

The Lost Art of Filling in the Blanks

By Dennis Payton Knight

It is not widely known at Windsor Gardens, but my first published book was not “Joyride for Sale”. No, it was a little 400-page ditty known as the *Colorado Family Law Deskbook with Forms*, 2008, Bradford Publishing Co. I am listed as a co-author on the cover, along with two attorneys, Richard Harris and Christine Nierenz. The attorneys wrote the practice notes, and I, a paralegal, designed the forms in the package.

It is an exciting piece of legal literature that was designed for young attorneys dipping their toes in the scintillating practice of family law, which means the art of getting people divorced, not build families, because folks seldom come to attorneys for family planning.

I will be happy at some point to read selections from the tome. Perhaps you would like to hear the lovely, even poetic language that made critics rave over Form 2-10, Petition for Allocation of Parental Responsibilities (APR).

There are some dandy chapters on Pattern and Additional Requests for Production of Documents, and Pattern and Additional Interrogatories. I drafted an exciting version of a bit I called “Request for Admissions”, but it didn’t make the cut, I suppose because attorneys, even divorce attorneys, loath to admit anything.

I, personally, was taken by my Form 4-6, Checklist and Orders Related to Initial Status Conference (Dissolution of Marriage), mostly because it runs about seven pages and has enough blanks in it to shoot a cowboy movie.

There are only fourteen chapters in our volume, but I managed to create 106 separate forms to give them life. Every form has its own unique and entertaining punch line; that is, except for the form the judge signs to enter the decree of divorce. After summarizing who gets whom and who gets what, and how much one whom pays the other, and for how long, and finally getting around to declaring the marriage is kaput, there is a place for the judge to affix his signature, and the final stanza of the marriage dissolution saga, which reads simply, “The End.”

I didn’t include a happily-ever-after clause because ten to one they’ll just go out and get married again. But on the other hand, I was selling a lot of forms.

The End