

Author's Introduction

2026–2027 Edition

The primary objective of *Federal Trial Handbook: Civil* is to give trial attorneys and judges the ability to find quick, accurate answers to their legal questions both before and during trial. Since I began authoring this publication in 2013, I have worked to comprehensively align its text with this overarching goal. More than ever, *Federal Trial Handbook: Civil* offers the reader a hands-on, how-to-do commentary; an extensive analysis of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and Federal Rules of Evidence as those rules impact a civil trial; citation and analysis of key federal statutes and doctrines; and an expanded look at federal case law in each circuit.

Highlights of the 2026–2027 Edition:

- Updated coverage of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, the Federal Rules of Evidence, and important federal statutes relevant to civil trial practice.
- Updated commentary throughout the publication.
 - The chapters addressing jurisdiction, conflict of laws, discovery, summary judgment, motion practice, the conduct of a trial, the conduct of the judge, the conduct of the attorney, trial by the court, jury trials, final arguments, jury instructions, jury deliberations, admission of evidence, objections to evidence, demonstrative evidence, circumstantial evidence, judicial notice, evidence of reputation and character, impeachment of witnesses, hearsay, documentary evidence, the best evidence rule, and judgment as a matter of law, among others, have been expanded or enhanced.
 - In numerous sections, the text identifies and addresses differences in the law between federal circuit courts.
 - “Practice Tip” materials are sprinkled throughout the publication, offering users practical advice about how to accomplish tasks or address problems commonly encountered in a lawyer’s civil practice.
- Improvements to the accessibility of commentary, citations, and case law illustrations.

- The Handbook is organized in an intuitive manner that will help users find useful information quickly. Its chapters are divided into five parts: Jurisdiction and Pretrial Matters, Civil Trials, Evidence at Trial, Elements of Claims, and Miscellaneous Proceedings.
- All citations have been relocated and consolidated into footnotes, which improves the readability of the Handbook's primary commentary.
- All citations to illustrative case law have been reviewed and updated, where necessary.
- The Handbook's volumes are more portable than in past years, making it easier for you to keep them by your desk or carry them to court.

The editorial staff at Thomson Reuters, especially Stephen Tarolli, has provided valuable insight and guidance during the preparation and writing of this *Federal Trial Handbook*. Many thanks to them.

Now, let me comment about Judge Robert S. Hunter, the original author of this Handbook. Judge Hunter was an experienced jurist, actively practicing his trade for many years in Quincy, Illinois. I did not personally know Judge Hunter, but he was widely respected as a scholar and gentleman who continued writing about the law into his nineties, long after most of his colleagues had retired from the practice of law. The legal profession owes Judge Hunter a tremendous debt of gratitude for his many sustained years of unselfish contribution and service to our legal profession. Judge Hunter passed on February 22, 2012, at the young age of 92.

I invite commentary about this and future editions of *Federal Trial Handbook: Civil*. It is important that this book serve your needs, so please communicate and tell me how it can be written to best assist your practice. My email address is sarthur@harrisonmoberly.com.

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