

The Trials of a Court of Common Pleas Judge

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by Honorable Mark I. Bernstein (ret.)

269 pages

Free at <https://www.judgebernstein.org/the-trials-of-a-common-pleas-judge>

After 21 years as a trial judge in C.C.P. Philadelphia, the Honorable Mark Bernstein retired in October 2016. Over those years he had gained the respect of both the plaintiffs' and defense bar, and was thought to be our expert on the Pennsylvania Rules of Evidence. After he stepped down, he became available to mediate and arbitrate civil cases.

Now he has written a book, which is published free on-line, a chapter a month, of indefinite duration, and can be read at www.judgebernstein.org under the above title. The premise is that he leaves his office for a medical appointment and, upon his return, realizes that he is in the Court in 1913. At that time, there were a limited number of courts of three judges each, usually two Republicans and one Democrat.

In the course of the book, he finds out how the judges are chosen, what their daily schedule is like, and what the attitude of each is toward trials, settlement conferences, status calls, big firms, and socializing with lawyers,

among other things. Suffice it to say that the reader will eventually be convinced of the diligence, scholarship and integrity of our present bench.

Is this fiction, or based on facts and research? Whatever you conclude, you are likely to be fascinated by the straightforward narrative, and looking forward to the next chapter. Judge Bernstein is leaving with a legacy of competence and a future of interest. ■

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Sidebar, Too — More Reflections of a Philadelphia Lawyer

M. Kelly Tillery's second book, *Sidebar, Too* picks up where his first book (*Sidebar: Reflections of a Philadelphia Lawyer*) left off: fanning the flame of history that used to roar throughout the legal profession but has begun to flicker in recent years. In fact, *Sidebar, Too* serves as a shot of jet fuel, reinvigorating a sense of purpose in the reader. Attorneys seeking historical perspective, a connection to the giants of the past, or a simple reminder of why he or she practices law, would do well to pick up M. Kelly Tillery's latest work.

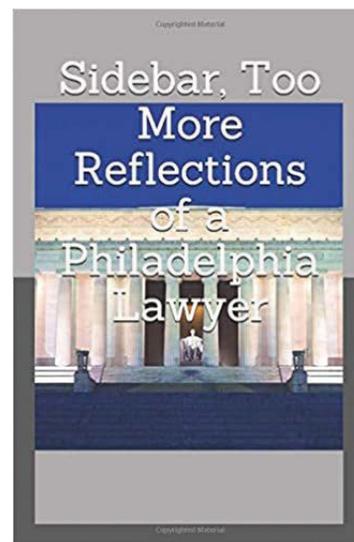
After thumbing briefly through the first pages of *Sidebar, Too*, I knew it had the makings of a great follow up to *Sidebar: Reflections*. The author extols the virtuous character of Abraham Lincoln, "which better exemplifies the truest meaning of a Philadelphia Lawyer..." Mr. Tillery writes honestly and passionately, opening himself up to the reader while relaying the book's contents—a series of written works that illuminate the challenges lawyers, and the legal system itself, have faced and

continue to face.

The works included in *Sidebar, Too* are varied, but maintain a common theme: honestly addressing your subject matter, whatever it may be. The author begins with a work depicting "cause lawyers," those in the profession who speak truth to power and help the weak and oppressed. He writes about "The Oldest Profession," modern matchmaking in the internet era, and the Civil War. He touches on impeachment, the Beatles, and Jazz. He addresses voting, the free press, and again, Lincoln. He closes with a warning about our current affairs.

M. Kelly Tillery touches on all the topics I have mentioned, and much more, in his newest title, *Sidebar, Too*. He does so all the while drawing the reader closer and closer to what it means to be a "Philadelphia Lawyer." If the reader takes his words to heart, he or she may look in the mirror and realize they have become one. ■

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