

Book Reviews

Adjudicating Illinois: Justices of the Illinois Supreme Court. By John A. Lupton. (Brookfield, MO: Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Committee/Donning, 2018. Pp. 340, illustrations, notes. Cloth, \$60.00.)

In his recent work, *Adjudicating Illinois: Justices of the Illinois Supreme Court*, editor John A. Lupton and his four collaborators offer readers biographies of 117 Illinois Supreme Court justices from 1818 through the present. Funded by the Friends of Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission and private donations, the work is a notable achievement of legal historical scholarship that provides readers with an introduction to the state's most important jurisprudential developments and influential jurists.

The format for the biographies is similar throughout the work, with the lives and careers of each justice distilled to about three pages apiece. *Adjudicating Illinois*, however, is much more than simply a retelling of the lives of the state's leading judges and their most important rulings. Throughout the biographies, Lupton and his colleagues provide historical insight into the significant legal issues of the day. They illustrate how judges' conclusions are inextricably intertwined with their personal assumptions and community expectations. They also briefly contextualize the importance of the most significant decisions that each justice made during her or his time on the bench. While the focus is on Illinois, the biographies present an evolution of law in the state and the Midwest generally.

Perhaps the most impressive contribution of the work, however, is as a history of Illinois. The biographies paint a lively portrait not only of the judges but of society itself. In this light, the individual stories of the justices' lives and careers become a mosaic of the region's development over the last two hundred years. The earliest biographies, for example, reflect the fact that Illinois was a sparsely populated frontier—many of the justices, like so many of their fellow

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residents, were born elsewhere and relocated to the new state. Illinois was an agricultural state, and many of the justices' early decisions reflect the sort of commercial and property law issues and rural values common to farmers. The early biographies also demonstrate the interconnection between law and politics at a time when legislatures exercised control over the number and appointments of justices. Indeed, in an era in which the boundaries between law and politics were more fluid than today, many judges were deeply involved in state and local politics before, during, and after their judicial appointments. The work also highlights the state's antebellum struggles with the issue of slavery. As Illinois became more populous and industrialized, conflicts reflected the new legal landscape of an increasingly commercial and mobile society. Issues of tort negligence, contract law, and criminal procedure became more complex, necessitating original interpretations of established precedents as judges struggled to apply ancient common law principles and old agrarian values to novel situations that arose as the state's economy developed. The work also demonstrates how national jurisprudential trends influenced Illinois judges in such areas as worker protections, social welfare, and union development and activity. In the modern era, the work reflects the court's response to legal issues rooted in our diverse society. Questions of urban governance and authority reflect the shifting locus of political power toward cities, while cases about parental custody, the death penalty, zoning, civil rights, personal liberty, unions, and insurance liability are as much about evolution of society as the progression of jurisprudence. The most recent biographies show how judges continue to wrestle with their own contemporary issues, including privacy and liability in an era shaped by information technology and social media.

As a chronicle of the individual lives of 117 Illinois judges, this work is an important legal history reference; as an analysis of how those careers, taken collectively, evidence the evolution of the state through their legal decisions, it is a unique and compelling social and cultural history. While readers who are already familiar with historical legal terms and concepts will likely appreciate some of the work's more technical analyses, Lupton and his colleagues steer away from courtroom jargon to provide general readers with a superb introduction to the evolution of law in the state and the region, as well as to the complex interactions between individuals and communities that shape the evolution of all the social contracts that make it possible us all to live together.

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