

TO THE VICE PRESIDENT

FROM: BEN WATTENBERG

RE: Ideas for Informal Remarks for
Justice Black Reception

Allyson

*Mr. ~~mead~~
mead*

*Jerome Cooper
1st Law Clerk
Justice Black*

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- I. Hugo Lafayette Black has been a Justice of the Supreme Court for 30 years -- longer than any man in the 20th Century.
- II. A title of a recent book about him would seem to sum up the nobility of his career and his life:
"One Man's Stand For Freedom --
Mr. Justice Black and the Bill of Rights."

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Bill of Rights
believed that the ~~Constitution~~ gave ~~no~~ little protection to individuals from the actions of state governments: Individuals could be beaten up in jail, they could be segregated, mixture of church and state was allowed, etc.

It was Hugo Black, through a broad interpretation of the commerce clause and a bulldog reliance on the Bill of Rights, who

"Under our constitutional system, courts -5-
stand against any winds that blow as havens of
refuge for those who might otherwise suffer because
they are helpless, weak, outnumbered, or because
they are non-conforming victims of prejudice and
public excitement... No higher duty, no more solemn
responsibility, rests upon this Court, than that of
translating into living law and maintaining this
constitutional shield... for the benefit of every human
being subject to our Constitution -- of whatever race,
creed or persuasion."

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V. When Hugo Black was appointed to the
Supreme Court in 1937, they were known
as the "Nine Old Men." Today, Hugo
Black is the best octogenarian tennis
player in Washington, and many people--
friends and enemies -- have called him
many things -- but no one could ever
think of calling Hugo Black an "old man."

(OVER)

JUSTICE HUGO BLACK'S BACKGROUND
PRIOR TO APPOINTMENT TO SUPREME COURT

1. Born in Clay County, Alabama in 1886.
2. Graduate of University of Alabama Law School 1906, age of 20. (He never went to college.)
3. Became a "tort" lawyer -- specializing in auto accidents, damages, injuries, etc. He was a vigorous trial lawyer.

7. Following the war, he returned to practice as a private lawyer in Birmingham.
8. Was appointed by Attorney General Harlan Stone to be a special prosecutor to try an important prohibition case in Alabama.
9. Elected in 1926 to the United States Senate, (in primary campaign he was given very little

regarded as one of the best read men in Washington -- it might be noted again that he had no formal college undergraduate experience, and he is essentially self-educated.

10. Was re-elected to the Senate in 1932 and was one of the major floor leaders of FDR's New Deal. He was floor leader for the Minimum Wage Law.

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