyer? It wasn't something I always wanted to do. I worked in politics for a while and thought I would continue on that career path. I was on the brink of heading to Washington, D.C., to pursue a master's degree in public policy when I decided to pursue a law degree instead. Although I started law school with a vision of a political career, after completing a clinical program, I became enamored with working directly with clients. I never looked back.

Your area of law deals with family issues. What specifically interested you in working in that area? Divorce can be the most emotionally and physically draining time of someone's life. Divorce leaves many people bitter and emotionally battered. If I can help someone navigate the process with dignity so that they can get through this trying period and move forward with his or her life, then I'm doing work I can be proud of.

How does your background affect the way you work with clients? Being a mother of a three-year-old child and having gone through a divorce myself, I can look at a client and say, "I get it. I know what you are going through. I know how you feel."

What challenges did you face when writing this book? What did you find was easy about writing the book?

Starting was the biggest challenge. I envisioned the book a certain way but it was hard to transfer my ideas to paper when I had so many thoughts swimming in my head. Balancing my business, writing, and my family was equally as challenging. There are only so many hours in a day, so I always feared that while I was focusing on one aspect, another would suffer. Once I got organized, it was easy to write. Writing has always been my passion, so I was excited to integrate some creativity in a practical and informative guide that would be easy, and possibly even enjoyable, to read.

How did you manage your time while writing this book? I'm still trying to figure that one out. When I looked at the project as a whole, anxiety would set in but so long as I broke it down into smaller pieces, it was more manageable. I tried to leave one or two unscheduled days per week when I could devote all my time to writing. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't. I wrote a lot at night after my son went to bed. I never compromised my personal time; that is, my time with the people I love or doing the things I enjoy such as exercising.

What did you learn as you were writing this book? That an obstacle is only an obstacle if you let it be. That a lot can be accomplished in a mere few months. That success has nothing to do with money and everything to do with reaching your personal goals.

Looking back, was there anything you would have done differently? No. Writing this book was more than just about writing a book. It was about challenging myself to do something I wasn't so sure I could do. Was it easy? No. Did I doubt myself? Absolutely. But if it was easy it wouldn't have been as rewarding.

There are many books on the market that have solo practice as their topic. How does your book differ from other books that give advice to solo practitioners? Most books on this topic fail to address the business aspect of a law practice. An attorney can be the most gifted litigator in the state, but if he or she doesn't market adequately, manage the office efficiently, and handle the finances resourcefully, the practice will crumble. I compiled a business advisory panel to contribute their expertise to the book in areas such as marketing, networking, accounting, and professional development. The expertise of these talented individuals comes at a high price if a small business owner were to seek out their services, but it's at the reader's fingertips in the book. I don't believe there is a book quite like it out there for solo practitioners.

What do you think readers will come away with when they read this book? Renewed focus and energy to better their practice. This book offers a lot of

practical tips that are easy to implement. I hope it inspires readers to think outside of the box; that is, just because things were traditionally always done one way, it doesn't mean it needs to stay that way. I also hope that it helps the reader re-evaluate his or her own business to identify the pieces that need to be refurbished so that his or her business can be better balanced and flourish.

What are your plans for the near future? Are there any more books on the horizon? I'm a planner by nature but I've recently learned that some things just can't be planned. When you stop mapping out your life, you can start living your life. I didn't plan on writing a book but the opportunity presented itself. With that said, I will continue doing the work I love and continue writing. My dream has always been to write a fictional novel so perhaps I should start getting some extra sleep now while I can.

How did you get interested in becoming a lawyer? In college, I started out wanting to be a writer for The New York Times and pursued a degree in journalism. After working for my college paper, I decided that reporting about what other people were doing was not for me. I decided to go to law school so that I could take a more active role in making things happen and impacting people. The John Grisham novels I devoured in high school didn't hurt either.

How does the second book in the Controversial Court Cases series differ from the first book? This book is more current, and thus probably more relevant. It takes a look at cases that involve people who are still alive and are still being affected by the outcomes. I think that the second book also took a gorier look into Connecticut's legal history, which may pique the interest of readers.

What challenges did you face when writing this book? Because many of the people involved in these cases were still alive, I had to be careful not to step on peoples' toes. Many of those involved did not want to talk about these cases, for whatever reason, and so having these resources technically available, but just beyond my reach, was frustrating. Also, the heinous nature of the crimes contained in this book, especially in the Michael Ross case, tended to keep me up at night. I thoroughly enjoyed finishing that chapter and putting it behind me.

How did you manage your time while writing this book? Deadlines are both helpful and stressful, but trying to keep the deadlines, and their extensions, at the forefront of my mind helped me to get the book done. Balancing work and school on the side helped keep me focused, since there was only so much time in the day to get everything done. I had no choice but to stay focused and organized.

What did you learn as you were writing this book? I learned a lot about these cases. I am not a life-long Connecticut resident and so before I started writing, I was not familiar with all the cases in the second book. Delving into them lead me to find out a lot of interesting things about this state. I also learned that one of my aunts was called for jury duty in the Crafts case, but due to work conflicts, did not actually serve.

Looking back, was there anything you would have done differently? I think I would have tried to take more time to pursue more people who were involved in the cases. Since this book really just presents an overview of the cases, instead of an in-depth case study of each, I think that too many interviews would have been overkill, but talking with a few more people would probably have added to the book.

What do you think readers will come away with when they read this second book in the series? I think that readers will get a better picture of Connecticut's legal history, and hopefully understand that many important cases have been decided in this state. If all turns out well, readers should also get enjoyment from reading the book.

You have graduated from law school (by the time this appears in print). What are your plans for the future?

While I'm not prepping for the bar exam, which is almost never, I try to furnish and decorate my "new" house (it was built in 1870), plan my wedding, knit fabulous sweaters, and start work on my third book, *The Young Lawyers' Survival Guide*. In August I'll start my life as an attorney at Brown Paindiris & Scott LLP in Glastonbury where I'll be working mainly in their commercial department. In the next few years, I hope to start a successful intellectual property practice there and have a few more books under my belt.