

BOOK REVIEW

SPECIALIZED LEGAL RESEARCH: Edited by LEAH F. CHANIN.*
Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 1987. Pp. vii, 388 (\$60.00).

If you don't know where you are going, you will probably end up someplace else. — Laurence J. Peter, author of *THE PETER PRINCIPLE*

Skillful, thorough legal research is often an essential part of adequate legal representation. When the American legal system was less complex, researching a particular area of the law usually involved little more than consulting general treatises or digests which soon led to the applicable statutes, cases, and regulations. As all lawyers are aware, however, this traditional research process has become increasingly inadequate in the modern age of huge bureaucracies and inexpensive data processing. Each day witnesses the publication of thousands, if not millions, of potentially relevant, jargon-filled pages of regulations, unofficial and official rulings, opinion letters, guidelines, histories, articles, treatises, and the like. As a result, the general practice of law is slowly yielding to a maze of specialties and subspecialties, and general practitioners complain that they must consult expensive legal experts before handling even minor problems in specialized areas.

In part, this perceived need for expert consultation arises from a belief that thorough research of the law in specialized areas is impossible or excessively time consuming without the guidance of a specialist. Professor Leah Chanin's *Specialized Legal Research* provides the legal researcher with the written guidance of experts concerning how to thoroughly and efficiently 'find the law' in selected specialty areas. *Specialized Legal Research* gives clear explanations of otherwise incomprehensible jargon and, perhaps more importantly, directs the researcher to easily overlooked sources. The work contains information on nine distinct areas of the law: securities regulation, the Uniform Commercial Code, federal income taxation, copyright law, labor and employment law, environmental law and

* Director of Law Library and Professor of Law, Mercer University. Southern Methodist University (B.A., 1950); Mercer University (LL.B., 1954). Member, State Bar of Georgia and the American Bar Association.

land use planning, admiralty and maritime law, immigration law, and military law. Periodic supplements will keep current the information concerning research in these areas. In addition, Professor Chanin plans two more chapters for publication in January, 1988, one on banking and the other on patent law.

The securities regulation chapter was prepared by Kay Moller Todd, a legal research specialist employed by the firm of Paul, Hastings, Janofsky and Walker in Atlanta, Georgia. Ms. Todd introduces the reader to the scope and legislative history of the seven principal federal statutes governing securities transactions. By including a concordance of SEC rules, Ms. Todd eases the nettlesome task of locating the SEC's regulatory material in the Code of Federal Regulations. Ms. Todd also points the reader to sources of proposed regulations and other SEC issuances, such as no-action letters, staff reports, and miscellaneous documents. She also reviews other secondary sources such as texts, periodicals, looseleaf services, forms, and databases. Finally, Ms. Todd offers a few examples of common research problems in securities regulation which might provide helpful guidance to the novice researcher.

The second chapter concerns Uniform Commercial Code (U.C.C.) research and was contributed by Professor Igor Ivar Kavass, Professor of Law and Director of the Legal Information Center and Law Library at Vanderbilt University. Professor Kavass begins the chapter with a discussion of the origins of the U.C.C. and its legislative history. He includes helpful sections on construction and interpretation problems and varying theories of analysis. He also assesses the value and ease of various principal research sources, as well as secondary research sources. Professor Kavass directs the reader to additional research and practice aids, including a U.C.C. concordance, state conversion tables, forms, other tables, and newsletters. His chapter concludes with a bibliography of U.C.C. materials.

Researching the field of federal income taxation is the subject of the third chapter of *Specialized Legal Research*. This chapter was prepared by Professor Chanin and Patricia M. McDermott, the circuit librarian for the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Professor Chanin and Ms. McDermott lead the researcher to both historical and current sources of federal income tax statutes and to sources that reveal the legislative history of these statutes. Their general discussion of case law provides the reader with a valuable description of the avenues of recourse open to the taxpayer who disputes an assessment. They also inform the reader of the location of tax court decisions, tax court rules, and claims court decisions. They include a list of citators and case digests along with direction on how to best use them. Professor Chanin and Ms. McDermott review in some detail IRS acquiescence and nonacquiescence announcements, IRS regulations and rulings, sources of IRS revenue pro-

cedures and rules, and other IRS publications. Their chapter closes with a concordance of selected tax legislation, a federal income tax bibliography, and a listing of pre-1954 titles of IRS and other pronouncements.

The next chapter of *Specialized Legal Research* examines the pitfalls of research into the field of copyright law and was contributed by Professor Joseph James Beard of St. John's University. Professor Beard begins with an exploration of the sources of copyright law, including the Constitution and federal statutes. He includes the legislative history of the 1976 Act and Congressional Acts prior to 1976 as well as the location of current regulations on copyright, Copyright Office publications, and Office practices. Professor Beard reviews the three major looseleaf services that provide updated information on copyright law. The reader will find references to texts, treatises, and other information dealing with literature, music, motion pictures, and art works and their relationship to copyright. In addition, Professor Beard includes some discussion of computer software copyright developments. His chapter refers to available computerized research into the copyright field and ends with a brief discussion of state copyright law.

The chapter on labor and employment law was prepared by Michael K. Grogan and Eric J. Holshouser, partners in the firm of Coffman, Coleman, Andrews and Grogan, P.A., in Jacksonville, Florida. The authors cite legislation on labor relations, including federal wage and hour requirements, federal equal employment opportunity statutes, and occupational safety and health statutes. They include a guide to various research sources for these statutes, including United States Code sections, citators, and pending as well as proposed legislation. They also discuss the relationship between executive orders and labor law. This chapter of *Specialized Legal Research* will enable the researcher to make efficient use of labor law regulations, administrative rulings and case law derived from the National Labor Relations Board, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The authors' review includes specialized secondary source materials and information on computer research into labor and employment law. An appendix to their chapter gives step-by-step instructions for making a Freedom of Information Act request.

The chapter on environmental law and land use planning was prepared by Professor Frank F. Skillern of Texas Tech University School of Law. His discussion includes a clear description of the relationship between federal and state law in this area. Professor Skillern refers the reader to the best sources of both mandatory and persuasive authority in each jurisdiction. His chapter also discusses the available computerized research services.

The next chapter of *Specialized Legal Research* introduces the reader to admiralty and maritime law. In addition to general research sources for

this field, this chapter deals with specific issues pertaining to admiralty and maritime law, such as collision and shipowners' liability, marine insurance, maritime claims, personal injury and wrongful death, and marine pollution. The chapter was authored by Professor Sally Wiant, Associate Professor of Law and Director of the Law Library of Washington and Lee University.

Professor Chanin authored the chapter on immigration law and included discussions of the statutory history of immigration law, United Nations Immigration protocol, executive orders, and the administrative and regulatory structure of immigration law. The reader should find helpful Professor Chanin's reference to aids, treatises, looseleaf services, periodicals, and miscellaneous publications.

Professor Chanin also authored the book's final chapter on military law, which includes subsections concerning sources of authority, early codes of military justice, and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Professor Chanin discusses each part of the manual for courts-martial and information about military court rules and routes of appeal. Professor Chanin also lists periodicals and various secondary sources.

In essence, each chapter of *Specialized Legal Research* provides the nonspecialist with inexpensive research guidance from a patient, readily accessible specialist. The book fills a void and is a welcome addition to legal literature. With this reference guide at your side, you are more likely to venture into the hitherto uncharted waters of a legal specialty and to get where you should be going and not end up someplace else.

JAMES C. MARSHALL**

** Professor of Law, Mercer University. Princeton University (A.B., 1972); Boston University (J.D., 1977). Member, State Bar of Georgia.