

[Free] A Nation Under Lawyers: How the Crisis in the Legal Profession Is Transforming American Society

A Nation Under Lawyers: How the Crisis in the Legal Profession Is Transforming American Society

Mary Ann Glendon

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Mary Ann Glendon : A Nation Under Lawyers: How the Crisis in the Legal Profession Is Transforming American Society before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Nation Under Lawyers: How the Crisis in the Legal Profession Is Transforming American Society:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must readBy saul dorseyIf you are an American, you should read this book... If you are interested in law school, you should read this book. Glendon takes us on a harrowing read traversing the some times enigmatic world of law. She discusses all facets of law; from how law is taught and the changing face of how law is practiced... She is unfailing in her attempt to inform us of law's constant slip in to its nadir... However, there is hope for the law. She cajoles, sometimes argues, sometimes get in your face with her examples of what is wrong and how to fix it. She is caustic at times. However, her biting commentary helps us understand this all too important world that is so clandestine to most of us. Although, it has been almost twenty years since it was published, the thoughts and ideas given here are so very current. Even though Glendon is very much against change in the profession, however, all things must change, and change can be good. This is a must read.

Depicting the legal profession as a system in turmoil, with evolving beliefs and ideals battling for dominance, a criminal defender and civil rights attorney conducts a guided tour through the confusing labyrinth of the late-twentieth-century legal world.

From Publishers Weekly Analyzing the "significant advance of arrogance, unruliness, greed, and cynicism in the legal profession," Harvard law professor Glendon (Rights Talk) ambitiously assays the burgeoning legal world. According to the author, big-firm lawyers are motivated less by professional ideals than by client loyalty, judges prefer judicial supremacy to more democratic processes and legal education has drifted from professional pedagogy to often-irrelevant ideology. However, she believes "legal hubris" may have begun to decline and suggests that the Anglo-American legal tradition can reinvigorate today's "pragmatic" students. Glendon's analysis has historical depth and ideological subtlety: she recognizes both the strengths and the weaknesses of the past and states that the number of lawyers matters less than what those lawyers do. While her overblown subtitle might be better inverted-society probably has more effect on lawyers-and her survey is necessarily incomplete, this readable, moderate book should stimulate debate. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist When "critical legal studies" deny standards of objectivity, billable hours replace lifelong lawyer-client relationships, and advertising substitutes for reputation, the crisis bemoaned by this Harvard law prof appears intractable indeed. Beyond her erudite description of these dismaying features, she offers little solace but Micawber-like patience until some improvements show up--but will they ever? In her view, the foxes are so far inside the chicken houses, especially the American Bar Association, the judiciary, and the academy, that cleaning out the coops will be an arduous task. Portions of this tract harken back to the early 1960s, when her J.D. was minted in the classical fashion by fussy, elbow-patched teachers for whom the law was a calling, not a business. Glendon supports this outlook with summaries of the bar's giants, like Holmes, Hand, Frankfurter, and Cardozo, whose counsel of restraint and realism she hopes the next generation of lawyers will heed. A bit technical, but timely for students plunging into law school. Gilbert Taylor From Kirkus sAn entertaining addition to the growing shelf of books about the discontents of lawyers and, by implication, the rest of the citizenry who has to put up with them. Glendon (Rights Talk, not reviewed), a professor at Harvard Law School who started her legal career as an associate at a large Chicago law firm, offers an extremely interesting--if somewhat rambling and ultimately inconclusive--mixture of personal anecdote and sociological theory to describe purportedly profound changes in the legal profession over the past half-century and the effect of these changes on our democratic society: the rise in the number of lawyers, the burgeoning caseloads (one federal judge refers to himself as the "Terminator" because of the need to get matters over with rapidly, often at the cost of reflective justice), the economic pressures that have, in some eyes, reduced professionalism in favor of market imperatives and created the rise of an adversarial class of lawyers who accede to their clients' every wish. Glendon solemnly quotes Gibbon with respect to another empire where the growth in lawyers and legalism coincided with a decline and fall in the spirit of law that makes republican government viable; yet the author is neither as pessimistic nor as whiny as Sol M. Linowitz in his recent lament (*The Betrayed Profession*, p. 372). She does, however, raise many more questions than she answers, and her premise of seismic shocks to the foundation of the profession remains just that: premise rather than proof. Over 20 years ago, S.F.C. Milsom demonstrated that the growth of the Anglo-American common law comes not from some idealized development of legal principles but from the everyday work of lawyers attempting to find new solutions for their clients' problems. In light of that historical perspective, it remains to be seen whether alterations to the legal profession and society since the early 1960s are as cataclysmic as Glendon characterizes them. Well written and thought provoking, if not totally convincing. -- Copyright 1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.