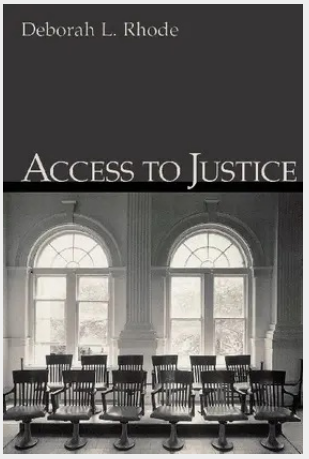
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Access to Justice

"Equal Justice Under Law" is one of America's most proudly proclaimed and widely violated legal principles. But it comes nowhere close to describing the legal system in practice. Millions of Americans lack any access to justice, let alone equal access. Worse, the increasing centrality of law in American life and its growing complexity has made access to legal assistance critical for all citizens. Yet according to most estimates about four-fifths of the legal needs of the poor, and two- to three-fifths of the needs of middle-income individuals remain unmet. This book reveals the inequities of legal assistance in America, from the lack of access to educational services and health benefits to gross injustices in the criminal defense system. It proposes a specific agenda for change, offering tangible reforms for coordinating comprehensive systems for the delivery of legal services, maximizing individual's opportunities to represent themselves, and making effective legal services more affordable for all Americans who need them.

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