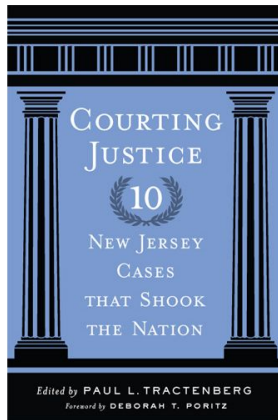


Courting Justice

Ten New Jersey Cases That Shook the Nation

Edited by Paul L. Tractenberg
Foreword by Deborah T. Poritz



DESCRIPTION

Since 1947 a modernized New Jersey Supreme Court has played an important and controversial role in the state, nation, and world. Its decisions in cutting-edge cases have confronted society's toughest issues, reflecting changing social attitudes, modern life's complexities, and new technologies.

Paul Tractenberg has selected ten of the court's landmark decisions between 1960 and 2011 to illustrate its extensive involvement in major public issues, and to assess its impact. Each case chapter is authored by a distinguished academic or professional expert, several of whom were deeply involved in the cases' litigation, enabling them to provide special insights. An overview chapter provides context for the court's distinctive activity.

Many of the cases are so widely known that they have become part of the national conversation about law and policy. In the *Karen Ann Quinlan* decision, the court determined the right of privacy extends to refusing life-sustaining treatment. The *Baby M* case reined in surrogate parenting and focused on the child's best interests. In the *Mount Laurel* decision, the court sought to increase affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents throughout the state. The *Megan's Law* case upheld legal regulation of sex offender community notification. A series of decisions known as *Abbott/Robinson* required the state to fund poor urban school districts at least on par with suburban districts.

Other less well known cases still have great public importance. *Henningsen v. Bloomfield Motors* reshaped product liability and tort law to protect consumers injured by defective cars; *State v. Hunt* shielded privacy rights from unwarranted searches beyond federal standards; *Lehmann v. Toys 'R' Us* protected employees from sexual harassment and a hostile work environment; *Right to Choose v. Byrne* expanded state constitutional abortion rights beyond the federal constitution; and *Marini v. Ireland* protected low-income tenants against removal from their homes.

For some observers, the New Jersey Supreme Court represents the worst of judicial activism; others laud it for being, in its words, "the designated last-resort guarantor of the Constitution's command." For Tractenberg, the court's activism means it tends to find for the less powerful over the more powerful and for the public good against private interests, an approach he applauds.

Paperback

9780813561592, \$41.95

eBook

9780813570174, \$41.95

PDF

9780813561608, \$41.95

Date: July 2013

Pages: 288



AUTHOR/EDITOR BIOGRAPHY

PAUL L. TRACTENBERG is Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor and Alfred C. Clapp Distinguished Public Service Professor at Rutgers School of Law-Newark. He is the author of numerous books, articles, and papers on education law and policy, a frequent lecturer, and a consultant and adviser to national, regional, and state organizations and agencies.

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