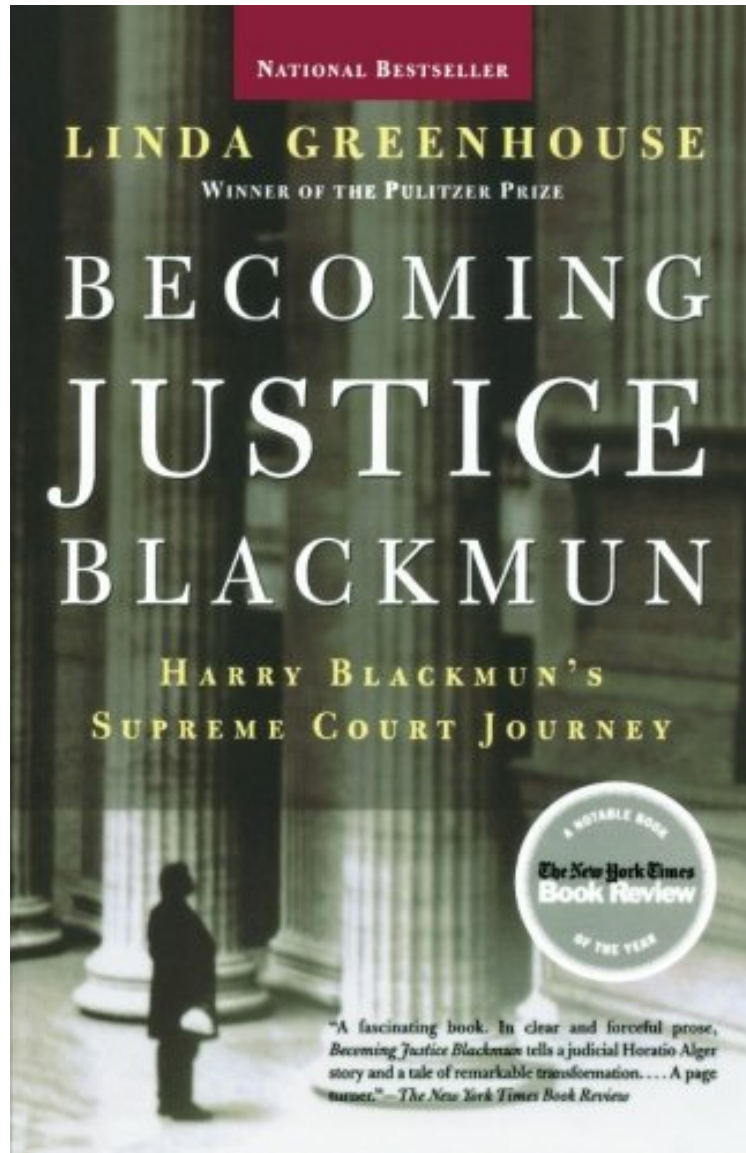


Becoming Justice Blackmun: Harry Blackmun's Supreme Court Journey

Linda Greenhouse

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#173354 in Books Linda Greenhouse 2006-04-04 2006-04-04 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .65 x 5.50l, .56 #File Name: 0805080570288 pages Becoming Justice Blackmun Harry Blackmun s Supreme Court Journey | File size: 45.Mb

Linda Greenhouse : Becoming Justice Blackmun: Harry Blackmun's Supreme Court Journey before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Becoming Justice Blackmun: Harry Blackmun's Supreme Court Journey:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. highly recommended. By Hannah After finishing the biography on Brennan (Justice Brennan: Liberal Champion), I thought I'd pick up a book about one of his co-justices, and a frequent ally. I have to say that I found this to be an easier read, and a more powerful one. The book is especially moving when describing Justice Blackmun's struggles with the effects of each court decision on real people. Unlike many judges, it's clear that Blackmun understood that court decisions are not merely conclusions of legal theory but that they have profound impact and can cause real devastation for those affected. All those famous quotes I remember from law school--from "Poor Joshua!" to "from this day forward I shall no longer tinker with the machinery of death" to "There is 'another world' out there, the existence of which the Court, I suspect, either chooses to ignore or fears to recognize"--were put into context. You can see and feel the evolution of Justice Blackmun's jurisprudence and his movement away from the faith held so close by most other justices (liberal and conservative): that judging is a sterile job through which an academic interpretation grounded in strict principles will lead to a "just" system regardless of whether human experience demonstrates otherwise. As a practicing lawyer who sees the impact of each judicial decision in human terms play out on the lives of her clients daily, I can appreciate Justice Blackmun's compassion. That this compassion shines through is a testament to Linda Greenhouse as a writer. TL;DR An accessible and moving biography that captures Justice Blackmun's compassion, highly recommended. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Evolution of Justice in the Mind of Harry Blackmun By Durwood Justice Harry Blackmun was appointed to the US Supreme Court by President Nixon in 1970. This biography is based on Justice Blackmun's own personal notes, letters, and documents which were released 5 years after his death in 1999. It is the definitive biography of one of the more influential Associate Justices in modern history. A major thread in the book involves Blackmun's relationship and interactions with other Justices, with particular emphasis on his relationship with Chief Justice Warren Burger. Burger was a lifelong friend, but their tenure on the court put an irreparable strain on that friendship. Justice Blackmun is most famous for having penned the majority opinion in the landmark abortion case, Roe v. Wade. The book does a wonderful job in showing how Blackmun's jurisprudence evolved during his 24 years on the Supreme Court: he began as a fairly conservative-to-moderate justice but was the court's most liberal judge when he retired in 1994. This is a great read. My only complaint is that there is some organizational confusion to the book: while in general it is presented chronologically, towards the end when discussing Blackmun's role with women's rights, it jumps back in time and is a little confusing. This is a minor problem though and certainly didn't interfere with my enjoyment of the book. Definitely worth reading if you have an interest in the Supreme Court, American History or biographies in general. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Interesting man By Jean For historians Blackmun must be an angel, as he kept all his papers and on his death turned them over to the Library of Congress. He also sat for 38 hours of videotaped interviews with his former clerk Harold Hongju Koh now Dean of the Yale Law School. Greenhouse was provided early access by Blackmun's daughter to write this biography. Greenhouse is a Pulitzer Prize winning Supreme Court reporter for the New York Times. The book provides a fascinating story told in clear and forceful prose telling the tale of a remarkable transformation. Greenhouse tells a detailed story of Blackmun's personal and professional life including his lifetime friendship with Warren Burger. Blackmun was a Republican, conservative, Methodist appointed to the Supreme Court by President Richard Nixon after two other men were refused appointment. Their fellow justices referred to Burger and Blackmun as the Minnesota Twins. Burger assigned Roe v. Wade and a number of other similar cases to Blackmun. He took his time deciding and writing the decision including spending part of his summer vacation at the Mayo Clinic library studying information about abortion. He had been the counsel for Mayo Clinic for about 9 years prior to appointment to the bench. Blackmun said, he was unprepared for the firestorm he entered after the decision was released; nor was he prepared to be assigned all the abortion cases by the court. Over time he found himself voting with the liberal judges more often particularly on cases of equal right, sex and race discrimination resulting in the breakup of the long friendship with Chief Justice Warren Burger. Greenhouse paints Blackmun as a modest Minnesotan who carries the weight of the world on his shoulders. He drove his little blue Volkswagen to court daily for breakfast with his clerks until assassination attempts required security to escort him. Greenhouse says he was known as a man of civility and compassion. Blackmun wrote numerous landmark Supreme Court decisions but he will always be best known as the protector of women's rights. He participated in the most contentious debates of his era all behind close door, with the donation of all his papers we now get to peek behind the door. I read this as an e-book via my Kindle app on my iPad.

"A fascinating book. In clear and forceful prose, *Becoming Justice Blackmun* tells a judicial Horatio Alger story and a tale of a remarkable transformation . . . A page-turner." The New York Times Book Review In this acclaimed biography, Linda Greenhouse of The New York Times draws back the curtain on America's most private branch of government, the Supreme Court. Greenhouse was the first print reporter to have access to the extensive archives of Justice Harry A. Blackmun (1908-1999), the man behind numerous landmark Supreme Court decisions, including *Roe v. Wade*. Through the lens of Blackmun's private and public papers, Greenhouse crafts a compelling portrait of a man who, from 1970 to 1994, ruled on such controversial issues as abortion, the death penalty, and sex discrimination yet never lost sight of the human beings behind the legal cases. Greenhouse also paints the arc of Blackmun's lifelong

friendship with Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, revealing how political differences became personal, even for two of the country's most respected jurists. From America's preeminent Supreme Court reporter, this is a must-read for everyone who cares about the Court and its impact on our lives.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . Supreme Court justice Harry Blackmun's lifelong connection with Chief Justice Warren Burger beginning in kindergarten in St. Paul, Minn., and culminating in 16 years together on the Supreme Court supplies Greenhouse with one of her main organizing themes in this illuminating study of Blackmun's life and intellectual history. Once the closest of friends, Blackmun (1908-1999) and Burger diverged personally and ideologically, beginning in 1973, when Burger assigned Blackmun to write the Court's opinion in *Roe v. Wade*. Greenhouse, the New York Times's veteran Supreme Court watcher, draws primarily on Blackmun's massive personal archive to show how his authorship of the majority opinion in *Roe* (72) propelled him down several unexpected paths. Blackmun embraced equal protection for women and came to reject capital punishment. A Nixon appointee, Blackmun became the Supreme Court's most liberal justice after the retirement of William Brennan and Thurgood Marshall. The personality that emerges in Greenhouse's portrayal is that of a self-effacing and scholarly judge, devoid of partisanship, willing to follow his ideas wherever they led him. Making no pretense at being definitive or comprehensive, Greenhouse sets a high standard in offering an intimate look both at the man and at the development of his judicial thought. Bw photos. (May) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Greenhouse, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter with the New York Times, was the first print reporter to have access to the personal and official papers of Justice Blackmun, who died in 1999, five years after retiring from the Supreme Court. Those papers are Greenhouse's primary source as she looks back on the 24 years of Blackmun's service on the court. He wrote the majority opinion in the *Roe v. Wade* decision that established a constitutional right to abortion, but his papers reflect his personal struggle with the decision, as well as others on issues of the death penalty and sex discrimination. The immense collection includes correspondence with other jurists, including Chief Justice Warren E. Burger. Greenhouse draws on personal papers to show Blackmun's personal journey, from entries in a childhood diary to the musings of a young lawyer hungering for partnership. This is an absorbing look at the personal and official concerns of a man who helped to shape American law and society. Vernon Ford Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved [A] wonderful book . . . one of the most intimate and revealing portraits of the relationship between two justices ever achieved. Jeffrey Rosen, *The New York Times* A graceful account, filled with well-chosen quotations, apt observations and elegant legal summaries. *The Washington Post Book World* Reprises in rich, thoughtful, and more extensive detail the main emotional and interpretive threads of Blackmun's career. David J. Garrow, *The New Republic* Highly readable and interesting . . . Greenhouse has mined [Blackmun's private papers] brilliantly to create a moving narrative. *Los Angeles Times* A riveting account of [Blackmun's] life. Anna Quindlen, *Newsweek* [A] fascinating volume . . . *Becoming Justice Blackmun* is as welcome as it is interesting . . . informative and moving. *The Washington Times* Should inform anyone with an interest in the law and how the court operates . . . Blackmun, a precise writer and exacting editor, would approve. *USA Today* A model biography of a Supreme Court justice . . . Greenhouse delivers a crystal-clear, and sometimes painful, portrait of the way personality shapes history. *The Courier-Journal (Louisville)* Greenhouse sets a high standard in offering an intimate look both at the man and at the development of his judicial thought. Publishers Weekly, starred review