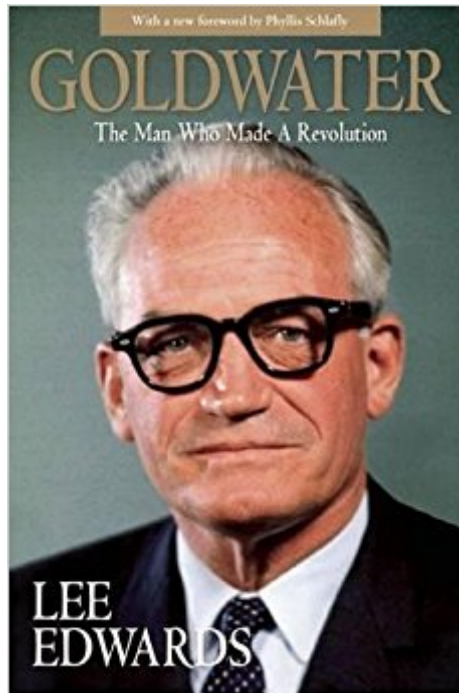




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Goldwater: The Man Who Made A Revolution



Synopsis

The most comprehensive biography of Barry Goldwater ever written is back by popular demand with a new foreword by Phyllis Schlafly and an updated introduction by the author. Lee Edwards renders a penetrating account of the icon who put the conservative movement on the national stage. Replete with previously unpublished details of his life, Goldwater established itself as the definitive study of the political maverick who made a revolution.

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Customer Reviews

Conservatives in the United States frequently celebrate the Reagan revolution in the 1980s. Yet, as Lee Edwards shows in this definitive biography, Reagan might never have made it to the White House if Barry Goldwater had not won the Republican nomination for president in 1964. Goldwater lost to President Johnson by a wide margin that year, but he fundamentally reshaped the GOP in the process. The scrappy Arizona senator is best known for his raw, Western-style conservatism that featured strong libertarian leanings and a devil-may-care wit. When he retired after serving six terms, Washington, D.C., suddenly became a less interesting place. Edwards writes as a sympathizer, but also offers a nuanced understanding of the man who famously declared, "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice.... Moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue!" --John J. Miller --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Hang in long enough and rehabilitation is virtually assured?witness Nixon?so one wonders at the

author's dismay that Goldwater, whose 1964 presidential campaign motto, "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice," alarmed liberals, has now become their "favorite conservative." For the first 400 pages, Edwards, who teaches politics at Catholic University of America, finds no wrong in the former Republican senator from Arizona?well, only his jealousy of Reagan?and proposes that as standard-bearer he "cast a brilliant lasting light." Although, as a presidential candidate, Goldwater carried only six states, Edwards makes the Johnson-Goldwater contest the centerpiece of his tedious book. Ultimately, it's the character of the 86-year-old senator in retirement that Edwards finds troubling: Goldwater's repudiation of the Moral Majority and his pro-choice and pro-gay rights stands. Has the senator been influenced by his new wife, Susan, a liberal 31 years his junior? Or by his grandson, an HIV-positive gay man, or by his lesbian grandniece? Edwards offers no opinion, an odd restraint in a book whose objective clearly is to advance a conservative agenda. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Haven't finished it yet, but a thoroughly enjoyable book.

Barry Goldwater was a politician who wrote a book called the conscience of a conservative. It proposed a number of positions which were popular in the extreme right wing of American Politics in the 60's. Barry stood against Lyndon Johnson in 1964 and was trounced. After that he continued to be a senator for many years. As he grew older his economic ideas remained unchanged but he never joined the rest of the right as it moved to be concerned with Abortion and civil decay as witnessed by the growing acceptance of homosexuality. Goldwater as a person seems to have been honest open and in his personal qualities admirable. The author of this book is a conservative. He believes that Goldwater was perhaps something that he was not. That is a casual factor in the shift to the right of American politics. A far more convincing argument for America's shift to the right is Lydon Johnon's civil rights legislation which changed the old south from a one party democratic province to a two party state. Added to this were the problems that Jimmy Carter had as a president. Goldwaters ideas for America in 1964 were just dumb. (Which is not to say that the man himself was dumb. The world is a complex place and to work out solutions to political problems is never easy) He supported the continuation of a policy of states rights. This policy meant in practice not using federal power to achieve integration. It is clear that Goldwater was not a racist and his commitment to this policy rested on his ideas of government rather than on the true place of Black Americans. His policy however would have delayed the end of segregation for ever. The Jim Crow

political structures in the South disenfranchised those voters who would want change. Further he believed that American should fight a conventional war against Vietnam to end the Vietnam war. Further that bombing should be used against Hanoi and civilian infrastructure. Such a policy had the very real danger of involving China in the conflict. His political instinct also lacked sophistication. He was a person who had been elected in Arizona a small state. He had no real idea of the sorts of compromises that were needed to achieve higher office. Of course his refusal to compromise were part of his charm to his supporters. The book is interesting as it is about an interesting man. However the writing is so insular it is annoying. One can understand the author may not like the moderately left wing governments that had been in the 50's and 60's but to call them socialist or big spending lacks an understanding of what those terms mean. In Sweden the government controls some 65% of the GDP. The Labour Party of England in the 40's nationalized the steel industry the coal industry and all of public transport. The United States has never had a either a Labour or Socialist Party. Trade Unions were restricted in their activities to the 30's.

In 1962 I was a sophomore in high school. This was also the year I became aware of politics, economics, and social issues. I soon became an ardent supporter of Barry Goldwater, so much so that my nickname my last two years of high school was "Barry." When I went to college in the fall of 1964 less than two months before the Presidential elections, I quickly became radicalized. I abandoned my support for Goldwater and before long found Lyndon Johnson too conservative for my tastes. Through my college and grad school years I thought of myself as a member of the New Left. Shortly after I earned my graduate degree and began teaching philosophy at the college level I became disillusioned with politics in particular and the civil government in general and became a self-styled anarchist. Eventually I matured and when I did I found myself most comfortable on the far reaches of the political right. I had come full circle. Needless to say, I was happy when I received Lee Edwards's "Goldwater" as a gift. I read it cover to cover and came to appreciate more than ever a man whom I had once idolized. Not only is this book of 470 pages of text a comprehensive study of his life, from his youth to his eighty-fifth year, but it thoroughly discusses his views (the basis for them, how they developed, how they changed) and as well as many elements of his personal life. Although it is clear that Edwards is fond of Goldwater, he doesn't idolize him. The blemishes in his personality, including the cantankerous side that increasingly manifested itself as he grew older, are in full view, as are, of course, those aspects of Goldwater that made him an endearing person to those closest to him. What comes across most clearly is that Goldwater was always an honest man, true to his convictions, someone who never let the potential for political gain get in the way of

standing up for what he believed was right. This is shown by many of the positions he took, no more so than in his ardent opposition to the federal civil rights legislation of 1964, which in his case was driven not because of approval for segregation (something he abhorred), but by his sincere belief in states' rights. Although there were many factors working against Goldwater in the 1964 election, this opposition cost him dearly. During the years Goldwater was a public figure I did not always agree with his positions. But I always respected him, for I knew that what he espoused came from sincerely-held convictions.

A few things of interest I found in this book: * Edward's discussion of the Johnson campaign tactics and how Goldwater was smeared a racist for one vote though his body of work and speeches spoke the opposite. * How Conscience of a Conservative was co-written by Brent Bozell and became a surprise success. * The break-up of the Republican Party and what it was like before. I've had people tell me Roe Vs Wade destroyed the Republicans, but not according to this history. Let alone, it's interesting to read that the NY Times said the Republican Party was dead following Goldwater's defeat ... and then after Romney's defeat ... history repeats itself. * Edward's actually correcting what Goldwater wrote in his own autobiographies and pointing out how Goldwater would mess up dates and comment on stuff or change his opinions as he got older and did more writing. Edwards is obviously not trying to sugar coat if he's willing to counter his own subject's writings. * Edward's discussion of how later biographies treated Goldwater and trying to show how these were based on negative ideas from the 1964 election that were never corrected. As for some cons: * The build-up to 1964 is as well documented as one would probably need, but what happens next seems a bit glossed over. Obviously, one era is more well documented than the other. * It's interesting how Edwards paints Goldwater. He tries to make him very human, a bit stubborn, maybe even clueless at times, but sometimes he gets lost in his own story. Having read numerous Goldwater books, both pro and con, I would highly recommend this one. It's a long read but very detailed.

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