H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Walter M. Manley, Canter Brown. *The Supreme Court of Florida, 1917-1972.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006. 428 pp. $59.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8130-3003-6.

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Published on H-Florida (October, 2008)
Commissioned by Jeanine A. Clark Bremer

Decisions that Shaped a State

Florida's supreme court is an institution that has recently been in the news due to the controversies surrounding the 2000 presidential election and subsequent battle between Texas governor George W. Bush and vice president Al Gore. In spite of this, not much is known about the history of the court. Florida's highest judicial body played a key role throughout the history of the state and Walter W. Manley II and Canter Brown, Jr. explore this history in their 2006 work, *The Supreme Court of Florida, 1917-1972.* This work actually serves as a successor to their previous book that focused on the court from the beginning of Florida's territorial phase in 1821 through 1917.

Tackling a project of this magnitude and scope is bound to provide problems for the authors but Manley and Brown, as they did in their first study of the court, are able to effectively lay out a plan for the reader, which helps one to grasp not only the workings of the judicial branch, but also how it fits into Florida's history in general. While their first work dealt with the creation of the court and its growth during and after the Civil War, this new book focuses on a time period of profound change in Florida. The twentieth century witnessed conflict and change throughout the United States and nowhere was this more evident than in the South, especially Florida.

What makes their book effective is the way in which the authors structure their work. They begin by explaining exactly what they aim to accomplish and how they will do so. They cite two goals in the introduction: the first is to examine the history of the court itself and the second, to show how Florida's supreme court, and state courts in general, fit into the larger federal judicial system. Furthermore, they break the entire work into sections covering various time periods, such as "The Roller Coaster Years, 1917-1932" and "Change and Reaction, 1955-1964." Within these sections they not only discuss the important cases but also provide the reader with a rather in-depth analysis of the individual justices who served on the bench. This added element is essential to their study since it enables a fuller understanding of the decisions handed down by the court. It is important to know who these justices were and why they acted in the manner they did. Each chapter also contains similar subsections that deal with themes prevalent throughout the state's history, such as race relations.

The only flaw in the work is that Manley and Brown do not provide as much detail on thesecond stated subject, the supposed renewed interest in how state courts fit into the larger federal judicial system. They do allude to basic themes regarding this topic but, in the end, the reader is left without a thorough analysis.

Brown and Manley exhausted numerous sources to compile their work, which was commissioned by the Florida Supreme Court Historical Society. The sources range from manuscripts and newspapers to secondary sources, primarily law review articles. One of the more interesting and effective tools used by the authors are the various interviews they conducted.

Overall, Brown and Manley's work is successful in providing both the average reader as well as the judicial scholar a valuable tool in understanding the cases and justices that shaped the court throughout most of the twentieth century. The work also allows the reader to see how the court defined and was defined by various events in Florida during the time period covered.

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Citation: Seth A. Weitz. Review of Manley, Walter M.; Brown, Canter, *The Supreme Court of Florida, 1917-1972*. H-Florida, H-Net Reviews. October, 2008.
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