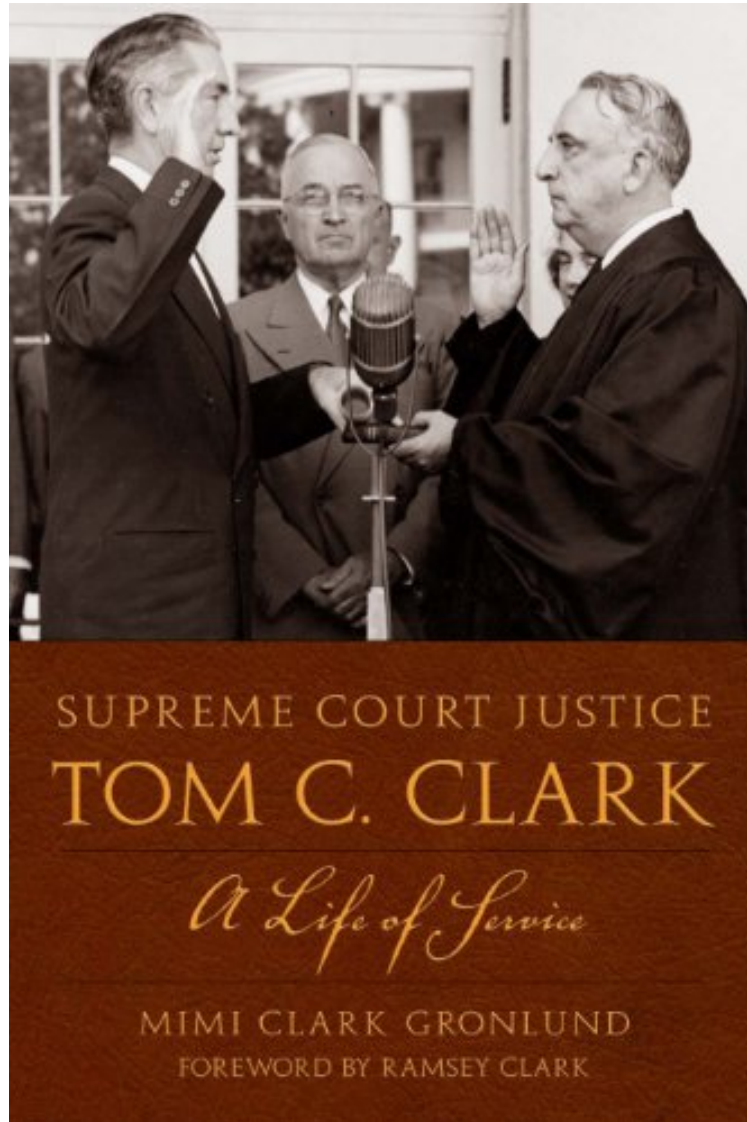


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Supreme Court Justice Tom C. Clark: A Life of Service (Texas Legal Studies)

Mimi Clark Gronlund

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Mimi Clark Gronlund : Supreme Court Justice Tom C. Clark: A Life of Service (Texas Legal Studies) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Supreme Court Justice Tom C. Clark: A Life of Service (Texas Legal Studies):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. At last a Justice Tom Clark biographyBy Ronald H. ClarkAs I have preached many times on , judicial biographies are one of the single best ways to understand how and why the Supreme

Court makes its decisions. The only problem is that while some Justices (e.g., Holmes, Brandeis, John and Thurgood Marshall) have multiple biographies, many less prominent Justices have not yet been the subject of one. Since the Court engages in 9-person decision-making, part of the story is not being covered as well as it might. A prime example of this phenomenon is Justice Tom C. Clark (1899-1977; on the Court between 1949 and 1967). This solid study, by his daughter, corrects this deficiency. While I had some concern that a biography written by a "loving daughter" (as the author characterizes herself) might be dedicated to portraying its subject in an heroic light, in fact the book is quite balanced. It is also much needed: even though I have been studying judicial biography (including teaching a course in it) since 1967, I knew relatively little about Clark's rich career in the Department of Justice, on the Court, and during a busy "retirement." Yet he served on both the Truman and Warren Courts at crucial periods of our judicial history. The author states at the outset that she is not writing a comprehensive analysis of the Justice. Basically, this means that we don't get extensive discussions of Clark's key decisions and his role as a dissenter. But we do receive a pretty good survey of some of his key areas of impact while on the Court; after all, this is not a text on con law but a judicial biography. Brother Ramsay Clark has contributed an excellent "Forward" which nicely summarizes the book's findings in a few pages. Part I, covering 1899-1936, traces Clark's youth, education and early private law practice in Texas. Part II covers his Department of Justice years between 1937-1949, including eventually becoming Truman's Attorney General. I spent 15 years at DOJ and I can tell you the depth of Clark's departmental career is probably greater than any other Attorney General I can recall: Antitrust Division; Japanese relocation during the second war; the War Frauds Unit; Assistant A.G. in charge of the Criminal Division; arguing to the Court in three cases; and finally AG itself. A primary interest in civil rights emerges, including filing an amicus brief in a case challenging restrictive covenants. But Clark during the late 1940's got involved in wiretap authorizations, employee loyalty programs, creation of the infamous "Attorney General's Life of Subversive Organizations," and several of the big Smith Act cases, including Judith Coplon, Dennis and Bentley. Part Three covers the Court years. Clark is involved in lots of important matters, including the Steel Seizure Case; the early graduate education cases leading to the Brown decision; important subversion and loyalty oath cases (he did have "conservative views of national security"); the "Red Monday" decisions; and Warren Court grappling with criminal justice, obscenity and religion in schools. The author does a very nice job on discussing Clark's interaction with other Court members, including Fred Vinson, Brennan and Felix Frankfurter. The final section deals with Clark's retirement years when he was deeply involved in the Federal Judicial Center, serving on U.S. district courts, reforming legal ethics, and enhancing the training opportunities for state judges. The author has done a solid job of research (as evidenced in her bibliography) including family material and interviews. So there is important biographical material out there, yet Clark remained until this book almost unknown today. Why? A couple of explanations suggest themselves. Clark was always seen as not particularly dynamic (like Black and Douglas) or a great legal scholar (like Harlan). He also was seen as being overwhelmingly conservative, though I think the author rightly paints a much more textured picture. When I studied the Court in the late 1960's and early 1970's particularly, most Court scholarship was written by liberal, activist scholars and Clark just did not fit the bill enough for them and consequently he did not attract much scholarly attention. While this book does not give us a complete analysis of Clark and his contributions to constitutional law, it does perform a heroic service in affording us an intimate and thorough introduction to Clark, the forces that shaped him, his ideas, and his professional activities. In short, it serves (along with some law review articles) as a foundation for hopefully the more comprehensive studies that will emerge of this most interesting judicial figure.

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Supreme Court Justice Tom C. Clark By Robert H. Schulze Excellent, well written biography. The book traces some important events in recent history, such as the legal fight to halt segregation, and the events that led up to the removal of ethnic Japanese from the west coast. Outstanding and highly recommended.

An associate justice on the renowned Warren Court whose landmark ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* overturned racial segregation in schools and other public facilities, Tom C. Clark was a crusader for justice throughout his long legal career. Among many tributes Clark received, Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger opined that "no man in the past thirty years has contributed more to the improvement of justice than Tom Clark." Supreme Court Justice Tom C. Clark is the first biography of this important American jurist. Written by his daughter, Mimi Clark Gronlund, and based on interviews with many of Clark's judicial associates, friends, and family, as well as archival research, it offers a well-rounded portrait of a lawyer and judge who dealt with issues that remain in contention today: civil rights, the rights of the accused, school prayer, and censorship/pornography, among them. Gronlund explores the factors in her father's upbringing and education that helped form his judicial philosophy, then describes how that philosophy shaped his decisions on key issues and cases, including the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, the investigation of war fraud, the Truman administration's loyalty program (an anti-communist effort), the Brown decision, *Mapp v. Ohio* (protections against unreasonable search and seizure), and *Abington v. Schempp* (which overturned a state law that required reading from the Bible each day in public schools).

About the Author MIMI CLARK GRONLUND, the daughter of Tom C. Clark, was a reference librarian at the

Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College for twenty-two years. Her research into her fathers career spanned more than thirty years, and her masters thesis, Tom Clark, the Early Years, earned her an M.A. in English from George Mason University. She has lived in McLean, Virginia, since 1976.