

## Preface to the 2025-2026 Edition

We are pleased to bring you the 2025-2026 Edition of *Trial Handbook for Illinois Lawyers—Homicide, 2d*. This 2025-2026 Edition replaces the 2024-2025 Edition of this handbook.

While all trials are complex and stressful on the parties involved, criminal trials are different. Of all criminal charges and trials, no charge is more complicated, more difficult, or more emotional than the trial of a person accused of committing a homicide. For the defendant, the stakes could not be any higher. He or she is facing, at worst, a lifetime in prison. For the State, our society demands justice for a life cut short by a violent act. It is incumbent on all the parties involved, that the decisions made in these trials are made quickly, fairly, and, most importantly, correctly. It is our hope that this handbook continues to be a valuable resource to lawyers and judges in making these decisions.

The criminal justice system is in a period of reflection and change as we examine our policies and procedures and how they impact the individuals they are meant to protect. Some of these changes, such as statutes dealing with police use of force and the definition of felony murder, are reflected in this treatise. Other changes, such as changes in pretrial detention, are addressed in *Trial Handbook for Illinois Lawyers—Criminal, 9th* and in *Trial Handbook for Illinois Lawyers—Criminal Sentencing, 9th*.

This edition includes statutory updates and discussion of recent cases impacting this area of law. We endeavour to bring you the most relevant and important cases each year.

Thank you for your support of this handbook. We encourage lawyers and judges who use this handbook to provide comments and we appreciate any and all suggestions as to how this handbook can further assist those in this area of practice.