



Called to Justice: The Life of a Federal Trial Judge (Law in the American West)

Hon. Warren K. Urbom

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Early in his judicial career, U.S. District Judge Warren K. Urbom was assigned a yearlong string of criminal trials arising from a seventy-one-day armed standoff between the American Indian Movement and federal law enforcement at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. In *Called to Justice* Urbom provides the first behind-the-scenes look at what quickly became one of the most significant series of federal trials of the twentieth century. Yet Wounded Knee was only one set of monumental cases Urbom presided over during his years on the bench, a set that in turn forms but one chapter in a remarkable life story.

Urbom's memoir begins on a small farm in Nebraska during the dustbowl 1930s. From making it through the Great Depression and drought to serving in World War II, working summers for his father's dirt-moving business, and going to school on the G.I. Bill, Urbom's experiences constitute a classic American story of making the most of opportunity, inspiration, and a little luck. Urbom gives a candid account of his time as a trial lawyer and his early plans to become a minister—and of the effect both had on his judicial career. His story offers a rare inside view of what it means to be a federal judge—the nuts and bolts of conducting trials, weighing evidence, and making decisions—but also considers the questions of law and morality, all within the framework of a life well lived and richly recounted.

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