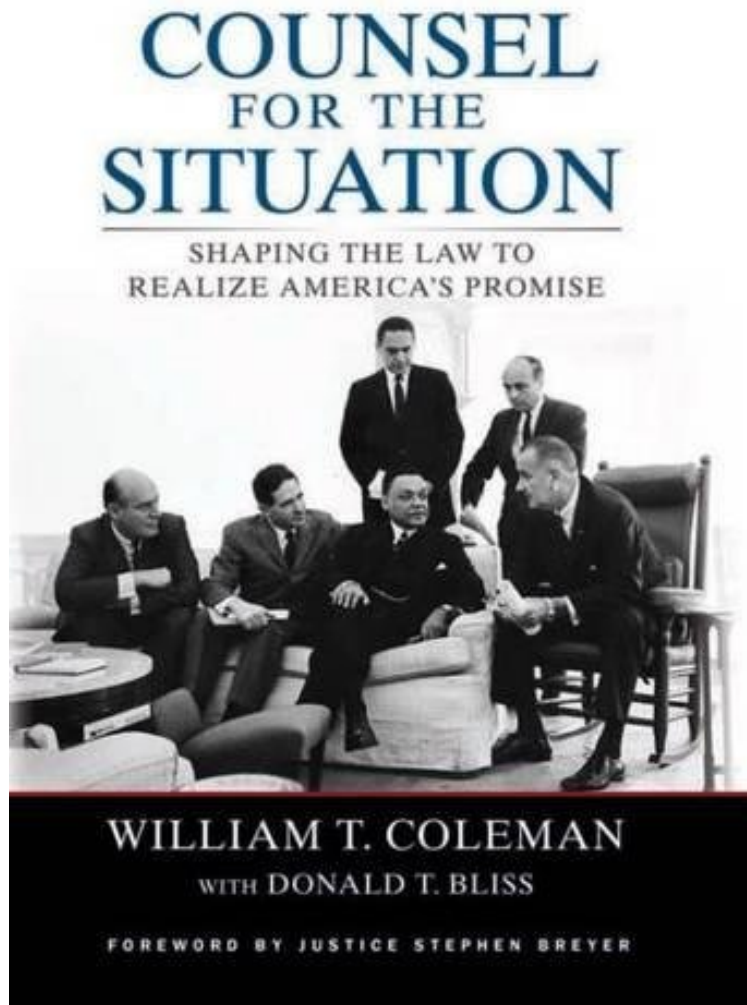


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## Counsel for the Situation: Shaping the Law to Realize America's Promise

*William T. Coleman*

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#1169215 in Books 2010-10-26 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.52 x 1.35 x 6.421, 1.90 #File Name: 0815704887450 pages | File size: 48.Mb

**William T. Coleman : Counsel for the Situation: Shaping the Law to Realize America's Promise** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Counsel for the Situation: Shaping the Law to Realize America's Promise:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Great Book, Great ManBy Daniel E. EatonWilliam Coleman's memoirs tell the story of an extraordinary life in the law in the man's own words. Many notable people, starting with his remarkable wife, have shaped Secretary Coleman's life and he in turn has helped shape the lives of countless

others. Mr. Coleman's story is at one level an inspiring story of a man of firsts: first African-American to finish first in his class at Harvard Law School; first African-American to clerk at the U.S. Supreme Court; first black partner at a major Philadelphia law firm; first black Secretary of Transportation . . . and the list goes on. But even as well-chronicled as his achievements have been, there are surprises in every chapter of this book. The reader gets answers to such important questions as: What was Mr. Coleman's reaction, as a member of the team that litigated *Brown v. the Board of Education*, to including references in the Supreme Court briefs to the well-known doll experiment? How close was Mr. Coleman to being named to the Supreme Court? How did Bill Clinton first come to Mr. Coleman's attention? What proposal did Mr. Coleman make as Secretary of Transportation that, had it been implemented after he left office, may have prevented the tragedy of 9/11? Why is Mr. Coleman a Republican? Why, notwithstanding his partisan affiliation, did Mr. Coleman decide to testify against Ronald Reagan's nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court, a man Mr. Coleman, as a member of the ABA evaluation panel, rated as exceptionally well-qualified to sit on the lower federal appeals court just a few years earlier? What are Mr. Coleman's ten secrets, discerned from 60 years of practice, for a successful legal career? I connected with this memoir on a deeply personal level because I remember, as an African-American student at Harvard Law School in the 1980's, seeing the stern countenance of Mr. Coleman's official portrait staring down at me as I ran up the stairs to the reading room of the Langdell law library every day. I could almost hear him say: "Get a move on, young man. There's much work to be done." Secretary Coleman's example continues to resonate with me now that I am a partner at a San Diego law firm. But it is clear that Mr. Coleman's story will move and inspire any lawyer. He stands as an embodiment of the ideals of our profession, starting with integrity, hard work, and intellectual dynamism. More than that, though, his story will move and inspire any American. In so many respects, he stands as an embodiment of the ideals of we, the people. William Coleman's life story is a testament to American possibilities realized and a beacon for the realization of American possibilities yet to come. We would all do well to read it.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *Autobiography of an Extraordinary American African Lawyers* By Customer Fascinating autobiography of a brilliant African-American lawyer who not only overcame the common extraordinary discrimination and obstacles faced by African Americans but also became one of the top lawyers in America. Pair this with Justice Justice Clarence Thomas' painfully honest autobiography *My Grandfather's Son*. Both men became deeply conservative but in profoundly different ways. Simply eye opening for a conventional white liberal lawyer or anyone who cares about American justice

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. "it will come in handy." By Cornelius Badger I've only perused it so far. But it's quickly apparent that the book is an insightful history text, with some valuable anecdotes, as I expected. As a graduate student pursuing (twentieth century) history studies and public policy studies, it will come in handy. - CBre: William Coleman Jr.'s *Counsel for the Situation*. Brookings Institution. Washington DC., 2010

"Bill Coleman's story is one that younger generations should mark and inwardly digest, lest they forget the pioneers who helped to make a better America possible." From the Foreword by Stephen G. Breyer William Coleman has spent a lifetime opening doors and breaking down barriers. He has been an eyewitness to history; moreover, he has made history. This is his inspiring story, in his own words. Americans of color faced daunting barriers in the 1940s. Despite graduating first in his class at Harvard Law and clerking for Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, Coleman was shut out of major East Coast law firms. But as the Philadelphia native writes, "The times, they were a'changing." He not only benefited from that change he helped propel it, by way of dogged determination, undeniable intellect, and stellar accomplishment. Coleman's legal work with Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund helped jumpstart the civil rights movement in the 1950s. He was the first American of color to clerk for the Supreme Court, and later served as senior counsel to the Warren Commission, investigating the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. In 1975 he was appointed secretary of transportation by President Gerald Ford the first American of color to serve in a Republican cabinet and in 1995 he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from Bill Clinton. At his core, Bill Coleman is a lawyer. He strives to be a "counsel for the situation" an advocate able to take on major matters in a variety of legal disciplines while upholding the highest traditions of justice and the public interest. He is fiercely proud of the legal profession's role in a democratic society and free economy, and he is grateful for the opportunities that profession has afforded him in the court room, the board room, and the corridors of power. It is through this prism that he relates his own story his life and the law. The results speak for themselves, and in this immensely entertaining chronicle, the *Counsel for the Situation* speaks for himself.

"This is much more than an autobiography, although it is one of the best I have ever read. It is a history of our times. Bill Coleman has provided us with one more act of public service in this fascinating and wide-ranging memoir." David Rockefeller, former chairman, Council on Foreign Relations, and CEO, Chase Manhattan Bank "This must-read book is written by a truly great American who has demonstrated great love of our country. Anchored by the fundamentals of hard work, excellence, sacrifice, and purpose, Bill Coleman has written an excellent tutorial for those interested in the legal profession and public service." Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., former president and CEO, National Urban League "Bill Coleman's recollections of conversations and dealings with notable personalities presidents, Supreme Court justices,

cabinet officers, and business and community leaders not only make his commentary a fascinating read but, importantly, a must-read for all Americans to understand more clearly the fundamental principles that make our nation 'a more perfect union.' Carla A. Hills, former U.S. secretary of housing and urban development "Generations of Americans will be indebted to Secretary Coleman. His remarkable story is beautifully set forth in this thoughtful and compelling book. His fierce intellect, diligence, and uncommon integrity have been brought to bear on scores of challenging and pivotal issues spanning nearly a century." Thurgood Marshall, Jr. "William Coleman belongs to the diminishing breed of distinguished citizen-statesmen who never sought the limelight, but whose brilliant intellect brought him to the pinnacle of success in the legal field, whose passion for justice drove his commitment to civil rights, and whose sense of obligation to serve his country led him to the highest echelons of government. His engaging memoir sums up his exceptional life with the insight and wisdom which have defined it." Henry Kissinger, former U.S. secretary of state About the Author William T. Coleman Jr. is currently a senior partner and the senior counselor in the Washington office of O'Melveny Myers LLP, one of the world's foremost law firms. He joined the firm after serving as U.S. secretary of transportation during the Ford administration. Donald T. Bliss has served as a U.S. ambassador, in senior positions at the U.S. departments of transportation and health, education, and welfare, and as a partner of O'Melveny Myers LLP. Stephen G. Breyer is an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.