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The Little Book On Oral Argument

The Little Book on Oral Argument

Alan L. Dworsky



Synopsis

This book, specifically designed for law students and lawyers who want to improve their oral argument skills, starts from scratch by presenting chapters on nervousness, preparation, and delivery, which help to make up a quick course in public speaking. More profoundly, it delves into the core theme of oral argument how one interacts with one's audience. Judges often decide what a lawyer will talk about as much as the lawyer does; they can interrupt with questions, cut a person off, force a lawyer to move on, or take up time telling the lawyer his or her case. The chapters on style, substance, structure, questions, and rebuttal explain the approach lawyers need to take in order to be effective in this peculiar form of conversation. Each oral argument is different, requiring one to make moment-to-moment adjustments to fit the situation and the judges. To make those adjustments intelligently, there is a need for more than mechanical rules. There is also a need to understand the psychology of persuasion. The Little Book on Oral Argument excels at addressing this need and the many others related to oral argument.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Recommended for all attorneys facing oral argument for the first time and an excellent resource for first-year moot court programs --Bimonthly Review of Law Books

Only purchase this book if it's required. It is tiny and has nothing to say that cannot be attributed to common sense.

I have never written a review before, however, now feel compelled to do so. This was my first oral argument, and before a 3 judge panel of the Federal Court of Appeals. This book is quick, to the point and informative. I followed the suggestion on an introduction exactly. After my argument, a Justice for the Federal 4th Circuit Court of Appeals shook my hand and said "A well organized argument...good job". Thank you Alan L. Dworsky Follow up: 2013 Used Dworsky's format again and the Chief Judge of the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals said "Thank you for making your arguments so clear".

This short book is a great read for any oral presenter. Its conversational style is very approachable. While it's geared towards the legal argument (and indeed, some parts are argument-specific), it contains a number of tips that are applicable for any oral presentation.

Could have been longer, but it was a good "primer" for those who want to know something about oral arguments.

I ordered this book before a moot court competition during my first year of law school. Despite a complete lack of confidence in my public speaking abilities, I became a finalist. I owe it all to this little book.

In order to prepare for oral argument in an important federal appeal, I ordered numerous books on oral advocacy. This book may be "little," but it was actually the best of the five books that I read. (Second best was "Winning on Appeal" by Judge Ruggero J. Aldisert). It was somewhat surprising that this book was best, because it was the smallest of the lot and, to some degree, is geared toward law students participating in moot court competitions, rather than to practicing lawyers. But this book had the most practical suggestions and I skipped over the parts applicable to moot court competitions (coordinating argument with a partner, etc.) I also liked the fact that this book had practical suggestions about dealing with "stage fright." Some of the other books I read suggested that if you don't feel totally comfortable with public speaking, perhaps you should find someone else to argue your appeal (gee, thanks). This is the book that I read over again the night before oral argument, and its upbeat tone and concrete suggestions really calmed my nerves. I highly recommend this book to any lawyer preparing for oral argument or for any law student participating in moot court.

Most points are well known or things that anyone could learn from youtube.

The book is not without merit, however, many of the ideas and concepts are common sense and the rest are readily searchable. If you completely lack oral argument skills this book could assist you but was of little to no help to me.

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