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William D. Bader, Roy M. Mersky. *The First One Hundred Eight Justices.* Buffalo: William S. Hein and Company, 2004. xvi + 173 pp. No price listed (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8377-3431-6.

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When asked to review this book, I assumed from the title and description that it was a collection of short biographical sketches of each justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. I looked forward to using such a book when I am writing about a case and simply want to know basic biographical information on a justice. However, that is not the book that William Bader and Roy Mersky have produced. Instead, it is a short book with only 117 pages of text and a 42-page bibliography.

The preface by Judge Richard Arnold describes this book as "a true feast of information." I would describe it as a snack–sometimes tasty, sometimes bland and most of the time less than filling. It is true, as Judge Arnold points out, that you can find out the name of the youngest, the oldest, the longest-serving, the shortest-serving justice, as well as the names of those nominated and not approved. Judge Arnold opines that "all of these facts are perhaps what would be called trivia in other contexts, but the word is hardly appropriate when applied to the Supreme Court." Maybe I am not deferential enough, but this is a book of trivia. Some of the trivia would be useful to a student of the court, but the format of the book is cumbersome. For example, in the aforementioned bibliography, we find a "selected list" of books and articles. It is not arranged by justice nor period but simply by the name of the author. Since the book has no index, one has to read the entire bibliography to find a publication on the justice or period of interest.

This is not to suggest that the book does not have some useful tools. A chronological list of the justices supplies the name of the appointing President, the age at appointment, the period of service, the years of service and the reason for termination of service. Other charts would be worthwhile for someone like a reporter trying to place the latest appointee in relation to prior justices. Included are charts on the religion, the political party, the educational background, and occupation of the justices. But would even a reporter need to know which justice had the most children?

Beyond the charts, the short chapters are uneven. The first chapter entitled "Biography of the Supreme Court" seems to set a light and informative tone for the book. But this reader was thrown off by the gratuitous insult of Justice Thurgood Marshall that is dropped under the topic of gender (p. 14). Why not simply give Justice Ginsburg a compliment instead of insulting Marshall? Chapter 2 is on rating the justices. But nothing new can be found here as it relies primarily on a 1970 survey. The chapter on those nominated but who did not serve represents the best sixteen pages of the book. It is followed by "Politically Correct Legal Culture and the Vicissitudes of Judicial Reputation." There is some worthwhile material here on some lost and underrated justices, but again there are two more attacks on Justice Thurgood Marshall. The essence of their criticism is that Justice Marshall was a poor judge because his jurisprudence "is only consistent in its liberal outcomes" (p. 61). The political bias of the authors prevents them from seeing any justices with a "conservative outcome jurisprudence."

It is ironic that both authors have contributed to some fine works on the Supreme Court. If you really need biographical data on each justice, I recommend the *Congressional Quarterly's Guide to the United States Supreme Court* (1990). If you want something more in-depth try Leon Friedman and Fred Israel's *The Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court* (1969), to which Mersky contributed. If you want a more thorough evaluative work on the justices try *Great Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court* (1993), to which Bader contributed. But if you need a rule book for a game of Supreme Court trivia, *The First One Hundred Eight Justices* may just be filling enough.

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