



## The Essential Holmes: Selections from the Letters, Speeches, Judicial Opinions, and Other Writings of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

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Legendary U.S. Supreme Court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes is not only a giant in American legal history but is also remarkable for having been a master prose stylist. This collection, edited by Richard Posner, who is himself a federal judge, contains essays, speeches, letters to friends, and legal opinions that give the reader a highly enjoyable look into the thoughts that emanated from a very active mind.

#### From Library Journal

Oliver Wendell Holmes is a major figure not only in American law but also in American letters. Edited by noted judge and legal scholar, Posner, this excellent one-volume anthology offers a mixture of Holmes's letters, speeches, and judicial opinions. Posner's introductory essay provides a fine framework for understanding Holmes's varied attitudes and multiple approaches to judicial issues. Posner sees Holmes's distinctive contribution as a "writer-philosopher" who placed literary/rhetorical skills and philosophical insight into legal work, and Holmes's correspondences with major late 19th-and early 20th-century personalities reveals that era's intellectual ferment. Posner's skillful analysis of Holmes's work is a worthwhile contribution to current American political/legal discussions.

- *Steven Puro, St. Louis Univ.*

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