

Beach Reading



Urofsky details life, works of influential Supreme Court Justice

In his 23 years on the U.S. Supreme Court, Louis D. Brandeis helped to formulate many of our ideas regarding free speech, right to privacy, pro bono legal work and the necessity of federal regulation in economic affairs. Although he has been dead for almost seven decades, many of his court decisions continue to reverberate throughout almost every level of our society.

Brandeis was born and raised in Louisville, Ky. In 1875, when he was 19, he entered Harvard, where his brilliant mind and fierce debating skills led him to become a lawyer. He set up practice in Boston and built a solid reputation as an arbitrator in labor disputes. He was an unusual attorney in that if he discovered

a client was in the wrong, he refused to represent him.

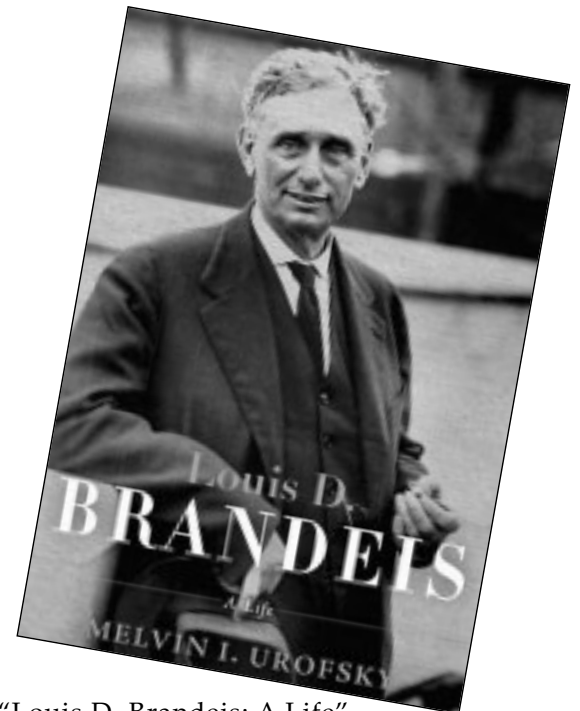
In 1912, he helped formulate the doctrine of New Freedom championed by Woodrow Wilson. Four years later, he was nominated by Wilson for the U.S. Supreme Court. His confirmation fight was ugly and took more than six months before he was confirmed. Justice William O. Douglas would later write that many saw the Brandeis nomination a threat because of the simple fact that he was incorruptible. He also was the first Jew to be seated on the high court.

In a fascinating new biography, Melvin I. Urofsky, a professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, draws on family papers, letters and

Supreme Court documents never before available to trace the life of this incredible man. Justice Brandeis — reformer, lawyer and jurist — is both humanized and made accessible.

His action in drafting the Federal Reserve Act, the Clayton Anti-Trust Act and the law establishing the Federal Trade Commission helped stabilize the United States following the stock market crash of 1929. It is ironic that another Brandeis measure, the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933, which mandated federal regulation for banking, was repealed in 1999 under the recommendation of Alan Greenspan and, unfortunately, led to our current economic mess.

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"Louis D. Brandeis: A Life"
by Melvin I. Urofsky
(Pantheon, \$40)
Reviewed by Larry Cox

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