

STYLE &

PERSUASION

A Handbook
for Lawyers



NELSON JOHNSON, JSC (Ret.)



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*To: Hon. Steven P. Perskie, JSC (Ret.),
my longtime friend, ally,
mentor, critic, and editor of my writings*

and

*To: Sberyl McGrotty, my aide-de-camp of many years,
and the proofreader of all my writings*



Acknowledgments

Writing about writing is something I've wanted to do for a long time. When I left the bench, I decided to consolidate my thoughts on writing that I had created over the years. Upon reviewing my files, I realized that I had prepared an outline for a writing handbook as early as 1982.

Not long after the release of my third book, *Battleground New Jersey*, which recounts the “political dirt” preceding the adoption of New Jersey’s present-day constitution, I made the acquaintance of Lisa Spiegel, Esq., Director of the NJ Bar Association’s ICLE program. Lisa introduced me to Dr. Robert Spangler, head of the NJSBA’s Office on Marketing & IT. Discussions ensued and the idea for this handbook was hatched. Lisa and Bob have been supportive of all my efforts, and I have found their suggestions invaluable. I am grateful to call them friends.

Another person associated with the NJSBA is the editor, Cheryl Baisden. Cheryl’s wisdom on word usage comes from her career in the newspaper business. At times, we struggled to get to the same place, but we always got there. Audio video manager Brian Altamura provided valuable criticism on the filming of the ten videos summarizing our handbook, creating our “vook.” Finally, there is Brian Skulnik and Alexia Garaventa who led the way on the production and design of our handbook. The two of them provided valuable suggestions. At the end of the day, everyone’s efforts were consistent with the ethos of the NJSBA, namely, the pursuit of excellence.



Discussion of Honoré Daumier Images

The five images of the sketches of the French Artist, Honoré Daumier (1808–1879) before each “Part” are in the public domain, online at Wikimedia Commons. These images were chosen for three reasons: (1) Your author’s high school art history teacher knew he wanted to become an attorney and introduced him to an artist who began his career while working as a clerk in the French courts. (2) While still in his thirties, and fascinated by the work of attorneys, Daumier began drawing caricatures—“Les Gens de Justice”—depicting members of the legal profession. (3) Daumier always knew where he was going before he began his sketches. How do we know that? Years ago, while visiting the “Musée d’Orsay” in Paris, your author found not only original sketches made by Daumier but also dozens of individual clay busts. Those busts captured the images of all the people frequently appearing in his artwork. By doing the hard work of distilling the essence of his characters, and sculpting the details of their face and head in clay, Daumier was ready to go to work. In all your writings you must distill the facts, master the pertinent law, and create a “lead” before launching a serious discussion on any issue of importance to your client.



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