

Glass and Gavel: Analyzing alcohol and the Supreme Court

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today@tulane.edu



In her new book, "Glass and Gavel: the U.S. Supreme Court and Alcohol," Nancy Maveety, professor and chair of the Department of Political Science, discusses how the justices have participated in both the enjoyment and the restriction of beverage alcohol throughout our country's history. (Photo from the Tulane School of Liberal Arts)

"I liked beer. I still like beer."

Long before then-Judge Brett Kavanaugh uttered these immortal words in his opening statement for his extended Senate confirmation hearings in late September, alcoholic beverages were a part of the life and work of the justices of the Supreme

Court. In her forthcoming book, [*Glass and Gavel: the U.S. Supreme Court and Alcohol*](#), Nancy Maveety, professor and chair of the Department of Political Science, discusses how the justices have participated in both the enjoyment and the restriction of beverage alcohol throughout our country's history.

Unexpectedly topical, the book unites two of Maveety's enduring interests: the Supreme Court in the process of American political development, and American mixology—or the life and times of that American invention, the cocktail.

"Glass and Gavel is the story of alcohol in American life and law, and a study of how the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court reflect that story," said Maveety. "It examines the social and political history of the Supreme Court by each era of its Chief Justice. It presents the evolution of the judicial institution and the most important developments in its constitutional decision-making through the lens of the cocktail."

Through a cocktail-by-cocktail history of the eras of the Supreme Court and its alcohol-related decisions, Maveety illustrates how constitutional law on regulating alcohol was intimately related with the justices' participation in the alcohol culture of their times.

"I share tales of famous cases and favorite drinks—from Chief Justice Taft's prosecution of bootleggers to Chief Justice Warren's appreciation of a well-chilled Gimlet, and from Chief Justice Marshall's punch-quaffing to Chief Justice Rehnquist's sobriety checkpoint ruling," said Maveety.

Glass and Gavel unites the saga of tastes and practices of alcoholic beverage consumption with a survey of how constitutional law, across the history of the Supreme Court's decision making, has been intermingled with and influenced by the question of alcohol's place in American political culture and social life.