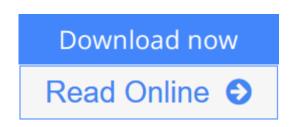


## The Essential Holmes: Selections from the Letters, Speeches, Judicial Opinions, and Other Writings of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

By Oliver Wendell Holmes



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Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., has been called the greatest jurist and legal scholar in the history of the English-speaking world. In this collection of his speeches, opinions, and letters, Richard Posner reveals the fullness of Holmes' achievements as judge, historian, philosopher, and master of English style. Thematically arranged, the volume covers a rich variety of subjects from aging and death to themes in politics, personalities, and law. Posner's substantial introduction firmly places this wealth of material in its proper biographical and historical context.

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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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