

Justice Brennan: The Great Conciliator

Hunter R. Clark

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Hunter R. Clark : Justice Brennan: The Great Conciliator before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Justice Brennan: The Great Conciliator:

10 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful story of a great jurist. By Eric V. Moyer Justice Brennan spent more than thirty years on the Supreme Court. He joined the Warren Court, decried by some as "liberal activists". He served with distinction there, on the Burger Court, and finally the Rehnquist Court (which some decry as reactionary conservative activists). On all three, he regularly was the man who spoke for the Court on many of the important issues of the times. The enduring question is "How could this man mold and shape such disparate groups of Justices to the point where he wrote some of the most significant majority opinions of our time?" With typical modesty, Justice Brennan said, that he learned early how to count to five. Rod Clark does a masterful job in his chronicle of the life, the influences, the context and the enduring legacy of Justice Brennan. He was a trail blazer in a host of areas of jurisprudence: First Amendment law, criminal defendants rights and women's issues. He has authored dozens of opinions affirming rights which we now take for granted. All this from the man who said "I don't expect to distinguish myself on the Court". A true American original. The kind of person who helped make this country great. A wonderful and easy read.

An in-depth look at a thirty-four-year Justice of the Supreme Court represents the first biography drawn from his own private papers and details his view on the First Amendment, criminal defendant rights, minorities, women, and the poor.

From Publishers Weekly Clark's biography defends the jurisprudential legacy of Supreme Court Justice William Brennan, whose opinions have generally been more respected by laypersons than by legal scholars. Clark argues that Brennan's liberal decisions on free speech, the rights of women and minorities, electoral reapportionment, abortion and criminal defendants' rights have exerted a profound impact on public policy and jurisprudence. Brennan's Irish-Catholic, working-class roots in Newark, N.J., where his father was a trade union leader and politician, lent iron determination to his self-deprecating manner. He became a colonel and troubleshooter for army procurement during WWII, a New Jersey state judge and an outspoken, early critic of Sen. Joseph McCarthy. As Supreme Court Justice, Brennan was a coalition builder in the 1960s and fought a rearguard action during the Court's conservative retrenchment of the 1970s and '80s right up to his retirement in 1990. Drake University law professor Clark (Thurgood Marshall) shows that Brennan's decisions gave the guarantees of free speech and press unprecedented force. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.