



Illinois Justice: The Scandal of 1969 and the Rise of John Paul Stevens

Kenneth A. Manaster

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Illinois political scandals reached new depths in the 1960s and '70s. In *Illinois Justice*, Kenneth Manaster takes us behind the scenes of one of the most spectacular. The so-called Scandal of 1969 not only ended an Illinois Supreme Court justice's aspirations to the US Supreme Court, but also marked the beginning of little-known lawyer John Paul Stevens's rise to the high court.

In 1969, citizen gadfly Sherman Skolnick accused two Illinois Supreme Court justices of accepting valuable bank stock from an influential Chicago lawyer in exchange for deciding an important case in the lawyer's favor. The resulting feverish media coverage prompted the state supreme court to appoint a special commission to investigate. Within six weeks and on a shoestring budget, the commission mobilized a small volunteer staff to reveal the facts. Stevens, then a relatively unknown Chicago lawyer, served as chief counsel. His work on this investigation would launch him into the public spotlight and onto the bench.

Manaster, who served on the commission, tells the real story of the investigation, detailing the dead ends, tactics, and triumphs. Manaster expertly traces Stevens's masterful courtroom strategies and vividly portrays the high-profile personalities involved, as well as the subtleties of judicial corruption. A reflective foreword by Justice Stevens himself looks back at the case and how it influenced his career.

Now the subject of the documentary *Unexpected Justice: The Rise of John Paul Stevens*, this fascinating chapter of political history offers a revealing portrait of the early career of a Supreme Court justice.

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