



University of Connecticut School of Law Library



RECORDS AND BRIEFS AND ORAL ARGUMENTS

In an appellate case, the parties submit briefs to the court containing arguments on the points of law at issue in the case. These are known as “merits briefs.” A person or group that is not a party to a case but has a strong interest in the subject matter may also be permitted to file an *amicus curiae* or “friend of the court” brief. In addition to briefs, the record of the trial court proceedings is also submitted. The contents of the “record” vary by case but may include such things as a trial transcript; court orders; motions and other pleadings; exhibits; and instructions to the jury. Oral arguments pertaining to the points addressed in the parties’ briefs are held by the court in most appellate cases.

Records and briefs and oral arguments can be useful tools for understanding a particular appellate decision and for developing legal arguments in similar cases. This guide provides an overview of materials available in the University of Connecticut Law School Library and those available online. Also included is information on how to obtain materials that the library does not have in its collection. Consult a Reference Librarian for further assistance.

I. RECORDS AND BRIEFS

UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT

United States Supreme Court Records and Briefs

(Microfiche-Cabinet 1: 1832 to present)

Complete records and briefs for cases decided by the court and cases where certiorari was denied. Arrangement varies by year:

- 1832-1871 - arranged by court term and divided into several parts, with each part containing a separate index
- 1872-1973 - arranged by official U.S. Reports citation
- 1974-1978 - arranged by IHS number (number assigned by Information Handling Services, the company that produced the microfilm set for these years) - check print indexes located on shelf in microform room for IHS number corresponding to either the case name, docket number, or U.S. Reports citation
- 1979 to present - arranged by case docket number

Landmark Briefs and Arguments of the Supreme Court of the United States: Constitutional Law (KF101.9.L36)

This print set contains the briefs for selected major constitutional cases decided by the Supreme Court from 1793 to 2004. Cases are arranged chronologically, with case names printed on the spines of the volumes.

ABA Preview of U.S. Supreme Court Cases

<http://www.abanet.org/publiced/preview/briefs/home.html>

Briefs for cases slated to be heard in the current Supreme Court term.

Findlaw

http://supreme.lp.findlaw.com/supreme_court/briefs/index.html

Full text of briefs for cases from 1999 to the present, arranged alphabetically by case name.

Lexis (“U.S. Supreme Court Briefs”)

Contains briefs for cases in which certiorari has been granted. Merits briefs and amicus briefs begin with the 1979 term, with selected coverage from 1936.

Westlaw (“United States Supreme Court Briefs”)

Contains selected briefs and petitions for certiorari, with coverage as far back as 1870.

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Supreme Court Records and Briefs

(KFC3640.9.A2 - Bound volumes: 1871 to Sept. 1986)

(Microfiche-Cabinet 14: Oct. 1986 to present)

Records and briefs for cases filed in the Connecticut Supreme Court, arranged by term argued. Briefs for March 2009 forward, as well as selected briefs for previous terms, are also available online at <http://blog.ctbriefsonline.com/>.

Lexis: “Connecticut State Briefs and Motions” - selected briefs from 2000 to the present

Westlaw: “Connecticut Supreme Court Briefs” - selected briefs from 2002 to the present

Connecticut Appellate Court Records and Briefs

(Microfiche-Cabinet 14: Oct. 1983 to present)

Records and briefs for cases filed in the Connecticut Appellate Court, arranged by term argued.

Lexis: “Connecticut State Briefs and Motions” - selected briefs from 2000 to the present

Westlaw: “Connecticut Court of Appeals Briefs” - selected briefs from 2005 to the present

OTHER COURTS

Lexis

-“All Federal and State Briefs, Motions, Pleadings and Other Court Filings” - contains selected briefs from all federal jurisdictions and selected states, from 2000 to present.

Westlaw

-“United States Court of Appeals Briefs” - contains selected briefs from all circuits. Coverage varies by circuit; 2nd circuit briefs begin in 1981.

Selected briefs from the courts of 51 states and the District of Columbia are also available on Westlaw. From the Westlaw Directory, under “U.S. State Materials,” click on “Briefs” and then “Briefs by State Jurisdiction.”

Other

Records and briefs for cases in other courts can often be obtained from other libraries through interlibrary loan or can be purchased from the appropriate court clerk’s office. Consult A Union

List of Appellate Court Records and Briefs: Federal and State (KF105.9.W49 1999 - Reference) for a list of libraries and archives which hold the records and briefs for federal and state appellate courts. This book also provides the addresses and phone numbers of the clerks of the federal and state courts and a list of vendors from which one can purchase copies of briefs.

II. ORAL ARGUMENTS

UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT

United States Supreme Court Web Site

http://www.supremecourtus.gov/oral_arguments/oral_arguments.html

Contains oral argument transcripts beginning with the October 2000 term, along with information on how to purchase transcripts from previous terms.

Lexis (“United States Supreme Court Transcripts”)

Contains oral argument transcripts beginning with the October 1979 term.

Westlaw (“Transcripts of U.S. Supreme Court Oral Arguments”)

Contains oral argument transcripts beginning with the October 1990 term.

The Oyez Project

<http://www.oyez.org/>

Audio recordings of oral arguments for over 500 leading constitutional law cases decided by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Landmark Briefs and Arguments of the Supreme Court of the United States: Constitutional Law (KF101.9.L36)

This print set contains the oral argument transcripts for selected major constitutional cases decided by the Supreme Court from 1793 to 2004. Cases are arranged chronologically, with case names printed on the spines of the volumes.

May It Please the Court: The Most Significant Oral Arguments Made Before the Supreme Court Since 1955

(KF4748.M39 1993)

Live recordings and transcripts of 23 landmark Bill of Rights cases argued before the Court.

May It Please the Court: Arguments on Abortion

(KF3771.M39 1995)

Live recordings and transcripts of 8 reproductive rights cases argued before the Court.

May It Please the Court: Courts, Kids, and the Constitution

(KF4118.M39 2000)

Live recordings and transcripts of 16 Supreme Court cases relating to the constitutional rights of students and teachers.