A BISON ORIGINAL

Called to Justice
The Life of a Federal Trial Judge
Warren K. Urbom

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Book Synopsis:
Early in his judicial career, U.S. District Judge Warren K. Urbom was assigned a yearlong string of criminal trials arising from a seventy-one-day armed standoff between the American Indian Movement and federal law enforcement at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. In Called to Justice Urbom provides the first behind-the-scenes look at what quickly became one of the most significant series of federal trials of the twentieth century.

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Book Description

Early in his judicial career, U.S. District Judge Warren K. Urbom was assigned a yearlong string of criminal trials arising from a seventy-one-day armed standoff between the American Indian Movement and federal law enforcement at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. In Called to Justice Urbom provides the first behind-the-scenes look at what quickly became one of the most significant series of federal trials of the twentieth century. Yet Wounded Knee was only one set of monumental cases Urbom presided over during his years on the bench, a set that in turn forms but one chapter in a remarkable life story.

Urbom’s memoir begins on a small farm in Nebraska during the dustbowl 1930s. From making it through the Great Depression and drought to serving in World War II, working summers for his father’s dirt-moving business, and going to school on the G.I. Bill, Urbom’s experiences constitute a classic American story of making the most of opportunity, inspiration, and a little luck. Urbom gives a candid account of his time as a trial lawyer and his early plans to become a minister—and of the effect both had on his judicial career. His story offers a rare inside view of what it means to be a federal judge—the nuts and bolts of conducting trials, weighing evidence, and making decisions—but also considers the questions of law and morality, all within the framework of a life well lived and richly recounted.

Pre-Publication Praise

“In describing the extraordinary professional challenges and life-altering personal tragedies he has encountered, Judge Urbom shows why he is one of the truly great judges of our time—modeling for the legal profession, litigants, and all of humankind the highest standards of professionalism and personal conduct, which he has symbolized throughout his career.”—Deanell Reece Tacha, dean of Pepperdine University School of Law, U.S. Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit (Retired)

“In a humble and straightforward style, one of America’s finest federal jurists outlines his process of decision making in important cases over the years. It will strengthen your confidence in our judicial system.”—William Webster, former director of the FBI and of the CIA, and now chairman of the Homeland Security Advisory Council

“There are those who observe history and those who make history. Warren Urbom is one of the latter. He is a Federal Court Judge, but he seems quite unconscious of the fact that as such, he has made a significant difference in history. This book defines that difference. The defining moment of his career was the Wounded Knee trials of 1974–75, the story of which he relates with judicial objectivity. But to those who know him best, his role in that historic event is but the ‘outward and visible form of an inward and spiritual grace.’ It’s rare when both the losers and winners praise the referee.”—Darrel E. Berg, United Methodist Minister (Retired)

Post-Publication Praise

Please visit this book’s web page (http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/product/Called-to-Justice,675259.aspx) for the most current post-publication praise.
Author Biography

Warren K. Urbom has been a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Nebraska since 1970. William Jay Riley is chief judge of the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Additional Information

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