

INTRODUCTION TO
LAW



Beth Walston-Dunham

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Beth Walston-Dunham

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TABLE OF CASES

A

American Home Products Corp. v. Johnson & Johnson, 74
Anderson v. State, 311
Arizona v. Washington, 285
Atlas Garage & Custom Builders, Inc. v. Hurley, 63

B

Bargy, People v., 311
Barker v. Wingo, 285
Barrantes Cabalceta v. Standard Fruit Co., 63
Beach, State v., 311
Belle Isle Farm, In re, 151
Bernatzki's Estate, In re, 221, 230
Board of Com'rs of Public Schools of Baltimore City, United States v., 230
Bouska v. Bouska, 184
Brehmer, In re Estate of v. Demien, 224
Breunig v. American Family Ins. Co., 237
Brewer v. Williams, 285
Brinegar v. United States, 285
Bronson's Ex'r v. Chappell, 151
Buttfield v. Stranahan, 43

C

Callahan v. State, 311
Carpenter v. Coles, 184
Carter v. Carter Coal Co., 38, 43
Cavic v. Grand Bahama Development Co., Ltd., 151
Christian v. Christian, 114
Cimino v. Rosen, 258
City of (see name of city)
Clausen & Sons, Inc. v. Theo. Hamm Brewing Co., 114

Cline v. Festersen, 210

Commonwealth v. — (see opposing party)
Consolidated Oil & Gas, Inc. v. Roberts, 151
Cooke v. Firemen's Ins. Co. of Newark, N. J., 173
Crist v. Bretz, 285
Crosby v. Alton Ochsner Medical Foundation, 230
Cummings' Estate, In re, 212

D

Damora v. Christ-Janer, 101, 114
Daniel v. Wright, 184
Daniel M'Naghten's Case, 311
Debus v. Cook, 230
Dixon v. Dixon, 183
Dunn v. State, 311
Dunn, United States v., 285

E

Edinger's Estate, In re, 88
Elliott v. Mutual Life Ins. Co. of New York, 151
Erbach's Estate, In re, 230
Erie R. Co. v. Tompkins, 88
Estate of (see name of party)
European American Banking Corp. v. Chock Full O'Nuts Corp., 114

F

Favorite v. Miller, 160, 183
Fitzpatrick v. Rutter, 152
Flemington Nat. Bank & Trust Co. v. Domler Leasing Corp., 114
Freeman, United States v., 88
Friedman v. New York Tel. Co., 151
Furr, State v., 311

G

Glendening v. Glendening, 213
 Gogabashvele's Estate, In re, 11
 Goldsby v. State, 311
 Gonzalez v. Automatic Emp. Credit Union, 11
 Guaranty Trust Co. of New York v. York, 88
 Guin v. City of Riviera Beach, 258
Guthrie v. Harkness, 141, 152

H

Hanna v. Plumer, 88
 Henley v. Continental Cablevision of St. Louis
 County, Inc., 184
 Hester v. United States, 285
 Honolulu Rapid Transit Co. v. Paschoal, 114
 Huggins v. Castle Estates, Inc., 184

I**In re (see name of party)**

International Shoe Co. v. State of Washington,
 Office of Unemployment Compensation and
 Placement, 48

J

Jackson v. Jackson, 202, 213
Jacobs, People v., 8
 Jefferson, City of v. Holder, 152
 Jones v. Jones, 184
 J. S. & C., In re, 213
 J. W. Hampton, Jr., & Co. v. United States, 43

K

Katz v. United States, 285
 Kilroe v. Troast, 114
 Krukenberg, Estate of, 230

L

Lamkin v. Baldwin & Lamkin Mfg. Co., 152
 Lauderdale v. Peace Baptist Church of
 Birmingham, 151
 Law v. state, 311
 Leon, United States v., 265, 266, 285
 Lettinga v. Agristor Credit Corp., 152

Levitt, People v., 311
 Litsinger Sign Co. v. American Sign Co., 34
 Lofton v. Lofton, 230
 Lora, State v., 311
 Lord Fitzgerald Seaton v. Seaton, 11
 Love, People v., 311
 Lowry v. Semke, 63

M

Manner v. State, 296, 311
 Mapp v. Ohio, 264, 285
 Marron v. United States, 285
 Martin v. Beatty, 230
Marvin v. Marvin, 208, 211, 213
 Maschauer v. Downs, 213
 Mason v. Cohn, 258
 McDonald v. McDonald, 212
 McGirr v. Gulf Oil Corp., 151
McLane v. Northwest Natural Gas Co., 251
 McLendon v. McLendon, 230
 Michael, In re, 311
 Miranda v. State of Arizona, 270, 271, 285
Mitchell v. Aetna Cas. & Sur. Co., 104, 114
 Mobil Oil Corp. v. Wroten, 114
 Moffitt v. Moffitt, 63

N

New York v. Belton, 285
 New York v. Class, 285
 New York Times Co. v. Sullivan, 258

O

Opinion of the Justices, 26
 Ortego v. State Farm Mutual Automobile Ins.
 Co., 259

P

Pacific Tel & Tel Co v. Shite, 151
 Palko v. State of Connecticut, 285
Palsgraf v. Long Island R. Co., 242, 243, 258
 Parr v. Hamnes, 259
 Paset v. Old Orchard Bank & Trust Co., 183
 Paul v. Traders & General Insurance Co., 184
People v. ____ (see opposing party)
 Perla v. Perla, 213

Pfliger v. Peavey Co., 151
 Pinkett v. State, 311
 Portnoy, Estate of v. Cessna Aircraft Co., 63
 Predwitch v. Chrobak, 184
 Preston v. United States, 183
 Putnam v. Dickinson, 184

R

Ralston Steel Car Co. v. Ralston, 183
 Ready-Mix Concrete Co. v. Rape, 183
 Remon v. American Security and Trust
 Company, 230
 Reserve Ins. Co. v. Duckett, 114
 Richland Trust Co. v. Becvar, 230

S

Salerno, United States v., 285
 Schilb v. Kuebel, 285
 Schley v. Couch, 183
 Schmidt v. Foster, 114
Schneider v. Newmark, 128
 Schware v. Board of Bar Exam. of State of
 N.M., 11, 43
 Shafer v. Bull, 151
 Sim v. Edenborn, 151
 Sneed v. Weber, 184
 Solomon v. Dunlap, 230
 Stastny v. Tachovsky, 88
State v. — (see opposing party)
 Sterley, United States v., 311
Stewart, State v., 288 N.W.2d 751, p. 20,
 Stewart, State v., 537 S.W.2d 579, p. 311
 Stucki v. Loveland, 63

T

T. v. T., 186
 Taylor v. Roberts, 114

Terry v. State of Ohio, 285
 Thacker v. J. C. Penney Co., 184
 Thomas v. Mrkonich, 184
T. J. K. v. N. B., 60, 63

U

United States v. — (see opposing party)
*United States Fire Ins. Co. v. Paramount Fur
 Service, Inc.*, 156, 183

V

Vale v. Louisiana, 285

W

Wagman v. Carmel, 184
 Wavetek Indiana, Inc. v. K.H. Gatewood Steel
 Co., Inc., 114
 Weeks v. United States, 285
 Wilcox v. State, 311
 Williams, State v., 311
 Winston v. Sears, Roebuck & Co., 258
 Wirth v. Wirth, 212
 Wolf v. People of the State of Colorado, 264,
 285
Wooden v. Commonwealth, 304, 311
 Wright v. Benttinen, 230

Z

Zimmerman v. Allstate Ins. Co., 63

PREFACE

I never quite understood the meaning of the old saying “The law is a jealous mistress” until I began a career in law. The answers to society’s questions can be found in the law, and as society changes, so must the law to meet its needs. Consequently, one must always be aware of these changes. The more one knows, the more there is to learn. The law can be fascinating, frustrating, and rewarding. The purpose of this text is to introduce the student to the various aspects of the law that affect the daily lives of millions of people in the United States. Whether one plans a career in the law, business, the humanities, the health care industry, or any other aspect of American life, it will be affected by the law and a constant awareness of it is essential. Consequently, one of the goals of this text is to give the student a greater appreciation of the law’s capacity to be a source of stability and simultaneously a source of change. It is also hoped that the text will inspire the student to continue to explore the countless evolving facets of the American legal system.

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I would like to acknowledge the tremendous amount of work put into this effort by my father and personal editor, Keith Walston. His many hours of editing, suggestions, and kind but tough attitude have been of immeasurable help not only in the preparation of this manuscript but in my life in general.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This text is designed for the student who is studying law for the first time. Each chapter is designed to introduce the student to fundamental legal concepts and principles. Chapters 1 through 6 provide an introduction to the American legal system, the manner in which law is created and administered, and certain considerations that affect legal disputes. Each of the remaining chapters (Chapters 7 through 14) concentrates on a different area of law by exploring basic principles and terminology. The areas covered include property, business, estates, tort, and criminal law.

Each chapter is organized into sections followed by assignments that incorporate the information within the text. At the end of each chapter are review questions that test the student's general comprehension of the principles contained in the chapter. Words in boldface type in the text are legal terms that are defined in the glossary at the end of the text.

CONTENTS

Table of Cases	xvii
Preface	xxi
Acknowledgments	xxiii
About This Book	xxv

■	CHAPTER 1: The Historical Basis and Current Structure of the American Legal System	1
	THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF AMERICAN LAW	1
	Before the Government	1
	The Results of the Revolution	2
	The Influence of Political Theories	3
	Balance as the Key to Success	3
	The Modern Legal System	5
	THE SOURCES OF LAW	5

■	CHAPTER 2: The Courts	13
	THE CASE SYSTEM	13
	Common Law	13
	Case Law	14
	Cases	15
	Case Analysis	16
	The Facts	17
	The Issue	18
	The Law	18
	The Rule	19
	THE FEDERAL COURT SYSTEM	21
	The United States Supreme Court	21

The Circuit Court of Appeals	22
The District Courts	22
Special Federal Courts	23
THE STATE COURT SYSTEM	23
THE PURPOSE AND EFFECT OF JUDICIAL LAW	24

■ **CHAPTER 3: Legislation** 27

THE PURPOSE OF LEGISLATION	27
THE PROCESS OF LEGISLATION	30
JUDICIAL REVIEW	32

■ **CHAPTER 4: The Executive Branch and Administrative Authority** 35

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH	35
THE CREATION OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY	36
THE FUNCTION OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY	39

■ **CHAPTER 5: Jurisdiction** 45

THE TYPES OF JURISDICTION	45
Subject Matter Jurisdiction	45
Jurisdiction in Personam	47
In Rem and Quasi in Rem Jurisdiction	51
FEDERAL JURISDICTION	52
Issues Affecting Federal Law	52
The United States as a Party	53
Diversity of Citizenship	53
Removal and Remand	54
OTHER JURISDICTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	56
Corporations	56
Conflict of Laws	57
Forum Non Conveniens	59

■ CHAPTER 6: Substantive and Procedural Issues 65

SUBSTANTIVE V. PROCEDURAL LAW 66

Substantive Law 66

Procedural Law 67

The Common Ground 68

THE CREATION AND APPLICATION OF CIVIL PROCEDURE 69

Creating Laws of Procedure 69

Types of Procedural Law 70

Rules of Civil Procedure 70

Pretrial Proceedings 70

The Role of Judges, Jurors, and Attorneys in Trials 73

Trial 76

Motion Practice 79

Rules of Evidence 81

Rules of Appellate Procedure 82

■ CHAPTER 7: The Law of Contracts 89

ELEMENTS OF A VALID CONTRACT 89

At Least Two Parties 90

Parties Who Have Legal Capacity 90

Manifestation of Assent by All Parties 91

Objective Standard 92

Circumstances 92

Elements of Assent 93

Offer 93

Advertisements 94

Indefinite Promises 95

Auctions 95

Illusory Promises 95

Termination of the Offer 96

Acceptance 96

Methods of Acceptance 97

Consideration That Supports an Enforceable Promise 99

PROBLEMS IN CREATING OR ENFORCING THE CONTRACT 99

Terms of the Contract 99

Parol evidence Rule 100

Errors in Integration 103

Modifications and Premature Endings 103

Unconscionable Contracts 106

Fraud in Contracts	107
Statute of Frauds	108
DEFENSES TO AN ALLEGATION OF BREACH OF CONTRACT	109
REMEDIES FOR BREACH OF CONTRACT	110
THIRD PARTY INVOLVEMENT IN CONTRACTS	111
Third Party Contracts	111
Assignment and Delegation	112

■ CHAPTER 8: The Law of Business 115

AGENCY	115
Creation of the Agency Relationship	115
Types of Authority	117
Actual Authority	117
<i>Actual Express Authority</i>	118
<i>Actual Implied Authority</i>	118
Apparent Authority	119
Inherent Authority	120
Ratification	120
Respondeat Superior	121
SOLE PROPRIETORSHIPS	122
PARTNERSHIPS	123
The Nature of Partnerships	123
Characteristics of a Partnership	123
Limited Partnerships	124
The Relationship of Partners	124
Partnership Property	125
The Life of a Partnership	126
Creation	126
Recognition	126
Partnership Dealings with Third Parties	126
Termination or Dissolution	127
CORPORATIONS	130
Corporate Characteristics	130
A Legal Person	130
Life	131
Limited Liability	131
Ownership v. Control	131
Sale of Ownership	131
Limits on Operation	132
Creating a Corporation	132
Promoters	132
Statutory Requirements	132
Types of Corporate Status	133
Piercing the Corporate Veil	134
Corporate Stock	136

Generally	136
Types of Stock	136
Stock Subscriptions	137
The Securities and Exchange Commission	138
The Corporate Existence	139
Voting by Shareholders	139
Rights of Shareholders	140
Dissolution of the Corporation	143
THE UNIFORM COMMERCIAL CODE	145
Article 3: Commercial Paper	146
Article 9: Security Interests	148
Characteristics of a Security Interest	148
Perfection of a Security Interest	148

CHAPTER 9: Property Law 153

PERSONAL PROPERTY 153

Bailment	154
Types of Bailment	154
<i>Gratuitous Bailment</i>	154
<i>Mutual Benefit Bailment</i>	154
Lost and Mislaid Property	157
Abandoned Property	158
Confused Property	158
Actions to Recover Property or Its Value	158
Conversion	158
Trespass to Chattels (Personal Property)	159
Replevin	159

REAL PROPERTY 162

Freehold Estates	162
Fee Estates	162
<i>Fee Simple Absolute</i>	162
Life Estates	163
<i>Fee Tail</i>	163
<i>Other Estates</i>	163
<i>Curtesy and Dower</i>	164
Types of Ownership between Multiple Parties	164
<i>Tenancy in Common</i>	164
<i>Joint Tenancy</i>	164
<i>Tenancy by Entirety</i>	167
Air and Subsurface Rights	168
Incorporeal Interests	168
<i>Easements</i>	168
Buyers' and Sellers' Rights	170
Adverse Possession	174
Rights and Duties of Ownership	175
Condominiums	177

Nonfreehold Estates	178
Types of Leaseholds	179
Fixtures	181

■ CHAPTER 10: Family Law 185

MARRIAGE AND ANNULMENT	186
Antenuptial (Prenuptial) Agreements	186
Requirements for Marriage	188
Annulment	189
Common Law Marriage	190
The Marriage Relationship	191
ENDING THE MARITAL RELATIONSHIP	193
Jurisdiction	193
Grounds for Dissolution of a Marriage	194
Legal Separation	195
Custody	197
Child Support	199
Visitation	203
Property and Debt Division	204
Separate Property	204
Community Property	205
Pensions and Employee Benefit Programs	205
Marital Debts	206
Maintenance (Alimony or Spousal Support)	206
NONMARITAL RELATIONSHIPS	208

■ CHAPTER 11: Estates and Probate 215

INTESTATE SUCCESSION	215
TESTATE SUCCESSION	218
Requirements of a Valid Will	218
Will Codicils and Will Revocation	220
Will Contests	223
PROBATE OF ESTATES	227

■ CHAPTER 12: Torts 231

WHAT IS A TORT?	231
Tort Defined	231
The Development of Tort Law	232

Terminology in Torts	233
NEGLIGENCE	235
The Concept of Duty	235
The Standard of Care	236
The Issue of Proximate Cause	240
Damage	243
Res Ipsa Loquitur	244
INTENTIONAL TORTS	246
Assault	246
Battery	246
False Imprisonment	247
Trespass	247
Fraud	248
Defamation	248
Emotional Distress	249
STRICT LIABILITY	250
EMPLOYMENT AND TORTS	253
Third Parties	253
Statutes Governing the Employment Relationship That	
Affect Tort Actions	253
Worker's Compensation	253
Injuries Not Subject to Worker's Compensation Laws	254
Employer Liability Laws	254
TORT DEFENSES	255
Contributory and Comparative Negligence	255
Assumption of Risk	256
Last Clear Chance	256

CHAPTER 13: Criminal Procedure 261

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AND THE CONSTITUTION	261
The Approach of the U.S. Supreme Court	261
The Fourteenth Amendment	262
The Fourth Amendment	264
The Fifth Amendment	268
Double Jeopardy	268
Self-Incrimination	269
The Sixth Amendment	274
Speedy Trial	274
Right of Confrontation	275
The Eighth Amendment	276
THE STAGES OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE	277
Pre-Arrest	278
Arrest and Interrogation	280