Maximum Impact: How to Give (and Get) the Most Effective Edits

AJEI 2017 SUMMIT

Event

Long Beach, CA

11.03.17
8:00 AM

Participants:
Moderator Cliffie J. Wesson, Fifth District Court of Appeals at Dallas, TX
Panelist Professor Mary Beth Beazley, UNLV School of Law
Panelist Wendy McGuire Coats, Fisher Phillips, San Francisco, CA

Learning Objectives:
The panelists will examine methods for effective editing in the appellate context. Effective editing is crucial to effective legal writing, but writers and editors may have different goals at different times. First, editing can always be affected by power dynamics between the writer and the editor. Further, some editors want only to improve the document enough for it to get out the door as quickly and effectively as possible; others want not only to create a good document, but also to educate the writer so that the writing process will go more smoothly in the future. The panel will discuss how best to streamline and improve the editing process, including (1) how to ease communication between writers and editors, (2) how to identify reasonable goals for documents and writers, and (3) how to criticize writing without criticizing the writer.

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Topical Outline:

1. What does "editing" mean, anyway? Line edits v. critiques v. substantive edits
2. Understanding power dynamics in the editing relationship
3. How writers can ask for the edits they need
4. Style v. "correctness" in legal writing
5. Empowering newer legal writers on both sides of the bench

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