

Sample Page

1 of 2

Foreword

The American Civil Liberties Union is unique among organizations. It exists solely to protect civil liberties and civil rights. It has done this brilliantly for a century. It has done so at the national level and at the state and local levels. It has done so in the legislative and political process and in the courts. Not surprisingly, many of these judicial battles have ended in the United States Supreme Court and have led to crucial decisions that affect all of us, often in the most important and intimate aspects of our lives.

Surprisingly, though, no one has systematically chronicled the ACLU's history in the United States Supreme Court. That is the contribution of Steven Markoff and his history of "The ACLU and the U.S. Supreme Court: The Union's Wins and Losses at the Court During its First 100 years." His focus is on the ACLU's involvement in the Supreme Court in the 20th century, from 1925-2019.

I must disclose that I am not an impartial observer of all of this. I have been an ACLU member my entire adult life. I served on the Board of Directors of the ACLU of Southern California for almost 15 years and on the Board of Directors of the ACLU of North Carolina for several years when I lived there. I have been directly or tangentially involved in many ACLU cases, including in the Supreme Court. I have spoken to the ACLU lawyers at their conferences for over 30 years. One of my proudest awards (and one of the few plaques in my office) is the one naming me an honorary ACLU lawyer.