



UNC
SCHOOL OF LAW

NORTH CAROLINA LAW REVIEW

Volume 51 | Number 5

Article 3

6-1-1973

Book Review

North Carolina Law Review

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Recommended Citation

North Carolina Law Review, *Book Review*, 51 N.C. L. REV. 1227 (1973).

Available at: <http://scholarship.law.unc.edu/nclr/vol51/iss5/3>

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BOOK REVIEW

Stansbury's North Carolina Evidence—Brandis Revision. By Henry Brandis, Jr., Charlottesville: The Michie Company, 1973. Volume One, Pp. XXI, 561; Volume Two, Pp. XIII, 478.

This work is precisely what one would expect of Henry Brandis. That said, the remainder of this review will be mere surplusage to those who know him, and it is written primarily for the benefit of those who do not.

In this edition, as in the earlier editions, the book is an exceptionally fine volume for the price. It simply does not contain any unnecessary words. It is terse, yet smoothly written, and it is unlikely that another book will ever surpass it in terms of the maximum quantity of useful law in each page. The footnotes are written in most helpful fashion, giving some brief summary of the point that the case covers when this is not apparent from the text; therefore it is unnecessary for the user to wade through countless cases that really are not on the point he is concerned with in order to find the one that is. As in the earlier editions, the wishes of the writer, with respect to the law of evidence, are kept within reasonable limits and are clearly separated from the treatment of what the law actually is. Further, the writer appears to be on solid ground in every instance in which he is critical of the existing law, and it is quite likely that what he says may serve as the basis for salutary change.

Many important and recent developments in North Carolina and federal law, both substantive and procedural, are treated at length with respect to their impact on the law of evidence. In this category are the Rules of Civil Procedure, the Uniform Commercial Code, and the great changes wrought by the Supreme Court of the United States in areas such as the law pertaining to confessions. The proposed Federal Rules of Evidence are frequently mentioned, and this will make the book particularly useful to trial lawyers who practice in both federal and North Carolina courts. Reference is made to many excellent and helpful law review articles that have appeared since the previous editions.

Occasionally, one finds a passage that can only be the product of the present author. When an absurd rule is characterized as "a monumental legal asininity," or when the text views the relaxation of the requirement of proving the pedigree of bloodhounds as a manifestation of "the general decline of the aristocratic tradition," we know that we

are hearing from Brandis and not from Stansbury. Such comments are kept within reasonable limits and are not made unless they enhance the impact of the text.

One closes this book with the firm conviction that every citation has been checked and checked again, that every line of the text has been scrutinized anew to determine its continuing accuracy and to improve its clarity, and that quality and utility have been the sole objectives of the present author as they were those of Stansbury. It will be difficult for any lawyer who has not written a book on law to appreciate the sheer volume of work required, and the intellectual and moral character that are indispensable, to achieve such a product.

The advice is unlikely to be taken, but this is a work which would repay any trial lawyer's time reading from cover to cover. The North Carolina law of evidence has many peculiarities, and it is easy to forget them when one is years out of law school.

Finally, this work points up the great need in North Carolina for a quality encyclopedia covering all areas of our law. If this book, and many of the other fine books as to certain areas of North Carolina law, could one day serve as a point of departure for a project that would attempt to write a "North Carolina Jurisprudence" of equal quality, the end product would be of inestimable value to lawyers and the public.

If this book were less than outstanding, this review would be longer. No purpose would be served, however, by a long discourse on a work that is obviously the result, not of the time and effort the authors found they could conveniently devote to it, but of the time and effort essential, regardless of whether their personal lives had it comfortably to spare, to approach perfection as closely as one may.

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