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Medina: Judge Medina Speaks

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RECENT BOOKS

This department undertakes to note or review briefly current books on law and matters closely related thereto. Periodicals, court reports, and other publications that appear at frequent intervals are not included. The information given in the notes is derived from inspection of the books, publishers' literature, and the ordinary library sources.

BRIEF REVIEWS

JUDGE MEDINA SPEAKS. By *Harold R. Medina*. Albany: Matthew Bender. 1954. Pp. viii, 320. \$5.

Judge Medina came into the public eye as a result of presiding over the trial of the eleven top American Communists. His conduct of that trial in the face of threats and abuse within and without the courtroom gained the admiration of the general public as well as the bench and bar. The collection of speeches included in this book indicates the kind of individual that Judge Medina is.

The speeches range over a period of twenty years, from the time he was a professor of civil procedure at Columbia University Law School to the early years of this decade. Certain themes run throughout the speeches. Judge Medina is a member of the Section of Judicial Administration of the American Bar Association and his interest in the work of this section and the improvement of the judicial system is very apparent, antedating his appointment to the bench. There are explanations and evaluations of the Vanderbilt Plan of court organization and of the work of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. The disfavor with which Judge Medina views purely political methods for selecting judges is made plain. All of these topics have been covered before, but seldom with such clarity and persuasiveness. This material could have been presented in a dry form, but it is a testimonial to Judge Medina's ability as a speaker that it is not. With a liberal sprinkling of anecdotes, the nucleus of his ideas is presented in a most literate and entertaining form.

The majority of the speeches develop Judge Medina's philosophy of life in general, and of the lawyer-judge's place in society in particular. There are sections of the book dealing with religion, education and democracy. In each field Judge Medina displays strong convictions and deep insight. These speeches show the workings of a searching mind always open to new ideas but founded on a strong set of ideals. The thought in each is compelling and carries the reader's imagination with it. Judge Medina extends this personal philosophy into his opinions on the legal profession's duty to the public. He believes the goal of every lawyer and judge should be to work consciously for "100% justice." Many times he reaffirms his belief that the American public is truly interested in this "100% justice," and the letters he received following the Communist trial, some of which are included in an appendix, have apparently buttressed that conviction.

A great part of the credit for the readability of this book should be given to its editor, Mrs. Maxine Virtue. Both in selection and arrangement of material the book is outstanding. Unlike many collections of speeches, there is a logical

continuity to the book which enhances both the enjoyment and value of the material. As entertainment, as a thought-provoking work, as an insight into the mind of a leading American personality, the book is a gratifying and worthwhile experience.

M. Fred Mallender, II, S.Ed.