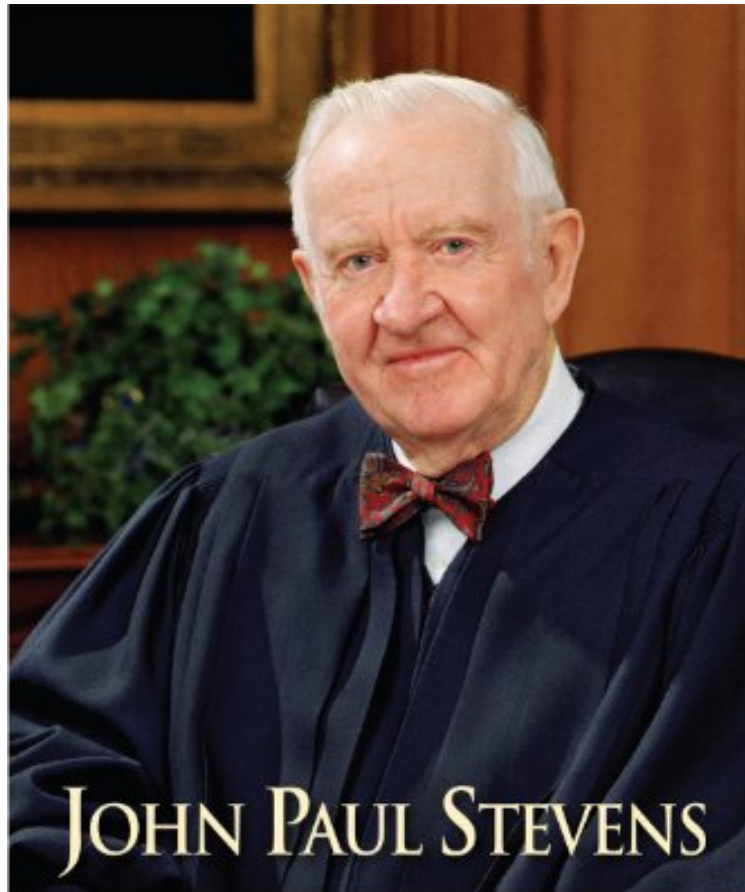


[E-BOOK] John Paul Stevens: An Independent Life

## John Paul Stevens: An Independent Life

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### JOHN PAUL STEVENS An Independent Life

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**Bill Barnhart, Gene Schlickman : John Paul Stevens: An Independent Life** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised John Paul Stevens: An Independent Life:

18 of 19 people found the following review helpful. A Fine Biography on the Eve of RetirementBy Ronald H. ClarkToday, April 28, 2010, Justice John Paul Stevens will hear his final argument in the Supreme Court. Although Stevens is the second-longest serving Justice in modern times, he probably has garnered greater public attention with his retirement announcement than any time during his period of service. This is why this important judicial biography

is so welcome, for it represents the first complete biography of the Justice published so far. And it is a fine job. A good judicial biography should focus on three elements of its subject's life: family background and education; professional career at the bar and on the bench; and of course the period of service on the Court. This 300-page book nicely allocates attention to all three elements of Stevens' life. In fact, the authors don't have Stevens on the Court until page 202 or so. The book traces Stevens' family background, his legal education, and an important Supreme Court clerkship with Justice Wiley Rutledge during the 1947 term, when he first confronted vital habeas corpus issues that would later come into play as a Justice when dealing with the Guantanamo detainee cases. We next follow Stevens as he begins practice in Chicago, teaches some antitrust law at the University of Chicago as an adjunct, works with Congressman Manny Celler in several antitrust investigations on the Hill, participates in the Attorney General's Committee to Study the Antitrust Laws, and conducts an investigation of state judicial corruption in Illinois. Probably the strongest chapter covers how Stevens, in the bizarre world of Illinois politics, was selected to join the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit (1970-1975). How one comes to the attention of the right people in being selected is dissected with great insight by the authors and makes an important contribution in helping us understand how judicial nominees emerge from the crowd and are selected. The authors also do an effective job in concisely reviewing some of the trends in Stevens' 7th Circuit decision making, relying upon law review articles and other sources. One hallmark of this book is that the authors, one of whom is a lawyer, do not bury the general reader in zillions of cases; rather, they sketch themes of Stevens' decisionmaking in a non-technical manner. The last third of the book focuses on Stevens on the Court. The authors do another excellent job in explaining why President Ford selected Stevens from the many suitable candidates, involving of all people Donald Rumsfeld who was Ford's chief of staff at the time. Stevens is confirmed 98-0, which is almost unbelievable given modern Senate Judiciary Committee warfare over nominees. Although the Justice had the reputation for independence, and being a maverick who wrote a large number of concurrences and dissents to express his perhaps idiosyncratic legal positions, the authors make a good case that Stevens developed into (in the words of Linda Greenhouse) a "very strategic player" able to build coalitions. His own viewpoint shifted to the more liberal and pragmatic over time in areas like capital punishment, *Roe v. Wade*, *Bush v. Gore*, and religion cases, eventually becoming somewhat the leader of the liberal bloc on the Court. The authors have done an excellent job of researching their subject: interviews; Justice Blackmun court files; law reviews and other published sources; and the decisions of the Justice as well. Twenty pages of notes reflect their diligence; also included is a selected bibliography and a table of cases. Justice Stevens spent 35 years on the Court; thanks to this insightful study we can begin to truly realize on the eve of his retirement how important he has been in that role. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting Life By Carl H. Hanson Justice Stevens has had an interesting life, career, and viewpoints. His tenure on the Court was legendary, his life was interesting, and I am looking forward to reading his newest book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book. Very interesting and insightful. By Dean Winchester Great book. Very interesting and insightful.

During Justice Sonya Sotomayor's recent confirmation hearings, the idea of biography played a high-profile role in the debate. How much does a person's experience affect his or her judicial opinions? Should personal history be a key consideration when determining qualifications to sit on the highest court in the land? In this impeccably researched book, journalist Bill Barnhart and retired lawyer and former legislator Gene Schlickman paint a detailed portrait of Justice John Paul Stevens' remarkable life and tenure on the Court. Through vivid family history and a careful look at his work on the bench, Barnhart and Schlickman offer the first biography of the second longest serving Supreme Court justice of the modern era one who has proudly earned the title of the Court's most prolific dissenter.

"Terrific." Jeffrey Toobin, author of *The Nine* Justice John Paul Stevens combines a towering intellect with courageous independence. Bill Barnhart and Gene Schlickman combine their exhaustive research with insightful analysis to give readers a splendid biography of the Supreme Court's most respected member. Newton N. Minow, former FCC chairman A completely original and readable approach that connects the life and career of a future Supreme Court justice with his distinguished contributions on the Court. A new direction for legal scholarship and a great service to our democracy. Gary T. Johnson, President, Chicago History Museum