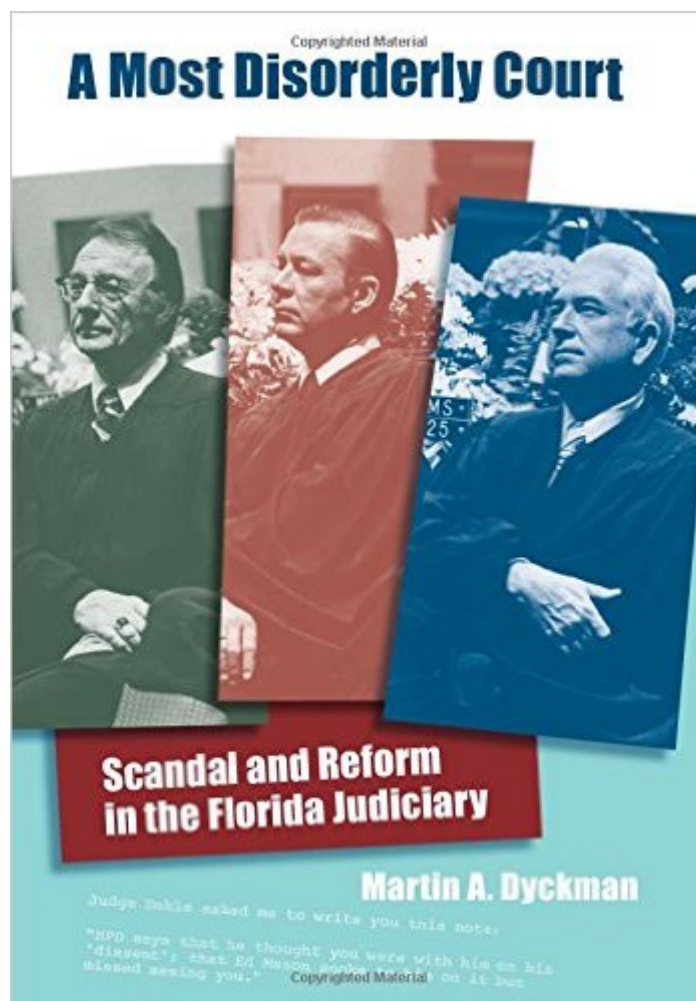


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A Most Disorderly Court: Scandal And Reform In The Florida Judiciary (Florida History And Culture)



Synopsis

In the 1970s, justices on the Florida Supreme Court were popularly elected. But a number of scandals threatened to topple the court until public outrage led to profound reforms and fundamental changes in the way justices were seated. One justice abruptly retired after being filmed on a high-roller junket to Las Vegas. Two others tried to fix cases in lower courts on behalf of campaign supporters. A fourth destroyed evidence by shredding his copy of a document into "seventeen equal" strips of paper that he then flushed down a toilet. As the journalist who wrote most of the stories that exposed these events, Martin Dyckman played a key role in revealing the corruption, favoritism, and cronyism then rampant in the court. A Most Disorderly Court recounts this dark period in Florida politics, when stunning revelations regularly came to light. He also traces the reform efforts that ultimately led to a constitutional amendment providing for the appointment of all Florida's appellate judges, and emphasizes the absolute importance of confidential sources for journalists.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As an attorney for nearly 50 years, I lived through the time which is the subject of this book. It was a time during which what may have started simply as a "good old white boys club" became incredibly corrupt. There was breach of ethics, bribery, control of case assignments, the letting of parties to the litigation or their representatives actually write decisions of the court, remaining on cases involving

close friends, ex part communications, condoning of unethical conduct, investigations, impeachment proceedings, resignations, politicizing of decisions, disbarment, etc. This novel, which is extremely well documented, could easily have been named "A Most Dishonorable Court." There are two aspects of this novel that are of extreme importance today. One is the effect of politicizing the Judiciary. During the last 15 years there has been there has been a concerted effort to politicize the Florida Judiciary. This has lead to the appointment of many unqualified ideologues as judges. Florida will pay a high price for this in the future. Secondly, the judiciary has been under constant attack by those who either do not understand its role and significance, or simply don't care. Under our former Governor, Jeb Bush, there was a truly shameful effort to diminish the jurisdiction and significance of the court, to assume essentially total control of the judicial appointment process, and to control future decisions through the appointment of ideologues. It became obvious that he preferred a Monarchy to a Constitutional form of government with three separate but equally important branches of government, each with their own roles.

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