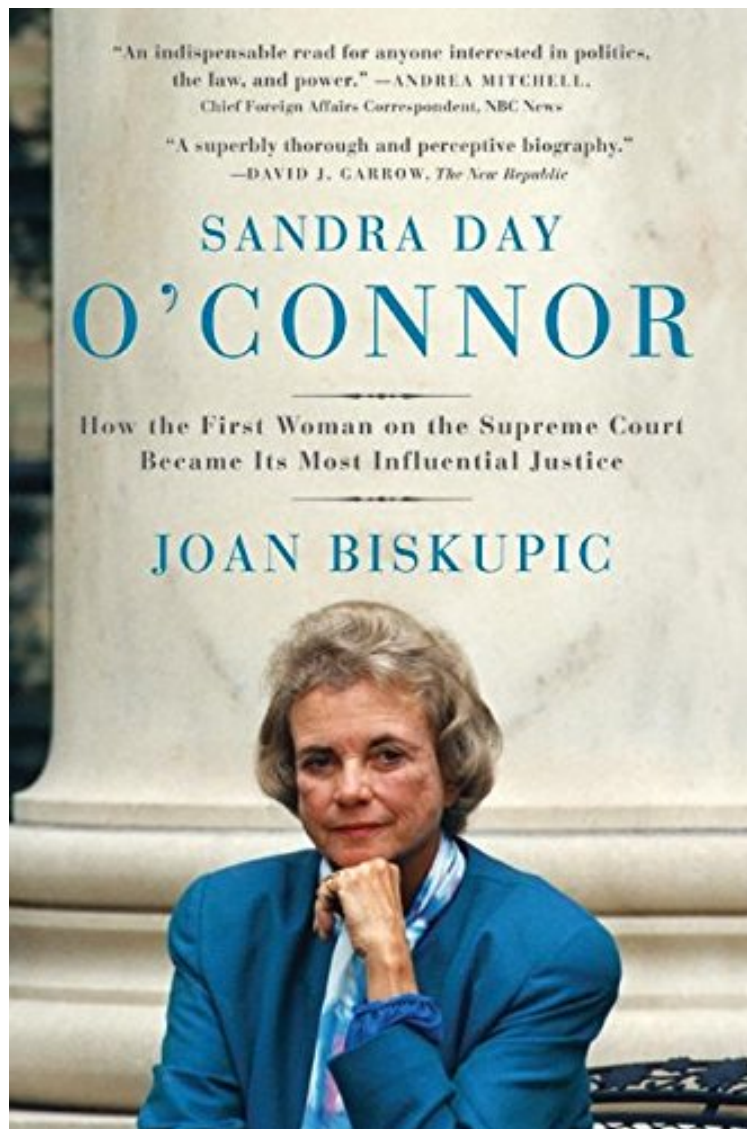


(Read now) Sandra Day O'Connor: How the First Woman on the Supreme Court Became Its Most Influential Justice

Sandra Day O'Connor: How the First Woman on the Supreme Court Became Its Most Influential Justice

Joan Biskupic

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Joan Biskupic : Sandra Day O'Connor: How the First Woman on the Supreme Court Became Its Most Influential Justice before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sandra Day O'Connor: How the First Woman on the Supreme Court Became Its Most Influential Justice:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Lot of information, but not a flowing story. Easy to loose interest.By

Charles Isele This book provided information and details which I did not know. The material covered for the most part was too detailed and of little interest or value. If condensed, it would be great. I would not recommend it to a friend nor would I give it as a gift. I have much respect for the "justice" and believe she provided good service to the system. The book provided much information on the many times she changed her mind or used politics to influence decisions. I believe the most value I received from the book was her description of the inter working of the court and the personalities involved. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Insight into the Career of Sandra Day O'Connor

By JJoan Biskupic has written an informative and interesting biography of Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. She describes O'Connor's youth on a ranch in Texas, and education through law school, which are later shown as influences on several of her decisions. The author outlines O'Connor's path through the politics of the State of Arizona, where she settled, showing how her unswerving loyalty to the Republican Party combined with hours of volunteer activities led to success. Her letters to the leaders on state political issues were couched in neutral and factual language. She never complained, she ignored failures, and never referred to behind-the-scenes conflicts. In an age promoting equal opportunity for women, she initially supported the Equal Rights Amendment, but since the political leaders whom she knew were cool towards it, she backed off of public support of it. Her appointment to the Supreme Court was political. She was not a legal scholar and in fact she had more experience as a state legislator than as a judge. Biskupic describes in detail the process of selecting and confirming her for the Supreme Court. Her role as a junior justice gradually evolved into one in which she worked to bring the conservative and liberal positions closer, even though she tended to be conservative herself. As the years went on she actively negotiated with other justices the wording of opinions which she could support as the 5th vote needed to form a majority. Most of the appeals that come before the Court, centered on topics such as federal-state relationships, affirmative action, abortion, death penalty appeals and separation of church and state. Biskupic describes in detail several of these cases, presenting the underlying issues, O'Connor's vote and reasoning in each, comparing them with those of the other justices. These are clearly written, enabling the reader to get a glimpse into how the votes evolved. A summary of O'Connor's opinions over the years showed her to be conservative, a pragmatist, quite assertive and never looking back. However, occasionally she would surprise everyone with an opinion that moved away from the more conservative point of view, especially on the subject of education. Some legal scholars complained her opinions were too open-ended, and vaguely worded, providing little guidance to the lower courts. Intermixed with all this are brief pictures showing the human side of the court, both the light and difficult moments. Personally she and her family had to deal with the problems and sufferings common to us all. How this was accomplished rounds out the book which ends with her sudden resignation from the Court in 2005. This summary of the major facts already known by most people are clarified and expanded by the details provided by Biskupic's scholarship, experience, and clear writing, and it is these details that makes the book worth reading. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Sandra Day O'Connor -- she plowed her own row

By Bob Allen The first part of the book, about O'Connor's growing up years, was a bit slow. I thought it picked up well once she was appointed to the Supreme Court. O'Connor is an interesting character. Though she set a precedent by being the first female SCOTUS justice, she didn't fit the mold of a radical reformer. She was both excellent lawyer/judge and "traditional" female, once saying that family should come first. She refused to take up certain stances simply because they were "women's issues". Biskupic does a really good job of showing how O'Connor's legal opinions modified and changed over time. She portrays O'Connor as one who prefers incremental change over radical change. O'Connor didn't always vote her convictions -- she stated that she found abortion abhorrent, yet always voted to retain Roe v Wade. She was usually behind states' rights issues, voting to block federal government interference. She was a political schemer and seemed to take political gain into consideration, more in her pre-SCOTUS days as a legislator than in her SCOTUS days, though she was careful in projecting her public image. In the SCOTUS, she was often the swing vote, taking a more centrist position than many of her colleagues. I especially enjoyed how Biskupic talked about the relationships between the justices. Interesting note: O'Connor refused to be interviewed for this book.

Sandra Day O'Connor, America's first woman justice, was called the most powerful woman in America. She became the axis on which the Supreme Court turned, and it was often said that to gauge the direction of American law, one need look only to O'Connor's vote. Drawing on information gleaned from once-private papers, hundreds of interviews, and the insight gained from nearly two decades of covering the Supreme Court, author Joan Biskupic offers readers a fascinating portrait of a complex and multifaceted woman—lawyer, politician, legislator, and justice, as well as wife, mother, A-list society hostess, and competitive athlete. Biskupic provides an in-depth account of her transformation from tentative jurist to confident architect of American law.

From Publishers Weekly In the late 1980s, as the Supreme Court justices were discussing a case, Antonin Scalia ranted against affirmative action. Sandra Day O'Connor, the first and then still the only woman on the High Court, replied, "Why, Nino, how do you think I got my job?" This is one of the few revelatory moments in Biskupic's bio of the retiring O'Connor as sharp-tongued, humorous and utterly realistic. It's also, as Biskupic shows in a close study of

O'Connor's jurisprudence, a bit misleading: for most of her career on the Court, the conservative O'Connor voted against affirmative action. With access to justices' once private papers, longtime court observer Biskupic, now with USA Today, sheds light on the internal workings on the Court, but not much on the internal workings of the very private O'Connor's mind and heart. Biskupic does show the justice gaining confidence and force on the Court, particularly after her fight against breast cancer in 1988. As O'Connor faces retirement, Biskupic clarifies her judicial legacy, sometimes seeing the glass as half full, sometimes as half empty: praising her lack of ideology but also noting a lack of vision in a justice who often "step[s] to the brink, and then back[s] away" a mixed legacy that will be debated for years to come. (Nov.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Before Sandra Day O'Connor's recent retirement, she was considered the most powerful woman in the U.S., exerting enormous influence as she operated from the center among the justices of the Supreme Court for a quarter of a century. Acclaimed as the first woman on the Court, O'Connor has nonetheless defied easy labels, leaving observers to wonder if she was the nonthreatening matron she appeared to be or as calculating as her colleagues. Biskupic, who has covered the Supreme Court since 1989, draws on once-private Court documents and hundreds of interviews to offer an absorbing portrait of a woman who remains somewhat enigmatic. Biskupic traces O'Connor's early lonely years on the Lazy B ranch and her years as wife, mother, and Republican state legislator in Arizona. She helped her Stanford University Law School classmate and friend William Rehnquist prepare for his nomination and was herself nominated in 1981 by President Reagan. She quickly achieved celebrity status and found herself navigating between conservatives and liberals, activists and strict constructionists. She used her talent as a natural consensus builder to control from the middle ground. O'Connor faced the challenges of a pioneering woman, dealing with political expectations and social conventions, a bout with breast cancer, and her husband's declining health--all against the backdrop of the tangled inner workings of the nation's highest court. O'Connor's retirement and the recent death of Chief Justice Rehnquist are guaranteed to boost reader interest in this illuminating biography. Vanessa Bush Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved [A] lively life of the just-retired Associate Justice. [A] fitting farewell to an influential jurist. (Kirkus s) An insightful biography of perhaps the most influential associate justice in recent history. Highly recommended. (Library Journal) A comprehensive narrative of OConnors remarkable judicial career. (Los Angeles Times Book) A fine new biography. (New York Times) [A] fascinating and revealing biography. Biskupic writes clearly and without hyperbole. (St. Petersburg Times) An excellent account of Sandra Day OConnors life and times as the first woman Supreme Court justice. (Washington Post Blog) A valuable window into OConnors operating style. (Roll Call) Biskupic ... draws on once-private Court documents and hundreds of interviews to offer an absorbing portrait. [An] illuminating biography. (Booklist) [A] smart book. Brisk and thorough. (Bloomberg News) [A] highly readable and engaging work. [A] powerful and persuasive account. (Washington Post Book World)