

Reading List

by Bill Davis

I confess to be a devoted reader of biographies, history, current events and some fiction. I invite anyone who has read some good fiction to advise me and I will share it with everyone. The following list covers the past 12-14 months. I recently donated a number of the legal histories to the Whitehawk Reading room.

BIOGRAPHIES

Without Precedent, Chief Justice Marshall, John Richard Paul. If you want to understand how this democracy still works, it is necessary to know about John Marshall

Grant, Ron Chernow. A terrific read I mentioned. It will give you a vastly different understanding of this remarkable man and his contributions to our history.

The Man That Saved the Union, Ulysses Grant in War and Peace, H. W. Brands. An excellent biography of Grant.

The Bully Pulpit, Doris Kearns Goodwin, story of William Howard Taft and Teddy Roosevelt. Taft and Roosevelt had a very complicated relationship that impacted the development of our country.

The Raven, a biography of Sam Houston, Marquis James, an utterly extraordinary man who did do many things that defy one's belief. Also, he was uncle of my grandmother.

Even Silence has an end, my six years in captivity, Ingrid Betancourt a utterly compelling book about a woman running for the Presidency of Colombia who was captured by the Farc and held captive for 6 years!

ECONOMICS AND DEMOCRACY

How Democracies Die, Levitsky and Ziblatt. A thoughtful read about the fragile nature of democracy and the challenges to its viability

The Soul of America, The Battle for our Better Angels, John Mecham. A current analysis of the forces at work in our country and our history with these forces through the years

Unintended Consequences, Why Everything You Have Been Told About the Economy is Wrong. Edward Conrad. A book written after the financial crisis challenging many of the views of causes of the crisis.

HISTORY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The Quest for a Moral Compass, A Global History of Ethics, Kernan Malik. Not an easy read but one that attempts to write a history of moral thought. Do not read before going to sleep unless you want to go to sleep quickly!

Sapiens, A Brief History of Humankind, Yuval Noah Harari. A profoundly thoughtful book about us a species and the factors that have influenced our development. Do not read before going to bed.

The Road to Character, David Brooks

MIDDLE EAST

Notes on a Century, Reflections of the Middle East Historian, Bernard Lewis, a historians look at the forces at work in the Moslem world that contribute to the issues of the day

A History of Iran, Michael Axworthy. Iran is land of many contradictions. For the general reader who wants to understand Iran it is good introductory work

Iran, Abbas Amanat. A comprehensive history of this land. Am just reading it now

Jerusalem, Simon Montifiore If you are interested in this Holy City this is must read. Montifiore is a very

distinguished name in the City with one of the gates in the Old City named for forefather. Great read.

Istanbul, A Tale of three Cities, Bettany Hughes Just got the book

Lawrence in Arabia, Scott Anderson War Deceit, Imperial Folly and the making o the modern Middle East. If you saw the movie, this is book is the antidote to the movie's conclusions.

SPAIN

Kingdoms of Faith, A new History of Islamic Spain, Brian Catlos just got the book

The Wise King, Cristian Prince, Muslim Spain and the birth of the Renaissance, Simon Doubleday. A History of remarkable ruler Alfonso X. A wise ruler who navigated multiple forces to enable Spain for a period to be the place that saved much of western thought.

Dogs of God, Columbus, The Inquisition and the defeat of the Moors, James Reston, Jr. a history of how one pattern of thought could lead to destructive outcomes.