



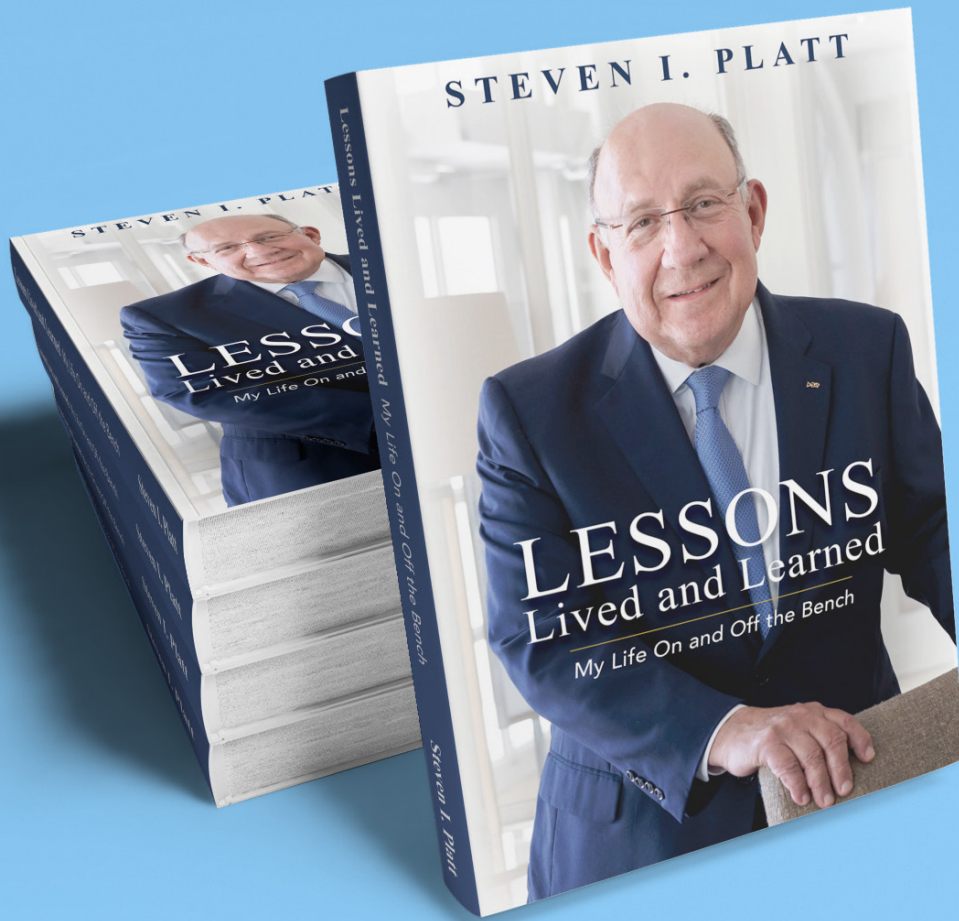
Steven I. Platt

AUTHOR: ***Lessons Lived and Learned: My Life On and Off the Bench***

“ In his characteristically inspiring and entertaining way, Judge Platt shares the story of his remarkable life and accomplishments. From humble beginnings, but imbued with the awareness that he had something special to offer the world, Judge Platt forged an impactful life and career that ranged from his start as a young and energetic operative in Maryland’s O’Malley-Hoyer political machine of the 1970s and 1980s to become an esteemed practicing lawyer, a distinguished judge in three levels of Maryland’s court system, and ultimately a highly respected and sought-after mediator/arbitrator of legal and business disputes. Could anyone have predicted that this grandson of a Jewish immigrant from Russia who came to America in 1913, with only \$17 in his pocket, could reach such heights? Indeed, Judge Platt has provided something special to the world—his basic decency and a career distinguished by his courage, scholarship, diligence, good humor, integrity, and passion for justice. I highly recommend ***Lessons Lived and Learned: My Life On and Off the Bench*** to anyone looking to enjoy a true American success story or to discover a roadmap for living a meaningful life.”

—Wayne M. Willoughby, past president, Maryland Association for Justice/Maryland Trial Lawyers Association; partner, Gershon, Willoughby & Getz, LLC

Steven I. Platt



What Readers Are Saying

“*Lessons Lived* is insightful, fun, and full of important history.”

—Timothy F. Maloney

“The judicial history in this book reveals a judge who ... truly invested the time and effort to make the justice system work.”

—Robert Bonsib

“*Lessons Lived* is a riveting journey through Maryland politics, full of stories, universal truths, and insights into recent Maryland political history.”

—Stephen Reichert

“Judge Platt is an insightful and irreverent raconteur who knows how to tell a story.”

—Douglas Furlong

“Judge Platt is a unique combination—historian, jurist, commentator, scholar, politician, teacher, and mediator.”

—Laurence W.B. Cumberland

“[C]uriosity and analysis has imbued [Judge Platt] with the wisdom that ... makes him a wonderful and compelling storyteller as you will see when you read his memoir.”

—William H. “Billy” Murphy, Jr.

“[*Lessons Lived*] brilliantly illustrates the connection between law and politics in Maryland.”

—Gregory K. Wells

“*Lessons Lived* provides an intimate look at the courtroom, cases, and heart behind the conflict from the vantage point of [the author].”

—Shelly M. Ingram

“Lawyers and judges enjoy being story tellers, and Judge Platt has done a masterful job in combining such wonderfully selected lore, history, and perception into a fine read.”

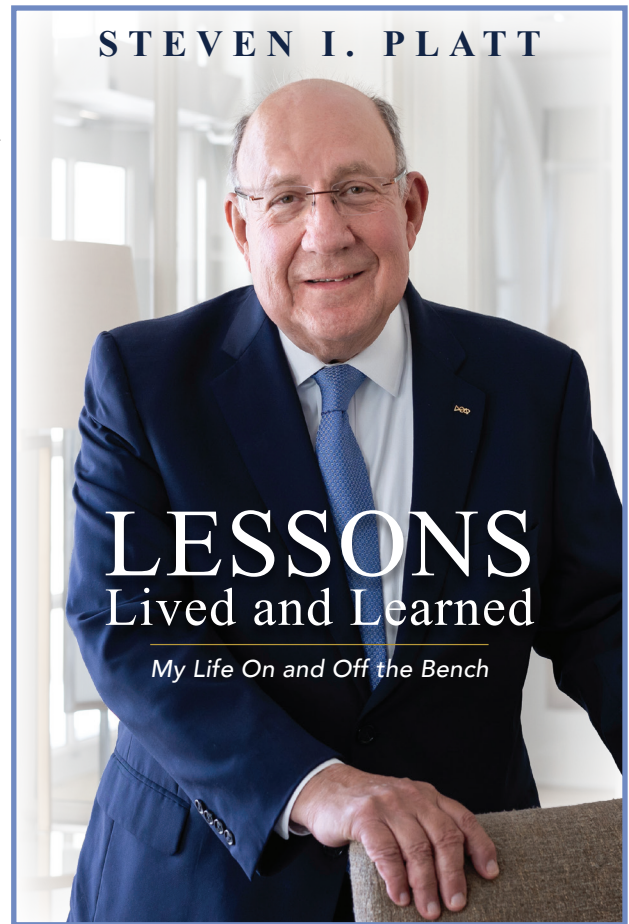
—Ron Bergman

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Book Synopsis

Having served 30 years on the bench in the Maryland court system, Steven I. Platt is a name synonymous with integrity, equity, and dignity. By the same token, he is a man with a contagious sense of humor, curated with a sharp wit. Inescapably intertwined with some of history's most pivotal events, the author has been aptly dubbed "the Forest Gump of politics." Capturing his fascinating life, interspersed with well-known historical figures, the author shares his adventures in *Lessons Lived and Learned: My Life On and Off the Bench*.

Lessons Lived serves as a historical account of the growth and transformation of Maryland politics and its judiciary over a 40-year period. Judge Platt's memoir opens a window to the thoughts and opinions, as well as personal, cultural, and political anecdotes derived from his journey through the worlds of law, economics, and politics.



Lessons Lived and Learned: My Life On and Off the Bench offers 30 blockbuster chapters:

PART ONE: My Foray into the World of Politics

- **CHAPTER 1:** A Democrat at Heart: Mountain Republicans, Two Assassinations, and a Thing Called the "Byrd Machine"
- **CHAPTER 2:** The Political Scene in Maryland (1966–1986)—A User's Manual
- **CHAPTER 3:** The Battle of College Park
- **CHAPTER 4:** Idealists, Rogues, and Scoundrels in Maryland Politics

PART TWO: Maryland Politics: Establishing a Foothold

- **CHAPTER 5:** Establishing Human Relations Within the Human Relations Commission
- **CHAPTER 6:** Counsel to the Maryland Democratic Party

PART THREE: Hanging Out a Shingle: My Days as an Attorney

- **CHAPTER 7:** The Case of "You Get Your Way at Ourisman Chevrolet"
- **CHAPTER 8:** The Case of "the Vice President in Charge of Personnel"

PART FOUR: Donning the Robe: My Days on the Bench

- **CHAPTER 9:** The Orphans' Court: A Valuable Lesson, an Emperor, and a Promiscuous Prescription
- **CHAPTER 10:** Becoming a District Court Judge: From "Unknown" to "Most Qualified" in Less than 90 Days

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- **CHAPTER 11:** Serving on the District Court Bench: Freedom Court, a Bail Bond Industry Uproar, and 36 Drunks
- **CHAPTER 12:** The Making of a Circuit Court Judge: One of “Those Guys,” a Political Network, and Burgers & Beer

PART FIVE: The State of Criminal Justice in Maryland

- **CHAPTER 13:** Criminal Justice – 1990s Style
- **CHAPTER 14:** Murderers’ Row

PART SIX: The Civil Docket

- **CHAPTER 15:** Civil Justice Served in Prince George’s County, Maryland: Family Law Division and Reform
- **CHAPTER 16:** Foreclosure Fraud
- **CHAPTER 17:** The Little Girl with 25 Personalities
- **CHAPTER 18:** The Drug Court Experiment
- **CHAPTER 19:** A New Case Management Program, Class-Action Fees, and the Management of Other Judges
- **CHAPTER 20:** Time Marches On (Transitioning Off the Bench ... and Then Some)

PART SEVEN: Thriving as a Professional Mediator and Arbitrator

- **CHAPTER 21:** The Rise of ADR
- **CHAPTER 22:** Corruption: Make It Go Away!
- **CHAPTER 23:** The Police Brutality Cases

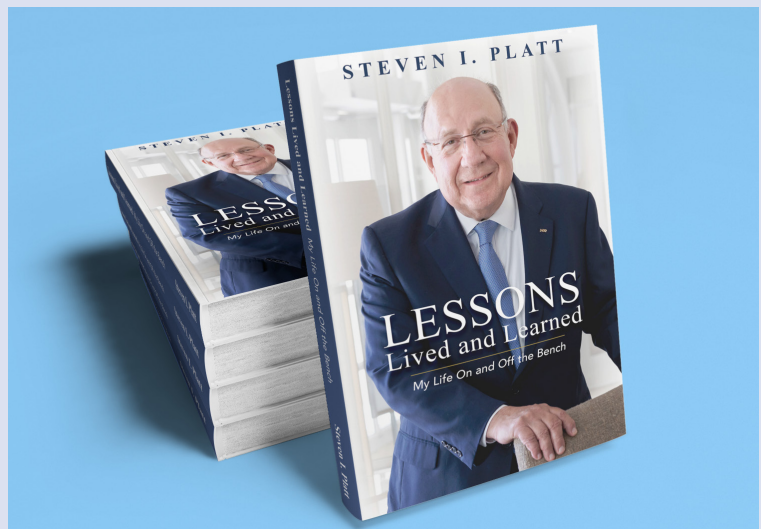
PART EIGHT: Comic Relief

- **CHAPTER 24:** Jury Duty for the Judge (PTSD for Defendant)
- **CHAPTER 25:** Everyone Needs a Hero
- **CHAPTER 26:** Contempt – An Elusive Concept
- **CHAPTER 27:** The Wizard of Oz Effect in Mediation
- **CHAPTER 28:** Strippers versus Strip Club (In the Mood?)
- **CHAPTER 29:** The Tiki Bar Grand Opening Cases (Be Careful What You Ask For – You Might Get It – Then What?)
- **CHAPTER 30:** ATTENTION, Shoppers! Sears & Roebuck of America v. Judge Steven I. Platt

Lessons Lived and Learned: My Life On and Off the Bench

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Steven I. Platt

Book Excerpt (CHAPTER 11)

Serving on the District Court Bench

The Sting

Sheriff Jimmy Aluisi had a “backlog” of unserved warrants that he wanted to clear out of his system to ensure that those warrants could not be used by anyone running against him. So, he set up a “sting.” His staff mailed out about 3,000 fake notices to individuals with arrest warrants, telling them that they had won \$500 and could pick up their prize money by appearing on a certain date and time at a tent located at an address previously utilized exclusively by cows and horses.

Sheriff Aluisi did not communicate to the Prince George’s County Department of Corrections that the jail could potentially add an in-flux of 3,000 inmates to its already overcrowded facility. How “The Sting” was found out about is unclear; fortunately, Corrections became aware of it in time to “address” the onslaught of incoming residents.

The scene of “The Sting” was of picture-book quality! A large tent was set up in a cow pasture on Lottsford Road in Largo, Maryland. Women dressed in long gowns were stationed along the path to the tent to “welcome” the “prize winners” and escort them to the tent where they would be presented with their \$500 check. As they were escorted into the tent, they were arrested and served with the out-standing warrant.

Adding to the color of this Saturday, a smaller tent was situated next to Sheriff Aluisi’s more elaborately decorated scenery. There, the district court, with the cooperation of the State’s Attorney’s office and the Office of the Public Defender, installed a less than majestic facsimile of a courtroom using card tables.

I, starring as the “judge,” held “court” on whether these individuals “stung” minutes ago would be incarcerated or allowed to go home with “conditions.” My decisions that day would determine

whether the jail’s population would violate the federal cap. Fortunately, most of the warrants were for failing to appear in court on comparatively minor charges. “The court,” operating in this cow pasture, was, therefore, able to provide justice or acceptable conditions of release sufficient to avoid a jail overpopulation crisis.

The Prince George’s County government, particularly the executive branch, was grateful. When I was contacted initially about this impending crisis by the Prince George’s County Department of Corrections director, I could have taken the position that the problem was not mine to solve. Instead, I immediately dove into “problem-solving mode.” I also insisted that the upper levels of the county government itself engage in short-term and long-term problem solving by supporting proposals that I had been presenting (and had fallen on deaf ears) until that time.

Those proposals included:

1. The creation of a criminal justice coordinating council that would institutionalize regular communications between county and state executive agencies and departments of government involved in the administration of the criminal justice system to avoid the kind of crisis management we had just experienced (not for the first time);
2. The establishment of a pre-trial release agency within the Prince George’s County Department of Corrections that could supervise inmates outside the Prince George’s County Detention Center, including their behavior and drug use as authorized by the courts;
3. Recognition that drug use had a relationship to criminal activity and a substantial enhancement of the county government’s ability to test those charged, as well as those on probation, for the

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purpose of limiting the risk of their continued presence in the community; and

4. The continued construction of a more modern detention center with state-of-the-art technology.

To my delight, all these common-sense measures were approved and funded, thereby proving that leaders should, as Rahm Emanuel once advised, “Never let an opportunity created by a crisis pass.”

We took action; Prince George’s County was better for it. In return, I took personal responsibility as Administrative Judge of the district court on behalf of the court for monitoring and managing the population of the Prince George’s County Detention Center to ensure the inmate population never exceeded the federal court-ordered cap.

Two-Line Bio (200 CHARACTERS)

Steven I. Platt debuts a fascinating and, at times, comical memoir, ***Lessons Lived and Learned: My Life On and Off the Bench***, based on 30 years of experience as a jurist and numerous lessons learned along the way.

Short Bio (60 WORDS)

In ***Lessons Lived and Learned: My Life On and Off the Bench***, Steven I. Platt captures an illustrious 30-year career as a judge and his almost irrevocably intertwined first-hand experiences with some of history’s most notable politicians. So deftly interwoven with pivotal moments in history is the judge that he’s been dubbed, “the Forrest Gump of Politics.”

Medium Bio (100 WORDS)

Having served 30 years on the bench in the Maryland court system, Steven I. Platt is a name synonymous with integrity, equity, and dignity. By the same token, he is a man with a contagious sense of humor, curated with a sharp wit.

Inescapably intertwined with some of history’s most pivotal events, Judge Platt has been aptly dubbed “the Forrest Gump of politics.”

Capturing his fascinating life, interspersed with well-known historical figures, the judge shares his adventures in ***Lessons Lived and Learned: My Life On and Off the Bench***. Originally drafted as a love letter to his grandchildren, this memoir is destined for the bestseller list.

Steven I. Platt

Speaker Introduction (300 WORDS)

“If a job title makes you feel important, then you’d better take a hard look in the mirror.” These are the words of Steven I. Platt, who should know something about titles, having earned numerous prestigious designations over the course of his nearly 50-year career in politics and law.

A household name in the state of Maryland, Judge Platt’s impact has been felt throughout the United States. Recognized as the architect of the Maryland Business Technology Case Management Program, it’s a model that has been duplicated across the country.

So deftly interwoven with pivotal moments in history is the judge that he’s been dubbed, “the Forrest Gump of Politics.” Fortunately for all of us, the judge has captured many of these experiences in his new book, ***Lessons Lived and Learned: My Life On and Off the Bench***.

Originally intended as a love letter to his grandchildren, the book is a delightfully constructed autobiography that feels more like a Hollywood blockbuster. It provides glimpses into his own private life as well as those whose names are notable in either politics or other avenues of fame.

This up-close and personal chronicle of the life of one of the country’s most respected and celebrated adjudicators takes the reader beyond the courtroom, into private conversations, and even the intricacies of ascending the bench.

Loathe to remain idle, even though he officially retired from the bench in 2007, Judge Platt remains very involved in the legal system, still presiding over cases, serving as a mediator in complex litigation, and remaining active as a member of numerous committees and boards and even as a faculty member of the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada.

Need a keynote speaker for your next event? Guest blogger? Podcast guest?

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Steven I. Platt

Long Bio

What can be said about a legend? A dynamic and integral part of the Maryland legal scene for nearly a half century, Steven I. Platt has enjoyed a career so intricately woven with the fabric of history that he's been dubbed "the Forrest Gump of politics." From his days of campaigning for RFK to his long and storied career overseeing the court systems in one of Maryland's largest counties, it's a challenge knowing where to begin when attempting to convey an accurate depiction of his accomplishments and the lessons he's learned along the way. How does one compose a true representation of this celebrated judge without being suspected of hyperbole?

Remarkable by any standards, Judge Platt's accomplishments in his seven decades on this earth are even more impressive given today's culture. In an era where people are famous for being infamous, many of his attributes, such as honor, veracity, compassion, and integrity, are considered "old fashioned." Then again, fame is not something the judge has ever sought or placed much value on.

"If a job title makes you feel important," he says, "then you'd better take a hard look in the mirror."

Balancing the solemn and weighty demeanor required of a man in his position is the judge's delightful and frequently self-deprecating sense of humor. It is in this vein that he happily acknowledges the Forrest Gump moniker. Indeed, if Judge Platt's life could be presented in a series of rapid news clips, it would be obvious that he's not only lived through some of the most pivotal points in history but, like Gump had a ringside seat, he often played an integral role.

After retiring from the bench in 2007, one of the things Judge Platt had on his bucket list was to chronicle many of these fascinating experiences in a letter intended for younger generations within his family. "I had thought about leaving a letter for my grandchildren," he says. "As I began to compile my thoughts and recollections, the letter just kept growing. As I say in the letter that can be found at the back of the book, I want them to remember me in several ways, including some of my accomplishments over the course of my career and some of the interesting people I've met."

That letter to his grandchildren eventually morphed into his memoir, ***Lessons Lived and Learned: My Life On and Off the Bench***, which is an engaging account of the judge's life filled with both humorous and pensive recollections. An artfully crafted autobiography, it reads like a Hollywood blockbuster. A friend of his approached him about the possibility of a screenplay and when asked about who he'd love to see playing him, he didn't hesitate to say, "As a young me, Matthew McConaughey, as a middle-aged me, Tom Hanks, and as me now, Clint Eastwood." Hollywood, are you listening?

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In his memoir, Judge Platt shares not only very personal aspects of his life, but also priceless glimpses into the more private moments of some of history's most notable players. Having worked on numerous political campaigns as a young man, particularly Robert F. Kennedy's (RFK) campaign for president, he recalls it fondly as "working for stuff you believe in and having fun doing it."

Upon hearing of RFK's assassination, Judge Platt remembers feeling emotionally drained. "That really bothered me in ways that others had not. When JFK was killed, I was attracted to the whole image he had projected. He did what had to be done. He even had to tell his father to bug off. But I was devastated by RFK's death. I was watching TV when it came on, probably on my college campus at the time. I still believe this country would have been different, better, had he succeeded."

While, understandably, his memoir may be the most meaningful to Judge Platt, it is not his first contribution to the literary world. In fact, *Lessons Lived and Learned* is the fourth book penned by the judge and, according to him, the epilogue. A prolific and highly praised author, Judge Platt wrote a column for the Baltimore-based legal and business newspaper, *The Daily Record*, for 13 years. So popular were his observations and commentaries, he was persuaded to compile his musings into three separate volumes to be released simultaneously with his memoir.

Judge Platt's gift for the written word was well-established even prior to his ascending to the bench. In fact, as he recalls, during his inaugural swearing-in ceremony, which the judge describes as a combination court proceeding and celebrity roast, Judge C. Philip Nichols, Jr. announced to all those present, "If Platt had lived during the 18th century, he would have written the Declaration of Independence instead of Thomas Jefferson."

"The key to understanding [Judge Platt] is to know that at every moment he is gathering information of every kind to understand what individuals and groups have done, are doing, will do and why," shares Billy Murphy, a notable lawyer in his own right and former jurist and close friend of Judge Platt's. "This level of curiosity and analysis has imbued him with the wisdom that made him an effective politician, a great judge and a masterful, effective mediator. It also makes him a wonderful and compelling storyteller as you will see when you read his memoir."

Many of Judge Platt's friends and colleagues refer to him as a "judge's judge," and would love to clone him. In fact, several prominent attorneys consider his DNA to be the foundation for success. He is respected and admired by many of the folks who have had the pleasure, or displeasure, of appearing before him. A perfect example is a letter he received from a co-defendant in a murder trial who had appeared in his courtroom some 27 years before. The man thanked Judge Platt for "looking at what was happening in my case, paying attention to the evidence (or lack thereof) against me, and ruling fairly in dismissing half of my charges."

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His colleagues have also revered him for his courtroom composure and fairness shown to all parties. Rose Crunkleton, a practicing attorney and former law clerk to Judge Platt fondly remembers the myriad times attorneys would whisper to her, “You know he’s an excellent judge, right?” Another colleague, Robert Bonsib of MarcusBonsib LLC, said, “Win or lose, one always felt that they had benefited from a fair, compassionate, and caring jurist.”

It is worth noting that Judge Platt was instrumental in creating and implementing the Maryland Business Technology Case Management Program, which was cited as a model for the nation. He is also recognized as the architect of the Prince George’s County Circuit Court Drug Court and the driving force behind a total restructuring of the operations and staff of the Prince George’s County Circuit Court Family Division.

“I was assigned management responsibility at one time or another during my 16 years on the Circuit Court for every division of that court except Juvenile,” Judge Platt recalls. “I enjoyed judging and I enjoyed the management of judicial personnel as well as operations and systems.”

Never one to mince words, Judge Platt began to contemplate leaving the bench when he felt he was no longer making a difference. “I had become increasingly frustrated with what I perceived as bureaucratic inertia and reluctance by the judiciary to recognize what I viewed as the changing legal culture, and to adapt its institutions and operations to address the altered expectations of the citizens that we served,” he says with conviction. “In addition, on a personal level, I found that the job of a circuit court judge was changing in a way that made it less fulfilling for me than it had been previously.”

Judge Platt served for 30 years on the bench and has been recalled to preside over cases several times since. While in senior judge status, one can both engage in private alternative dispute resolution (ADR) activities for pay and be recalled to sit as a judge.

He started his own ADR company, The Platt Group, and is a member of the National Academy of Distinguished Neutrals where he serves on the board of directors of the Maryland chapter. He also serves on the Judicial, Commercial, Employment, Large Complex Case, and Construction Panels of the American Arbitration Association, the International Institute for Conflict Prevention and Resolution, the International Mediation Institute (IMI), the Association for International Arbitration, and Resolute Systems.

A popular speaker, Judge Platt still travels extensively and serves on the faculty of the National Judicial College in Reno, NV.

“I have been very fortunate to have a career that I thoroughly enjoyed every moment of,” says Judge Platt. “I guess I should thank my Jewish mother who decided early on that I was to be either a doctor, lawyer, or dentist. Well, I can’t stand the sight of blood and am hopeless doing anything with my hands; so that left law—and what a great ride it’s been!”

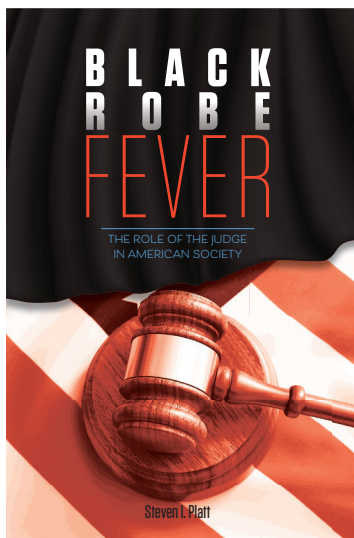
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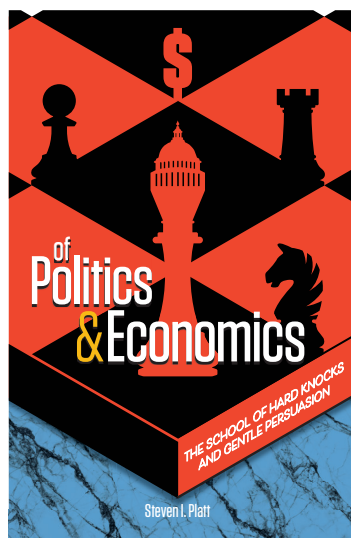
Fun Facts

- Favorite show: *Have Gun Will Travel*, a series about a gunfighter with a conscience. "As a kid, I thought, 'that's what I want to be when I grow up, a lawyer with a conscience.'"
- Career path not taken but considered: a newspaper editor and publisher.
- Words to describe yourself: humorous, rational, loyal but not to a fault.
- Words of encouragement: "Do important things and have fun doing it; and if you can do that, then you'll have a great life."

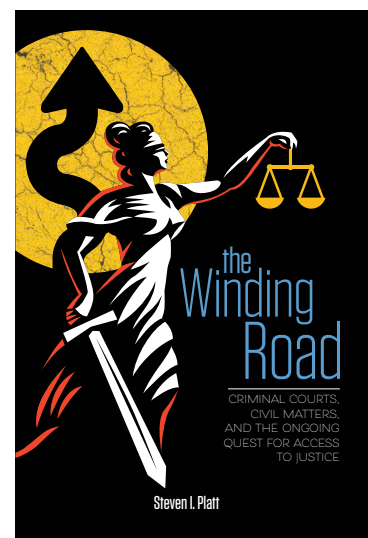
Other Publications



Black Robe Fever:
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The Winding Road: Criminal Courts,
Civil Matters, and the Ongoing Quest
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