



## Holiday Book Gift-Giving for Lawyers

By Daniel E. Cummins

**W**ith the holiday season upon us, you may be having trouble deciding what to buy as a present for that other lawyer in your life. Given that most lawyers love to read and write (otherwise they wouldn't be in this business), the best gift to give a lawyer may be a book — even better, a book that will assist in honing his or her lawyering or people skills. So here are some suggestions for books to give to the lawyer(s) in your life (and don't forget to get yourself a gift too).

### Writing Skills

As most lawyers spend most of their time with the written word, several books are recommended to assist in improving writing skills.

Arguably, every lawyer should have a copy of *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White. It contains elementary rules of grammar and composition, a list of words and expressions commonly misused and a list of words often misspelled. In 2011, *Time* magazine listed *The Elements of Style* as one of the 100 best and most influential books written in English since 1923.

Another possibility is a law-related thesaurus or even a regular thesaurus to assist that attorney in finding the best word to describe an opponent's ludicrous (absurd, asinine, nonsensical) brief.

Another excellent treatise to consider buying for the lawyer in your life is *The Winning Brief: 100 Tips for Persuasive Briefing in Trial and Appellate Courts* by Bryan A. Garner. The book is a resource that can be consulted again and again.

### Courtroom Skills

In the context of oral argument and trial tips, check out another book that Garner wrote with U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. It's titled *Making Your Case: The Art of Persuading Judges*. This book not only offers appellate-writing tips but also many excellent tips for presenting oral arguments at both the trial court and appellate levels. Highly recommended.

For the young attorney, or even as a reminder to the experienced attorney, Thomas A. Mauet's *Fundamentals of Trial Techniques* is an excellent discourse on how to perform all aspects of a civil-litigation trial, from jury selection to closing arguments.

### Branding

In the digital age, branding oneself online has become the way of the future. An excellent book providing the tools for building a powerful personal brand online through blogging or online professional networks such as LinkedIn can be found in *Me 2.0: Build a Powerful Brand to Achieve Career Success* by Dan Schawbel.

For excellent tips on improving client relations and providing quality service, a book highly recommended by others is *Managing the Professional Service Firm* by David H. Maister.

### Interpersonal Skills

Another book highly recommended for all lawyers (who are sometimes not the most socially adept) is Dale Carnegie's world-famous tome, *How to Win Friends & Influence People*. This is a book that a lawyer will find handy in dealing with others both within the practice of law and without. It may even become a book

that a lawyer could sit down and read every New Year's Day as a way to prepare for interpersonal relations with others in the year ahead. Also, look for the updated edition of the book, titled *How to Win Friends & Influence People in the Digital Age*.

Another gem of a self-help book for social interaction is *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* by Robert Fulghum. The author sets forth basic rules learned in kindergarten that apply to all walks of life, such as play fair, clean up your own mess and live a balanced life.

Another highly recommended book for self-improvement is Stephen R. Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Covey's book provides powerful lessons and a principle-centered approach for solving personal and professional problems through interesting insights and pointed anecdotes.

### Dealing with Stress

Stress and anxiety are, unfortunately, a part of lawyers' lives. A lawyer receiving the gift of a book with tips on how to deal with anxiety may be grateful.

Dale Carnegie also wrote an excellent book titled *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*. Here Carnegie confirms that worrying is a part of everyone's life and provides excellent tips on how to address everyday anxiety through the use of interesting anecdotes and real-life examples without resorting to psycho-babble.

Another excellent book is *Stress Management for Lawyers* by Amiram Elwork (a past contributor to this magazine). This book provides many examples of how to increase personal and profes-

sional satisfaction in the practice of law and thereby decrease anxiety and stress levels.

#### Re-read the Classics

Given how much we read at work, many lawyers have moved away from the joys of reading for enjoyment. Perhaps the lawyer in your life would appreciate receiving a copy of a classic novel such as Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* or anything by Kurt Vonnegut. All of them can be read now as a new experience with a different eye than when they were read back in high school or college. Googling a list of the top 100 novels of all time from a reliable source can give other great examples of classic novels to purchase.

As far as today's literary giants, perhaps any book by John Irving (especially *A Prayer for Owen Meany*) or Pat Conroy (especially *Beach Music*) would provide great reading enjoyment and a break from reading legal briefs and court decisions.

Other reading-for-enjoyment suggestions would include history-related books and biographies.

Lastly, another consideration is to purchase any of the above titles as an audio book or download. That way the recipient of your gift can escape on his or her own journey, listening to the book while enduring lengthy windshield time driving to appointments all across Pennsylvania. ♦



Daniel E. Cummins

Guest columnist Daniel E. Cummins is a partner with the law firm of Foley, Cagnetti, Comerford, Cimini & Cummins in Scranton. He is a frequent contributor to *The Pennsylvania Lawyer*.

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