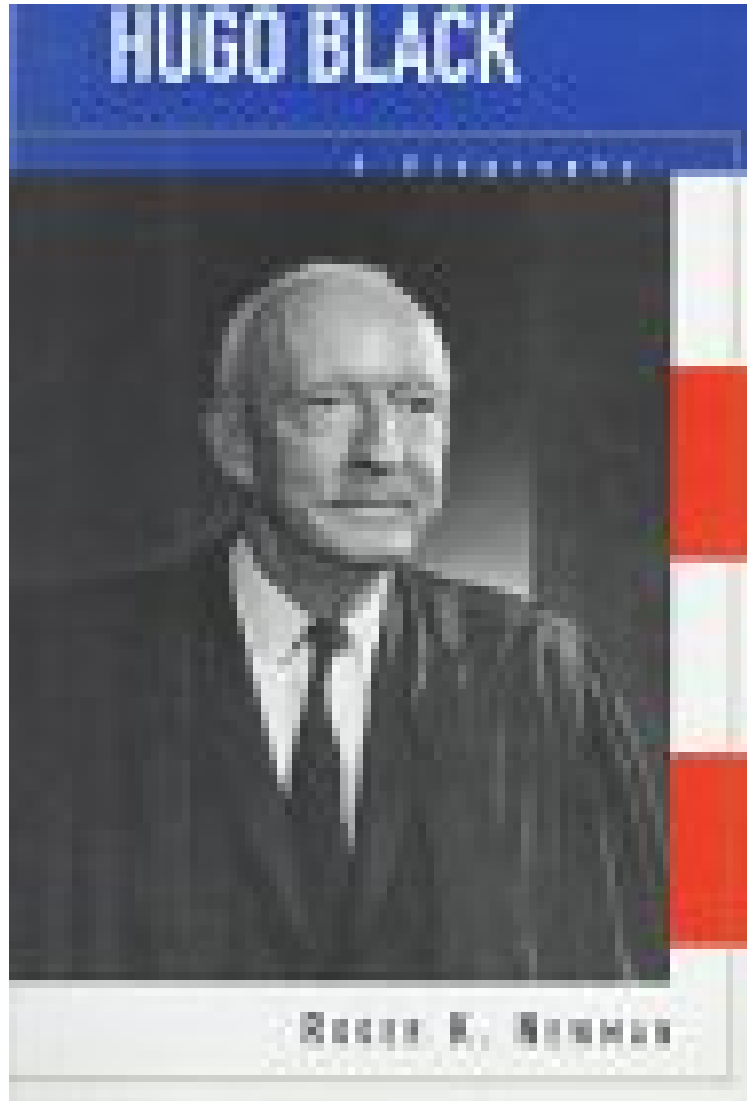


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## Hugo Black: A Biography

*Roger K. Newman*

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#887027 in Books 1994-10-11 1994-10-11 Original language: English PDF # 3 9.50 x 6.75 x 2.00l, #File Name: 0679431802741 pages | File size: 18.Mb

**Roger K. Newman : Hugo Black: A Biography** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hugo Black: A Biography:

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. This should be your first book about the Supreme Court By T. P. Roberts I had a great Constitutional law professor while I was in law school. He had all these stories of the Supreme Court behind the scenes, and it brought the law to life. So I started to look around for Supreme Court biographies. About 6 years later, I'm still reading them. This is the best I have come across. Love him or hate him, Hugo Black is one of the 10 most important Justices in history, most would agree. More than that--he had a strong, controversial,

well-thought-out point of view about the law, though he was friends with many people who absolutely disagreed with him. He is interesting to conservatives and liberals alike and he challenges us to use our brains because he doesn't fit neatly into modern ideas of what it is to be Republican or Democrat. For instance, he's known as a "judicial activist," but he was a textualist (like Scalia). He's also something of an original intent guy (though he doesn't ignore the Amendments like the 14th Amendment that were passed long after the "founding fathers" died). He didn't believe a constitutional right to privacy--abortion, gay rights, right to die--but was one of the leaders in applying the Bill of Rights to the states, not just the federal government. On the other hand, he wrote *Korematsu*, the opinion that allowed the government to put Japanese-Americans into internment camps during the war years. Along with Justice Douglas, he was the most vigorous protector of the First Amendment free speech rights that the Court has ever had. He was banned by the Alabama legislature from being buried in Alabama, his home state, because of his assistance in desegregating the nation and providing equal protection to African Americans (which is interesting in light of his KKK past). Thus, if you're a fan of the liberal Warren Court era OR a fan of Scalia and Thomas's modern/throwback textualist and originalist ideas, there is much for you to learn. That aside, Hugo's story was fascinating. Other reviewers have remarked on his KKK and New Deal Senator past. He was also one of the longest sitting Justices--30 years or so. This book is an easy read and you'll get a feel for Hugo's PERSONALITY, not just his actions. (I think of him as "Hugo" rather than Justice Black because I think of him as a friend...and that's due to this book).

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent book arrived in great shape  
By littleboots  
Excellent book arrived in great shape. A must read for anyone concerned with civil liberties and how the justice system works.  
3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. From KKK member to the Supreme Court: A fascinating story  
By Jeffrey Tidwell  
What more can you say to attract a reader than this book is the story of a southern lawyer who begins as a member of the Ku Klux Klan in Alabama and ends his career as one of the most respected members of the United States Supreme Court. WOW! The truth IS stranger than fiction. This book was written by one of Justice Black's former law clerks on the Court. It is well-written and gives great insight into the man, his methods, convictions, passions, and flaws. Highly recommended for those who are fans of the Court's jurisprudence during the era of expanding protection of individual rights.

Hugo Black's odyssey was long, varied, unlikely, and remarkably successful. It began in 1886 in the Alabama hill country and ended in 1971, when Americans were demonstrating in the streets. As a United States senator from 1927 to 1937 and then for thirty-four years on the United States Supreme Court as its most passionate civil libertarian, Black fought for the rights and welfare of all people. Here is the first full-scale biography of this commanding figure. Never before has the story been so richly told. Roger Newman reveals much we did not know -- about Black's activities in the Ku Klux Klan and the furor over his appointment by FDR to the Supreme Court. He takes us behind the scenes at the Court and into its secret conferences, showing us the preparation of opinions and explaining the relationships among the justices. Black is seen as he was -- a brilliant trial lawyer, the investigating senator called by one reporter "a walking encyclopedia with a Southern accent," and the wily politician and astute justice who led the redirection of American law toward the protection of the individual. Black's story, is also an American story, filled with vivid accounts of his friendships and often dramatic encounters with FDR, Harry Truman, Felix Frankfurter, William O. Douglas, Earl Warren, Lyndon Johnson, and William J. Brennan, Jr. Newman gives us a fascinating portrait of Black -- the captivating charmer with the steel backbone and stronger will, and the self-taught, scholarly, cracker populist who termed himself "a rather backward country fellow." More than a decade in the making, drawing upon an astonishing array of sources, including Black's family papers, to which Newman had exclusive access, and more than one thousand interviews, this moving, instructive biography is written with grace, sweep, and verve. A book to stand beside Beveridge's classic life of John Marshall and Catherine Drinker Bowen's popular *Yankee from Olympus*, Hugo Black is the extraordinary story of a man who bestrode his era like a colossus.

From Publishers Weekly  
Supreme Court Justice Black (1886-1971), a noted civil libertarian and populist, is done justice in this first comprehensive biography, written with the cooperation of his family. Newman, a former research scholar at New York University School of Law, recreates Black's youth in isolated Clay County, Ala., his move into law and politics in Birmingham and his election to the U.S. Senate in 1926. FDR's search for a liberal justice led him to appoint Black in 1937. On the Court, Black grew into a staunch defender of the Bill of Rights and, as one of his clerks wrote, a judge concerned most with "the human being involved." He battled with order-loving rival Felix Frankfurter to fight McCarthy-era speech restrictions and, as the 1960s began, became the country's foremost First Amendment absolutist. In 1963, he wrote the landmark right-to-counsel *Gideon* opinion, but, as the Warren Court continued its revolution, Black's "reformist zeal had sharply abated." Though Newman clearly admires his subject and effectively limns Black's private life, he also tracks the justice's evasions regarding his membership in the Ku Klux Klan as a young man, notes the senator's "excess zeal" as an investigator and scores his illiberal opinion regarding the World War II internment of Japanese-Americans. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.  
From Library Journal  
Supreme Court Associate Justice Hugo Black is described by the author as controversial and influential:

controversial for an earlier Ku Klux Klan membership; influential for his lasting impact on the law. Best known for an absolutist belief in the Bill of Rights as a guarantee of civil liberties, Black helped define modern American constitutional law. Newman almost lovingly delves into the private and public life of this complex man who characterized himself as merely a "country fellow." While there are other prominent works on Black, most, like Howard Ball and Phillip J. Cooper's *Of Power and Right* (Oxford Univ. Pr., 1992), focus on Black's often stormy relationships with Court colleagues like William O. Douglas and Felix Frankfurter. Black's memoirs, *Mr. Justice and Mrs. Black* (LJ 3/1/86), provided a first look at the private man. Now, Newman has brought both sides together in an admirable biography. If there is any real reservation, it is only that Hugo Black will compete for the reader's time and attention with Gerhard Gunther's *Learned Hand* (LJ 5/1/94). But we can only feel satisfied with two excellent judicial biographies appearing in the same year. Highly recommended. Jerry E. Stephens, U.S. Court of Appeals Lib., Oklahoma City

Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus sA majestic biography of the man who shed his Ku Klux Klan robes to become one of the most influential and liberal justices in Supreme Court history. Newman (Law/New York Univ.) spent 26 years researching Black's life, and the result is a massive work of uncommon depth and grace. In subtle, luminous prose, he describes Black's merchant-class childhood in Clay County, Ala., haunted by his drunkard father; his prosperous years as "Ego" Black, the personal-injury lawyer whose courtroom oratory and theatrical cross-examination style brought him statewide fame and a position in the Klan; his two terms as Alabama's senator, during which he transformed himself from an intolerant populist into a power-brokering New Dealer, well-versed in ancient classics and modern politics; and his 34 years on the Supreme Court, championing the Bill of Rights and judicial restraint. Newman plainly reveres his subject, but he is clear-eyed and sometimes critical: He presents Black's various self-contradictory rationalizations for having served as KKK "Kladd" (whose job it is to induct new members into the Invisible Empire), then notes that Black "never really grasped, or could admit, the genuine outrage that the Klan caused, and not only among Catholics, Jews and Negroes." Newman also criticizes Black's failure to grasp "the profound meaning gathered within the Fourth Amendment's words" (forbidding unreasonable searches and seizures). But he celebrates and illuminates the rest of the enormous body of Black's jurisprudence, which includes the ideas that the Bill of Rights applies in its entirety to the states and that the First Amendment right of free speech is "absolute." The author is equally astute in analyzing Black's complex relationships with his depressive first wife, Josephine, the brilliant but libertine Justice William O. Douglas, and the devious and divisive Justice Felix Frankfurter. More than just a major contribution to Supreme Court history: a master's finely etched portrait of an American hero. (Author tour) -- Copyright 1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.