
SUPREME COURT OF CANADA



STATISTICS

1992 to 2002

Bulletin of Proceedings:

SPECIAL EDITION

Introduction

This special edition of the *Bulletin* marks 2002, a year of transition for the Court. The Court saw the retirement of Madame Justice Claire L'Heureux-Dubé, who had served the Court for fifteen years, and the appointment of her successor, Madame Justice Marie Deschamps. As well, the *Rules of the Supreme Court of Canada* underwent a complete overhaul for the first time in two decades and they now reflect the modern case management practices of this Court. In this *Bulletin* you will find a statistical view of the work of the Supreme Court of Canada in 2002 with comparisons to the previous ten years' statistics.

A brief description of the appeal process may help explain the various charts and tables that follow. The Court decides cases that come to it from three sources. First, a party who wishes to appeal the decision of another court generally must obtain permission from a panel of three judges of the Court. Such permission, or leave to appeal, is given if the panel concludes that the case involves a question of public importance or raises an important issue of law. Second, there are cases for which leave to appeal is not required, such as certain criminal cases and appeals from provincial references. These cases are called "as of right" appeals. The third group is references from the federal government in which the Court is required to give an opinion on the questions referred to it. The figure on page 3 summarizes the process that unfolds from the filing of a complete application for leave to appeal, a notice of appeal as of right or a government reference.

The "Summary" table on page 4 outlines the Court's workload from 1992 to 2002 and is broken down into five categories. Graphical representations for each category are also provided.

The first category, "Cases Filed," shows the number of complete applications for leave to appeal and notices of appeal as of right filed by litigants with the Court's Registry each year. The total of 536 cases filed in the year 2002 is approximately 11% lower than the annual average number of cases filed over the last decade (600).

The second category, "Applications for Leave," shows the number of leave applications submitted to panels of the Court for decision, the number of leave applications granted and the percentage granted of the total submitted. As leave applications filed one year may be submitted the next year due to the time required for processing, the number of complete leave applications filed and the number submitted to panels will differ in each year. In 2002, there were 523 leave applications filed with the Supreme Court of Canada and 498 submitted to panels of the Court for decision.

The third category, "Appeals Heard," shows the number of appeals heard each year and the number of hearing days over the year. In 2002, the Court heard 72 appeals over 51 hearing days.

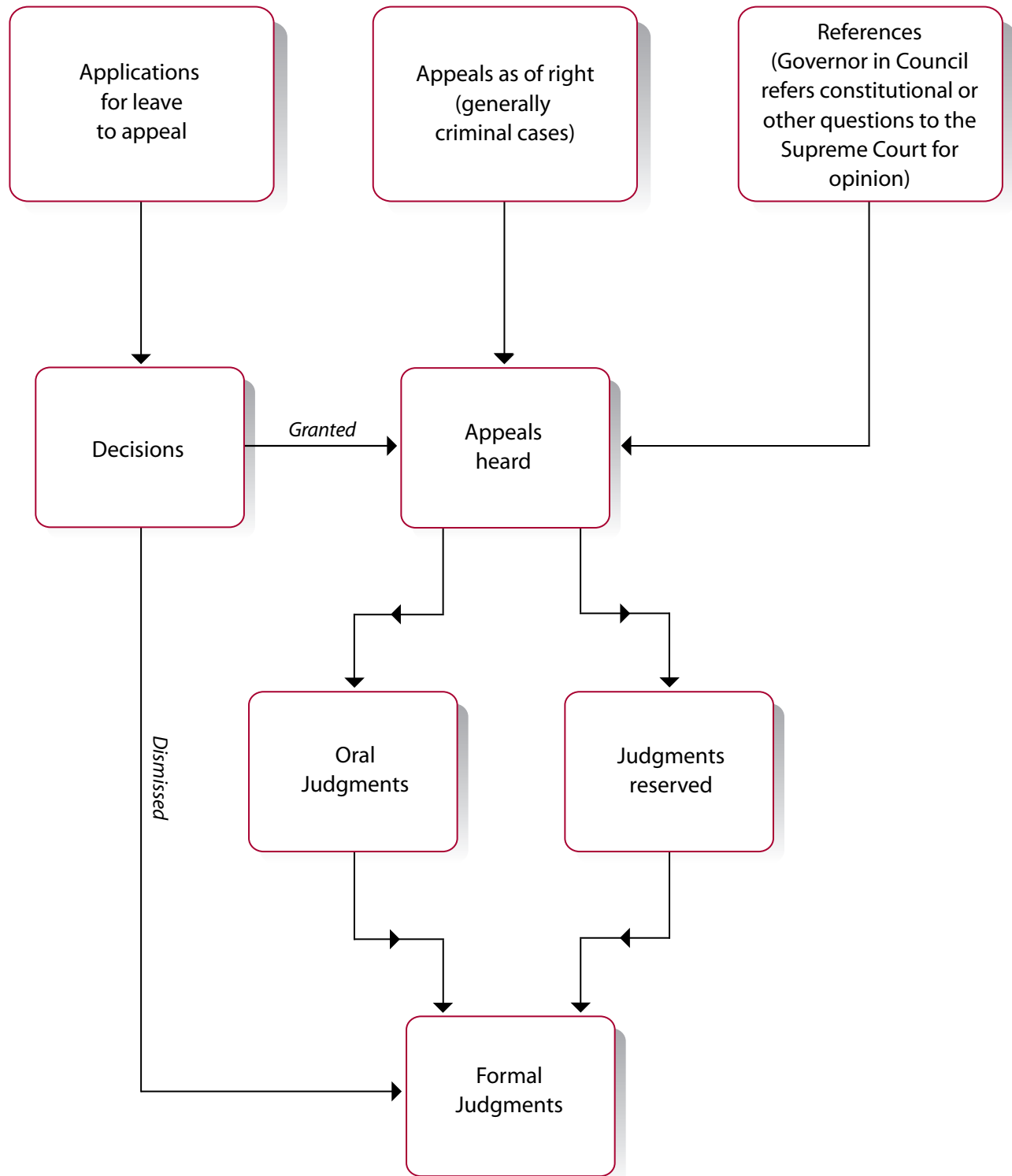
The fourth category, "Appeal Judgments," gives information with respect to the number of judgments rendered each year. The Court released 88 judgments in 2002. Of these, 20 were pronounced from the bench ("oral judgments"), with written reasons to follow in seven of them. Most judgments (69%) were unanimous.

Since the Court does not always render judgments in the same year in which the appeal is heard, there is usually a difference between the total number of appeals heard in a year and the number of judgments rendered in the same year. There were 25 appeal judgments in reserve at year end.

The final category, “Average Time Lapses,” shows time lines in the life of a case at the Supreme Court of Canada. On average, in 2002, the time between the filing of a complete application for leave to appeal and the Court’s decision on whether leave should be granted or denied was just over 5.7 months. In 2002, appeals were heard, on average, 12.2 months after leave was granted or the notice of appeal as of right was filed. In 2002, the Court rendered judgment, on average, 5.6 months after the hearing of an appeal. This figure includes oral judgments. When calculated just for appeals in which judgment was reserved (i.e., where the Court did not rule at the time of the hearing), the average time lapse increases to about 7 months.



The Appeal Process in the Supreme Court of Canada

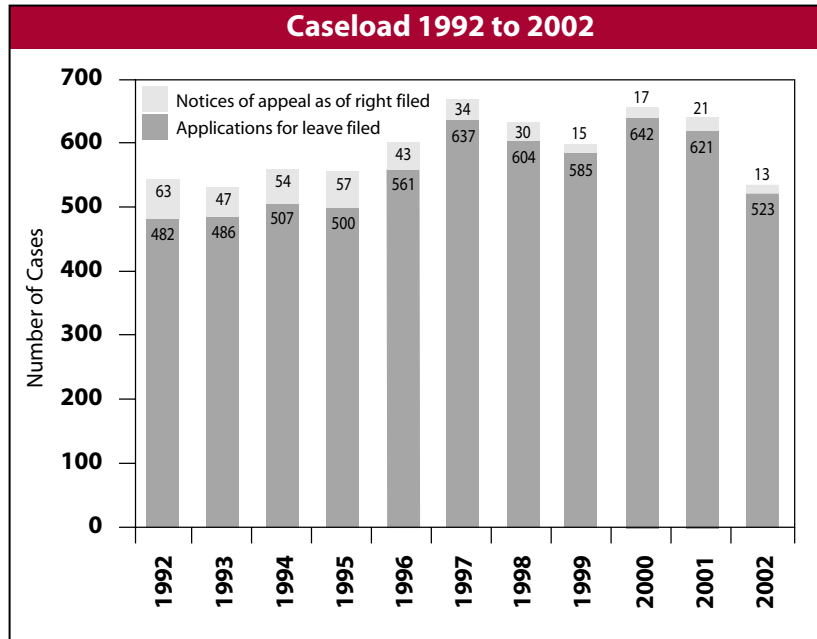


Summary 1992 to 2002

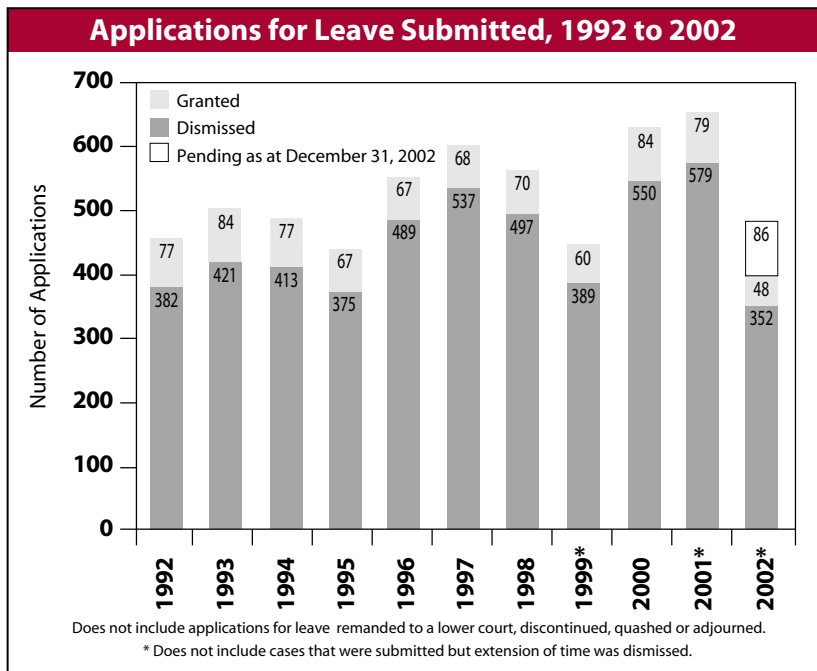
	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Cases Filed											
Complete applications for leave to appeal	482	486	507	500	561	637	604	585	642	621	523
Notices of appeal as of right	63	47	54	57	43	34	30	15	17	21	13
Applications for Leave											
Submitted to the Court	460	513	496	445	573	615	572	458	640	668	498
Granted (pending)	77	84	77	67	67	68	70	60	84	79	48(86)
Percentage granted	17	16	16	15	12	11	12	13	13	12	10
Appeals Heard											
Number	130	133	119	107	118	104	106	75	78	96	72
Hearing days	91	77	73	71	82	76	71	55	57	62	51
Appeal Judgments											
Number	119	150	120	103	124	107	92	73	72	91	88
Percentage of unanimous judgments	77	67	74	65	79	70	75	73	72	82	69
Appeals standing for judgment at the end of each year	48	32	31	32	26	20	34	33	39	44	25
Average Time Lapses (in months)											
Between filing of application for leave and decision on application for leave	3.6	4.0	3.4	3.8	4.4	3.5	3.9	5.2	5.4	4.3	5.7
Between date leave granted (or date notice of appeal as of right filed) and hearing	12.4	13.1	10.5	9.9	11.8	10.9	12.0	11.1	12.5	11.4	12.2
Between hearing and judgment	3.6	4.1	3.0	3.8	3.0	2.8	2.8	5.4	5.8	5.6	5.6
<i>All applications for leave, appeals and judgments are counted by individual file number.</i>											



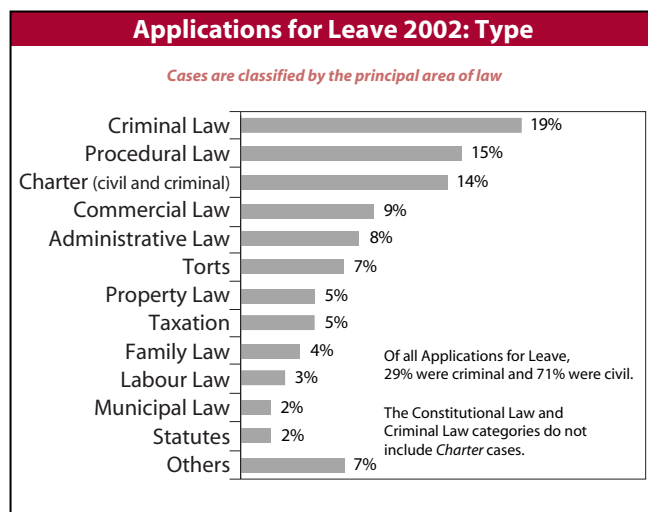
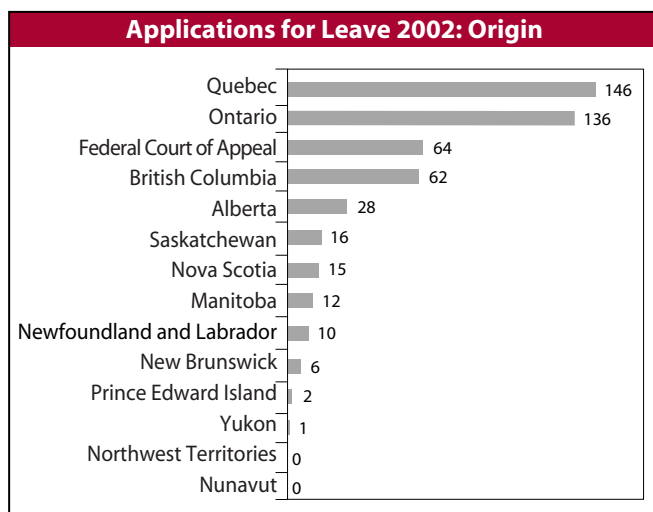
Category 1: Cases Filed



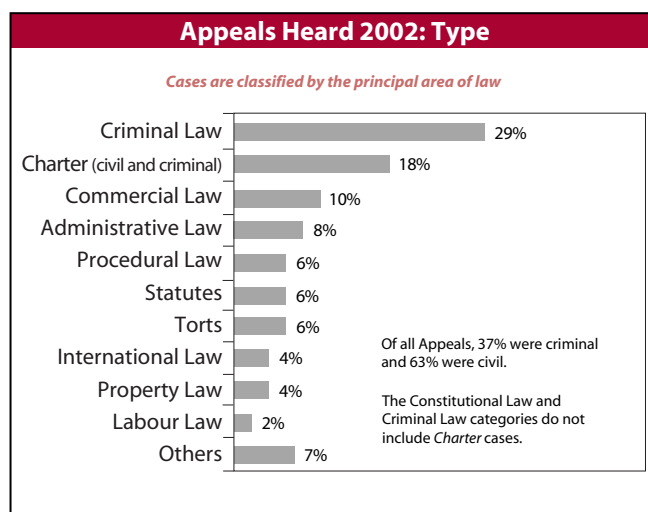
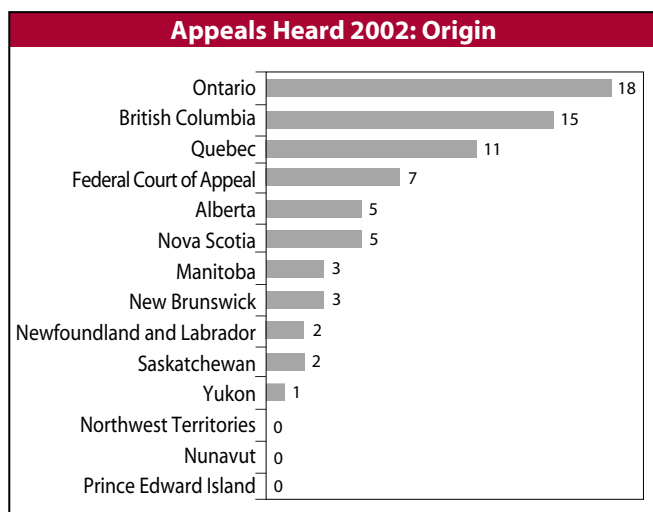
Category 2: Applications for Leave



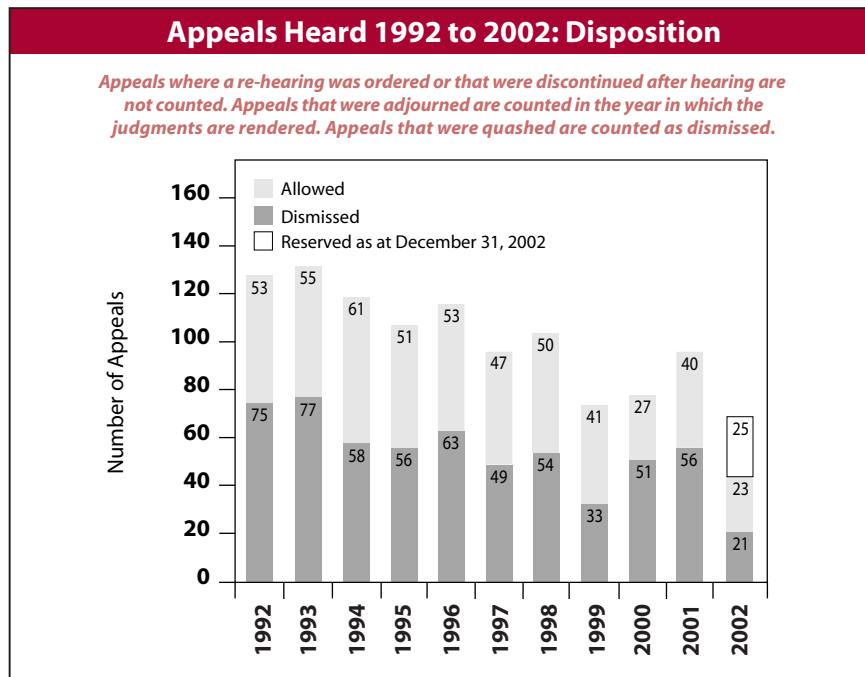
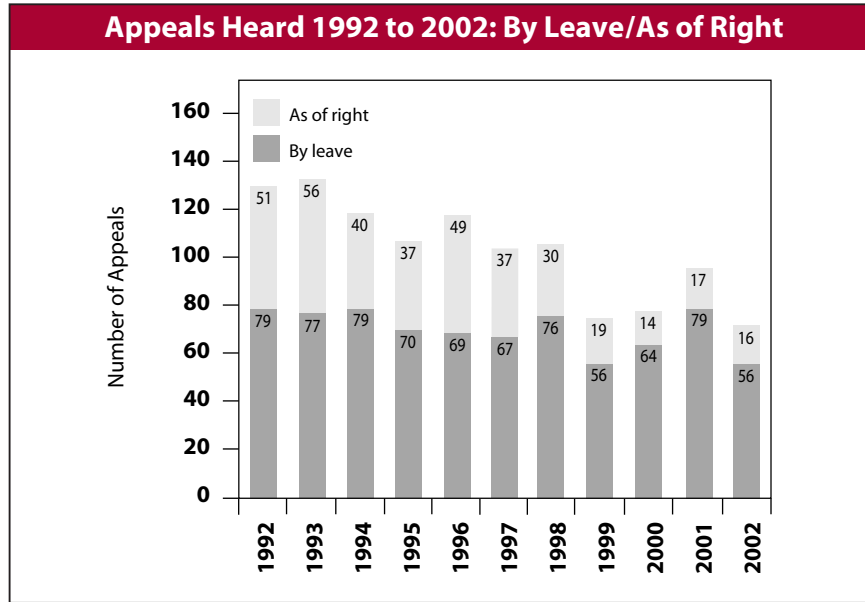
Category 2: Applications for Leave (continued)



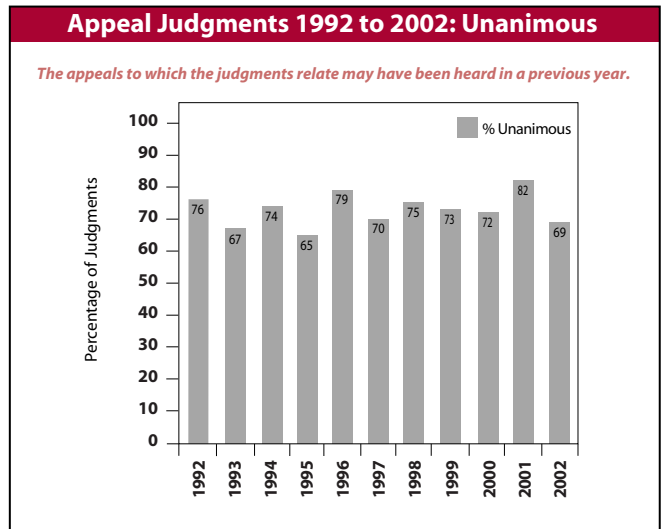
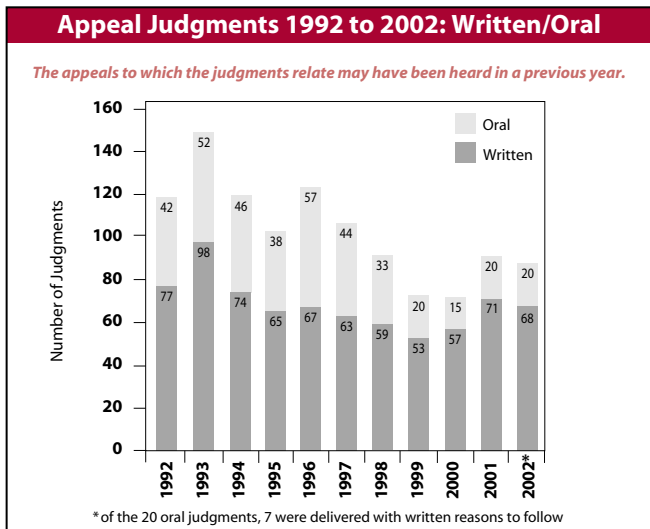
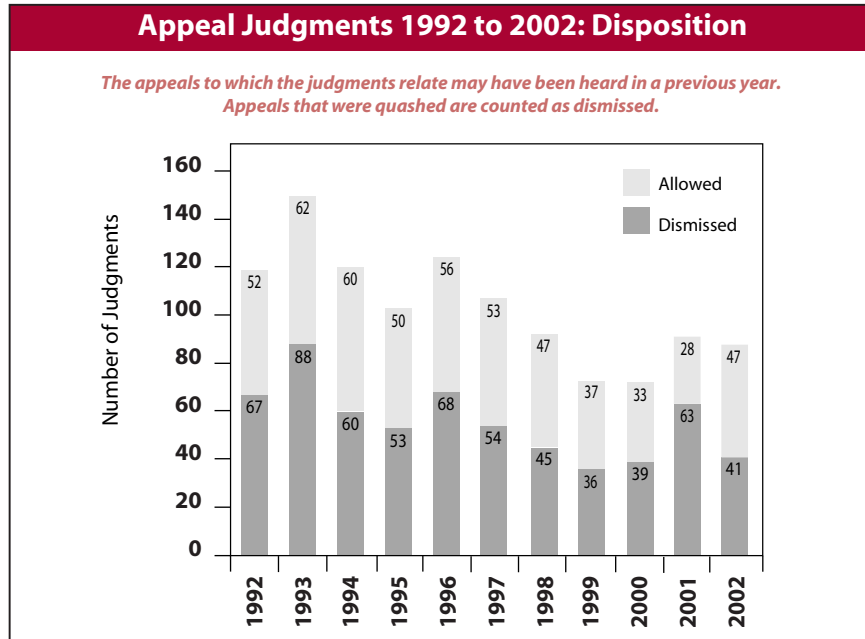
Category 3: Appeals Heard



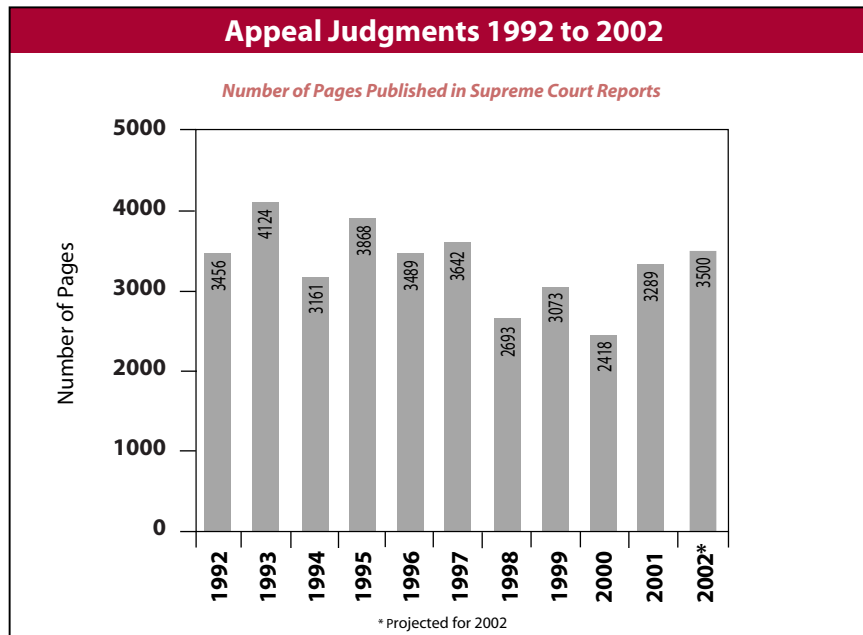
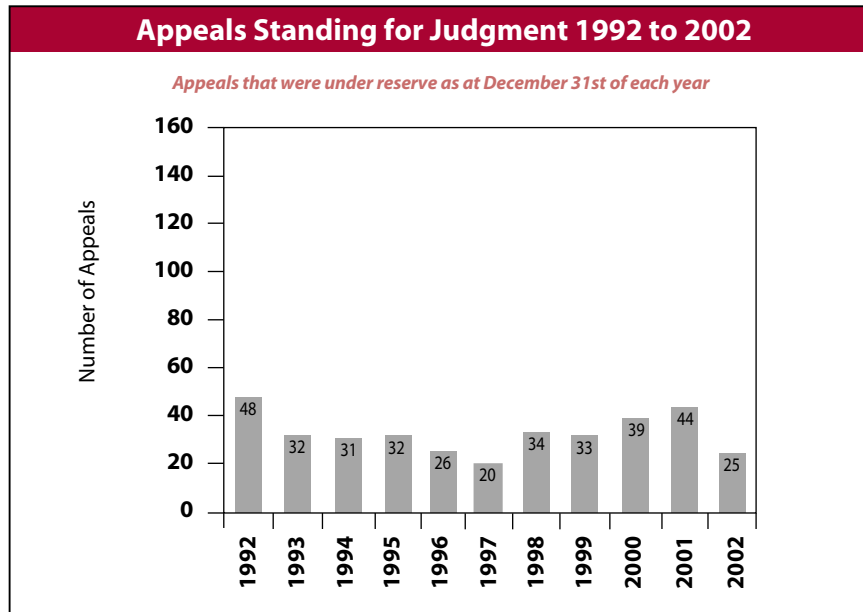
Category 3: Appeals Heard (continued)



Category 4: Appeal Judgments



Category 4: Appeal Judgments (continued)



Category 5: Average Time Lapses

