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***A Most Disorderly Court: Scandal and Reform in the Florida
Judiciary*** by James A. Dyckman

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especially important. And the work of Gerald E. Poyo provides important analysis of Key West's Cubans in elections, in the workplace, and in the drive for independence. His perspective, not surprisingly, often conflicts with the viewpoint of the Spanish consuls. It is also worthwhile to look at Jefferson Browne's reprinted volume on Key West, originally published in 1912. Finally, the scholarship of Canter Brown Jr. and Larry Rivers on black elected officials in Florida after Reconstruction is important because it documents and analyzes the fact that, compared to most other cities in Florida, including Tampa, African Americans in Key West were more successful in being elected to local political positions until early in the twentieth century.

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A Most Disorderly Court: Scandal and Reform in the Florida Judiciary. By James A. Dyckman. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008, xviii, 204 pp. Foreword, chronology/cast of characters, preface and acknowledgments, B&W photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth)

This book presents a penetrating and shocking account of a dark period in the history of government and politics in Florida, in general, and the Florida judiciary, in particular. Conduct on the part of several high-profile members of Florida's Supreme Court that, at a minimum, could be characterized as gross conflict of interest and, at worst, as scandalous seems to have engulfed the state's court of last resort during the 1960s and early 1970s. Implicit in the misconduct was the seemingly widespread complicity of a significant number of attorneys, private citizens, and business interests that expected and encouraged behavior contrary to the spirit of the judicial canons of ethics and, in many instances, was patently illegal. Moreover, it is apparent that several other justices on the court at that time were aware of this unacceptable conduct and did nothing more than "wink and look the other way." In fact, these justices (part of the so-called "Old Guard") seemed to be more interested in punishing individuals employed by the court (aides and law clerks) who had dared to reveal the court's "dirty linen" to the press than in reining in their wayward brethren.

As uncomfortable as it may be to read this sordid account of the behavior and activity of some of the state's highest-ranking jurists, the reader should come away with several important lessons (or reminders) from this ugly period. First, the reader should clearly recognize the important role played by the free press and bar associations. If it had not been for the aggressive role played by the media in pursuing the truth in this matter, the Florida judiciary might still be languishing in the shadows of corruption, influence peddling, and the perception that a favorable disposition of litigation pending before the courts can be bought for the right price. All too often,

the public takes the press corps (both print and electronic media) for granted and fails to appreciate the critical role that it plays in enlightening and informing the public about the performance of their government and the officials who run it. In short, a free press is indispensable to the preservation of an effective, responsible, and accountable democratic government. Likewise, a vigilant bar association that supervises and demands the highest level of ethical conduct from those practicing law is essential for the unbiased and color-blind dispensation of justice. Nothing is more likely to undermine the faith in and credibility of the judicial system than practicing attorneys and jurists who make a habit of auctioning off justice to the highest bidder. Unlike some other professional associations, both the national and state bar associations do an admirable job of setting and enforcing high ethical standards. Again, democracy is better for the part they play.

The story told in this book also reminds us of the pivotal importance of an independent judiciary. Whereas partisan elections seem to be synonymous with the spirit and practice of democratic government, this does not necessarily apply to the selection of members of the judiciary. While we may wish for the judiciary to be sensitive to the issues of the day as well as to the public it serves, it is imperative for the courts to apply the law evenly and without regard to partisan politics. As we know, there should be no such thing as a “Republican” or “Democratic” brand of justice. Furthermore, there is no place for “good old boy” politics in the system of justice. Perhaps the greatest threat to an independent judiciary and a return to the kind of court system that characterized the period that was the subject of this book has been recent efforts to give the governor a greater voice in the selection of District Court of Appeal judges and Supreme Court justices. Such an effort has the potential to politicize the appellate courts in a way reminiscent of the unflattering period of the courts chronicled in this book. Hopefully, however, this movement will be short-lived, and along with a stronger and more vigilant Judicial Qualifications Committee, the independence of the courts from partisan politics will be preserved, thus assuring the public that indeed there is “equal justice for all.”

In addition, this book should serve to reinforce the expectation and conviction that those chosen to dispense justice practice a higher calling. Simply put, there is no substitute for the exercise of scrupulous ethics, honesty, integrity, and a sense of fairness by those who serve on the bench. While corruption and unfairness are a reproach to any government that purports to be a democracy, such behavior in the judicial branch can be the death knell for governments, shaking the very foundation upon which the legitimacy of government rests.

For all the reasons mentioned above, the book makes good reading for those who wish to know more about the Florida judiciary, but it will especially interest those who would like to know more about the context within which the Florida courts were reformed. The quality of the book was certainly enhanced as result of the approach taken by the author. Being a newspaper reporter—and therefore possessing the “be sure to search under every rock for the truth” attitude and skills—enabled

the author to convey a story that demanded a scrupulous commitment to meticulous detail, accuracy, and honesty.

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A History of the Kennedy Space Center. By Kenneth Lipartito and Orville R. Butler. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007. xiii, 478 pp. Preface, acknowledgments, abbreviations, B&W illustrations, notes, notes on the sources, index. \$39.95 cloth)

Final Countdown: NASA and the End of the Space Shuttle Program. By Pat Duggins. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007. xi, 249 pp. Acknowledgments, prologue, B&W illustrations, epilogue, notes, suggested reading, index. \$24.95 cloth)

These two volumes represent an interesting attempt by the University Press of Florida to become engaged in publishing space history and policy in a manner accessible to the general public and those interested in exploring an important part of Florida's recent history. These two volumes complement each other in an interesting way, combining history into a discussion of current events even though their approaches differ. The first, *A History of the Kennedy Space Center*, is a product of NASA's excellent program in space history--an effort that combines technically oriented historical reconstructions of the past with an implicit advocacy function of convincing the public to support the space program. What occurs in these pages is an organizational history of the Kennedy Space Center (KSC), the point of the spear in U.S. civil space activities, since for NASA almost all missions begin there with the launch of spacecraft and humans into outer space. This history might be better titled "Kennedy Space Center's History in Human Spaceflight," since the bulk of the book deals with the run up to the Apollo moon-landing program, with less attention paid to the shuttle and beyond in KSC history. Apollo remains the lodestar for NASA--the definitive, formative experience that it continues attempts to repeat.

The growth and development of the KSC is approached through a quasi-historical chronology, meaning that specific lines of activity are pursued, and then the historical narrative doubles back to pick up another aspect of KSC's development, and through a theoretical framework drawn from organizational behavior literature. The former is well done in terms of providing vignettes that illustrate the cultural changes that the arrival of the space program had on both Florida and the organization as it evolved over time. For example, labor unions came to the KSC and proved to be more powerful than many realized at the time. This occurred despite the fact that Florida is a "right-to-work" state. Likewise, the evolving role of women and minorities is discussed in the context of a white male-dominated organization. The