



# Appointment of Judges: The Johnson Presidency (Administrative History of the Johnson Presidency)

*Neil D. McFeeley*

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The selection of federal judges constitutes one of the more significant legacies of any president; the choices of Lyndon Baines Johnson affected important social policies for decades. This book explores the process of making judicial appointments, examining how judges were selected during Johnson's administration and the president's own participation in the process. *Appointment of Judges: The Johnson Presidency* is the first in-depth study of the judicial selection process in the Johnson years and is one of the few books that has analyzed any individual president's process.

Based on sources in the archives of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and correspondence from senators, party officials, Justice Department officers, the American Bar Association, Supreme Court justices, and the candidates themselves, the book is an important exploration of a significant aspect of presidential power. The author shows that Johnson recognized the great impact for social and economic policy the judiciary could have in America and sought out judges who shared his vision of the Great Society. More than any previous president since William Howard Taft, Johnson took an active personal role in setting up the criteria for choosing judges and in many cases participated in decisions on individual nominees. The president utilized the resources of the White House, the Department of Justice, other agencies, and private individuals to identify judicial candidates who met criteria of compatible policy perspective, excellent legal qualifications, political or judicial experience, youth, and ethnic diversity. The book notes how the criteria and judicial selection process evolved over time and how it operated during the transitions between Kennedy and Johnson and between Johnson and Nixon.

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