



The Texas Supreme Court: A Narrative History, 1836-1986 (Texas Legal Studies)

James L. Haley

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“Few people realize that in the area of law, Texas began its American journey far ahead of most of the rest of the country, far more enlightened on such subjects as women’s rights and the protection of debtors.” Thus James Haley begins this highly readable account of the Texas Supreme Court. The first book-length history of the Court published since 1917, it tells the story of the Texas Supreme Court from its origins in the Republic of Texas to the political and philosophical upheavals of the mid-1980s.

Using a lively narrative style rather than a legalistic approach, Haley describes the twists and turns of an evolving judiciary both empowered and constrained by its dual ties to Spanish civil law and English common law. He focuses on the personalities and judicial philosophies of those who served on the Supreme Court, as well as on the interplay between the Court’s rulings and the state’s unique history in such areas as slavery, women’s rights, land and water rights, the rise of the railroad and oil and gas industries, Prohibition, civil rights, and consumer protection. The book is illustrated with more than fifty historical photos, many from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It concludes with a detailed chronology of milestones in the Supreme Court’s history and a list, with appointment and election dates, of the more than 150 justices who have served on the Court since 1836.

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