

[Mobile book] Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr.

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John C. Jeffries

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John C. Jeffries : Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr. before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr.:

Drawing on interviews and thousands of pages of court documents and notes, the author examines the life of the highly influential judge and frames the major issues of his career.

From Publishers WeeklyThe cooperation of Powell and his Supreme Court colleagues lends credibility to this judicious biography by one of his former law clerks, who now teaches at the University of Virginia School of Law. Powell, born in 1907, grew up in Virginia, ambitious and dutiful. From school lessons the author suggests stayed with him, Powell learned to respect both authority and the practical need to change. With perhaps too much detail, Jeffries discusses Powell's practice of law in Richmond, his role as school board chairman publicly reluctant to urge desegregation and his service as president of the American Bar Association. The author does not analyze the cases Powell judged, but looks closely at the most controversial ones regarding school busing, abortion, the Watergate tapes and, especially, the 1978 Bakke case, in which Powell's "pragmatic conservative" opinion outlawed a quota but endorsed racial preferences. Though Jeffries admires his subject's moderation and conscientiousness, he also criticizes him for hair-splitting distinctions and probes the Justice's regrets about cases involving capital punishment and

homosexual sodomy. A portrait worthy of the man and his work. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal. Jeffries (Univ. of Virginia Sch. of Law) has painted a penetrating portrait of the jurist once described, without too much hyperbole, as "the most powerful man in America." Jeffries's work, however, is not just another judicial biography, which in itself is virtually a lost art; rather, what we have here is a first-rate biography of a man who just happened to become a Supreme Court justice. As a result, what Jeffries offers the reader is an insight into America itself in the modern era, as the nation faces one crisis after another. At the heart of this superb work, however, is a cautious, conservative lawyer and jurist conscientiously committed to duty and, above all, justice. One may disagree with Powell's politics or his jurisprudence, but one would be hard pressed to find a better treatment of Powell the man and Powell the justice. An excellent work full of detail and short on jargon; highly recommended for all libraries. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 11/1/93.- Stephen K. Shaw, Northwest Nazarene Coll., Nampa, Id. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus sAn exhaustive and informative biography of a previously neglected Supreme Court justice, written by one his former clerks. Jeffries (Law/Univ. of Virginia) offers a voluminous review of the life and career of Justice Powell, once called the most powerful man in America because of his position as a moderate swing vote on the high court during a turbulent period in its history. Born early in the century to one of Virginia's first families, Powell was reared in relative comfort and attended the best schools, although his father was disappointed by his choice of the local Washington and Lee over Harvard and insisted he get a post-graduate degree at the Ivy League school. His Baptist upbringing deeply affected his youth and stayed with him throughout his life. He went on to become a very successful attorney with a prestigious Virginia law firm; not until he was 64, an age when most are considering retirement, was Powell persuaded to accept nomination to the Supreme Court. During his tenure, he was intimately involved in cases dealing with such important issues as racial segregation (called by the author a "hard-line moderate," he remained a staunch opponent of court-ordered busing), abortion (he was a strong proponent of Roe v. Wade and the right of privacy), and the White House Watergate tapes, a decision in which he found with the majority against the man who appointed him to the bench but whose scope and application he successfully argued should be limited. He retired in 1987. A fascinating glimpse inside the sometimes arcane and always political workings of the US Supreme Court and one of its influential members. -- Copyright 1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.