

Book Review

Rome, S.H. (2013). *Social Work and the Law: Judicial Policy and Forensic Practice*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

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Sunny Harris Rome is an associate professor in the Department of Social Work at George Mason University and has previously served as the department's BSW program director, MSW program director, and chair. Prior to joining the faculty, she worked as a litigator for the U.S. Department of Education and as a lobbyist for the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). She teaches courses on social policy, legislative advocacy, social work and the law, forensic social work practice, and community change. She is also the 2011 recipient of the College of Health & Human Service's Master Teacher Award for Senior Faculty.

Rome's research interests focus on the intersection of social work and law, specifically in the areas of child welfare and immigration. She is a faculty Fellow with the Cochrane Collaboration College for Policy, under whose auspices she is completing a project on the mental health status of immigrant children and youth. She serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Policy Practice*, the *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, and the *Journal of Social Work Education*, and is a frequent presenter at professional conferences.

Rome is an advocate for social work involvement in policy practice. She was an original member of the Steering Committee for the Policy Practice Forum (now in its 14th year) and is active in community, state, and national organizations,

having served on NASW's Legal Defense Fund Board of Trustees, Virginia NASW's Political Action for Candidate Election (PACE) Board of Directors, the Governor's Work Group on Therapeutic Foster Care, and Fairfax County's Community Action Advisory Board.

Rome's work is comprehensive and informed. The author covers every aspect of the interface between social work and the legal system. The case examples are particularly instructive and will be very useful for social workers entering the workforce.

The book begins with an introduction that addresses general aspects of the legal system. From that point, the author addresses specific topics on which social workers must be knowledgeable, regardless of their field of practice.

The topics covered include child maltreatment, adoption, child custody, domestic violence, and work with older adults. The third section of the book addresses issues such as death penalty mitigation and mental health. The final portion of the work looks at issues including the rights of immigrants and women as well as those of racial and ethnic minorities.

The strengths of this work are its breadth and the fact that the author has obviously "been

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there” in the world of practice. Too often, there is a disconnect between research and practice in today’s social work. Not so in this book.

Rome’s work should be of particular use in work with MSW students. Given the intellectual depth of the book, it would probably be less useful for undergraduate students. That said, in the hands of

an astute instructor, it could be used effectively with students at the BSW level.

In conclusion, this book is based on excellent research, and is comprehensive in its coverage of social work’s interactions with the legal system. I recommend it highly for any instructor teaching a course in social work and the law.