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Time for Justice: How the Excesses of Time Have Broken Our Civil Justice System
Anthony V. Curto
Ronald E. Roel, contributor
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Five Stars (out of Five)

It is popular these days to write a book claiming that this system or that institution is broken. Often times these revelatory books are delivered in shrill and accusatory language. The writer identifies the bad guys and offers draconian methods to root out the evil.

Thus, it is a great relief to read Anthony V. Curto's *The Time for Justice*, a thorough and reasoned analysis of the need for serious reform of the civil justice system in the United States. Curto does not scream expletives or make stinging accusations that liberals or conservatives have hijacked the courts for their own nefarious purposes. Rather, the reader is invited to experience a rational, temperate, and organized discussion of why our civil court system fails to deliver justice in a timely manner, and why that is important.

Curto does not blame lawyers or litigants or legislators alone, although he points out various ways in which each of these players contribute to the problem. According to Curto, the blame should be placed on time.

The author uses three techniques to direct his "unwavering light." First, he presents an enlightening and entertaining exposition of the case of Esther James v Adam Clayton Powell, a civil suit charging the congressman with defamation. This case dragged on through numerous courts for almost a decade, with Congressman Powell using every procedural technicality available to him (and sometimes open defiance) to avoid letting justice be served. "The case has been derailed by a defiant litigant whom the judges could do little to control," explains Curto. This is a predicament not exclusively related to this case.

Second, Curto uses a variety of examples from his own experience as an attorney to demonstrate how justice delayed is justice denied. In one of the most compelling examples, he discusses a single woman who got pregnant from a liaison with her boss. She wanted to keep the baby. He offered to pay for an abortion but not to support the child. After consulting an attorney, she concluded she could not afford to sue the man and wait the many months it would take to

resolve the case. She aborted the pregnancy.

Interspersed throughout the book are short sections outlining reforms to the civil justice system designed to streamline the litigation process. Many are simple, common-sense suggestions, such as requiring all litigants to attend pre-trial procedures, or limiting the use and length of written briefs attorneys are required to file. Another suggested innovation, expanding the jurisdiction of small claims courts, has been implemented in some jurisdictions. Others are more controversial, such as banning contingency-fee arrangements.

Curto is a distinguished lawyer with an impressive record of representing high-profile clients ranging from Linda Lovelace, the porn star, to folksinger Harry Chapin to Freeman McNiel, the All-Pro running back for the New York Jets. He had significant involvement in the creation of the Bernard M. Baruch Foundation and the establishment of the free agency and salary-cap provisions in the National Football League.

Like many talented lawyers, the author has a tremendous capacity for simplifying that which is complex. This makes the substance of *The Time For Justice* available to all readers.

John Senger