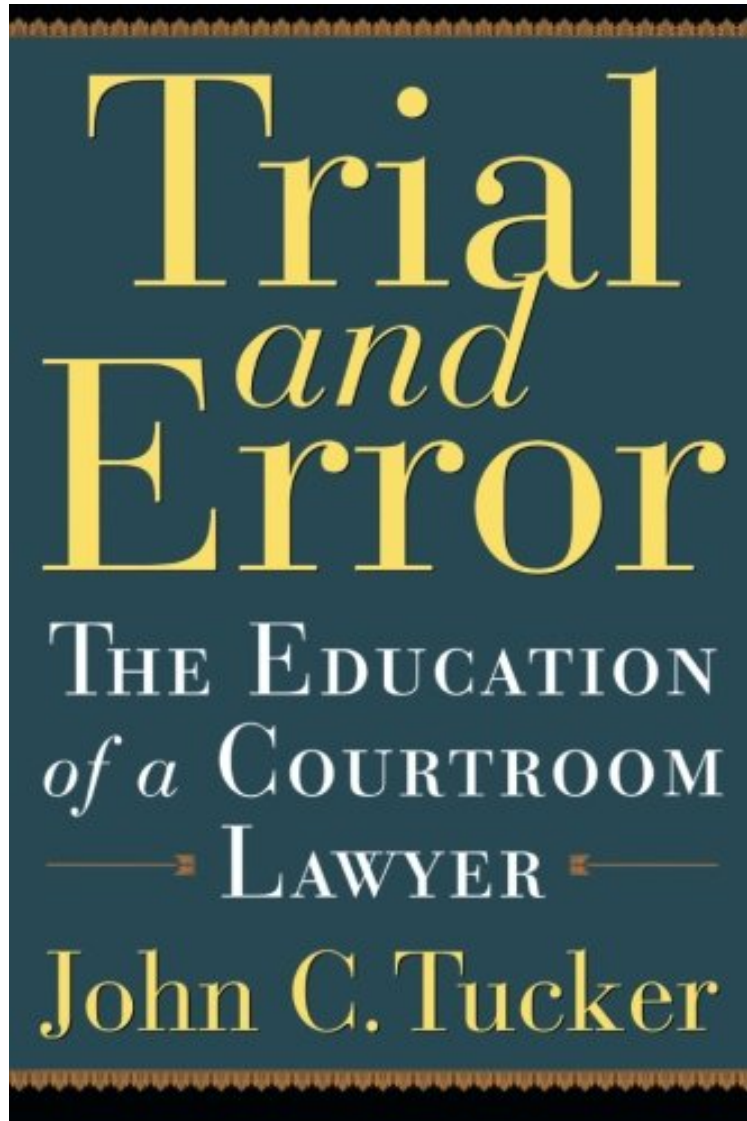


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Trial and Error: The Education of a Courtroom Lawyer

John C. Tucker

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John C. Tucker : Trial and Error: The Education of a Courtroom Lawyer before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Trial and Error: The Education of a Courtroom Lawyer:

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today. The book is not one of those long winded books which could have been written in 1/2 the pages. It is entertaining and educational. I'd love to meet Mr. Tucker.

Trial and Error offers an unexpurgated examination of the past half-century of American jurisprudence through the life of one of America's most celebrated and accomplished lawyers. Here is John C. Tucker, a man who twice argued before the Supreme Court and won, challenged the nefarious and discriminatory practice of "contract lending" and lost, participated in such monumental cases as the Chicago Eight trial following the calamitous 1968 Democratic Convention and retired at age fifty-one, securely established as one of the most respected jurists of his generation. In Trial and Error, he describes with poise and wit his encounters with as varied a cast of characters as Muhammad Ali, Abbie Hoffman, and Chief Justice Earl Warren, while chronicling the remarkable successes, and sobering disappointments, of his distinguished career. This is an honest and uncompromising analysis of the events that have shaped our court system, and the inspiring story of a man for principle in an increasingly unprincipled age for the legal profession.

From Publishers Weekly
Midlife crisis or not, at 51 Tucker made an unusual career move: he gave up his partnership and six-figure income with the prestigious Chicago law firm of Jenner and Block to write about legal issues that interested him. In his newest (after *May God Have Mercy*), he turns to professional autobiography and chronicles several of the major cases that shaped his views about the law. Mercifully, they transcend the kind of "war stories" too often told by middle-aged lawyers at cocktail parties. Tucker argued twice before the Supreme Court: his first case involved the question of mental illness and a person's competency to stand trial; the second concerned the controversial practice of patronage hiring (and firing). Tucker prevailed in each, although his first client subsequently fired him for suggesting the use of an insanity defense, even though this was the very issue that had been taken to the Supreme Court. Tucker takes it in stride: "I had long since learned that a client's gratitude is a fragile reed." Despite great material, however, Tucker displays a couple of unfortunate tendencies that lessen the book's impact. First, there's frequently more detail than the general reader needs and, as a result, Tucker's points are buried by needless digressions and asides. Second, while he makes no bones about his biases, sometimes the potshots that he takes at his legal adversaries, particularly Chief Justice Rehnquist, are so unwarranted that they undercut Tucker's credibility. These reservations aside, the author enjoyed the kind of career that most lawyers dream about, and his reflections will be of interest to those in the profession. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Booklist
Tucker, a respected lawyer and retired partner in a prestigious Chicago law firm, highlights some of his most interesting cases and casts light on a past era that still resonates with us today. Tucker recounts his baptism in practical trial experience, his firm's pro bono criminal representation, and his appearances before the U.S. Supreme Court, all of which provided insights into social and racial disparities. His firm undertook the landmark Contract Buyer League case, ultimately losing the case but still casting some light on a dual racial housing market and its inequities, which persist to this day. His most famous public interest case was the defense of the Chicago Eight, the major protesters involved in the demonstrations at the 1968 Democratic convention that provoked police violence. Tucker's client list has included Mafia affiliates as well as heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali. Tucker provides a glance at high courtroom drama as well as the flaws in our judicial system, offering an excellent read for those interested in popular American culture and the legal system. Vernon Ford
Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "I closed the book thinking we need more John Tuckers in the law today!"