

Tough Cases: Judges Tell The Stories Of Some Of The Hardest Decisions They've Ever Made

The next book in the 2020 alternative reading list is "Tough Cases: Judges Tell The Stories Of Some Of The Hardest Decisions They've Ever Made." The book, published by The New Press, is in its first edition.

In this book, a series of state and federal judges unburden themselves about the most difficult decisions they've had to make while on the bench. These decisions - some of them involving life and death, some involving long periods of incarceration, some involving professional risk to the judges themselves - give a different view of judges from the one we are accustomed to seeing. The general public, and many lawyers also, see judges only as remote figures on a bench whose decisions are vitally important for our clients' personal, and our professional, wellbeing, but who can appear distant and difficult to understand. This book reminds us that judges are human and that they are emotionally as well as professionally involved in the cases before them. They make decisions because that is their job, but the process of reaching those decisions can be extremely difficult for the judge involved.

This book was selected by Professor Mary Szto, Professor Szto's bio on the College of Law's website tells us that "[b]efore entering teaching, Professor Szto practiced law in New York City, representing banks in financing matters. She also co-founded a legal aid organization specializing in immigration law. Among other schools, she has previously taught at Mitchell Hamline School of Law, and Valparaiso University School of Law.

[Professor] Szto has written extensively on issues such as the role of real estate agents and housing discrimination, and she has published a bilingual law text on American property law in China. Her articles—on Chinese-American property ownership, anti-corruption law, real estate, and Chinese law and ritual—have appeared in the Journal of Transnational Law & Policy, Fordham International Law Journal, Minnesota Journal of International Law, and elsewhere."

A list of focus questions to help you get the most out of Tough Cases is available as a separate document.