



The American Vice Presidency: From Irrelevance to Power

Jules Witcover

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The American Vice Presidency is an all-inclusive examination of the vice presidency throughout American history. Acclaimed political journalist and author Jules Witcover chronicles each of the 47 vice presidents, including their personal biographies and their achievements--or lack thereof--during their vice presidential tenures. He explores how the roles and responsibilities were first subject to the whims of the presidents under whom they served, but came in time to be expanded by enlightened chief executives and the initiatives of the vice presidents themselves. Constitutionally assigned only to preside over the Senate as they stand by to fill a presidential vacancy, early vice presidents were left to languish in irrelevance and ineffectiveness; only in recent decades have vice presidents received--or taken--more power. In particular, Walter Mondale, Al Gore, Dick Cheney, and Joe Biden have undertaken greater and more significant responsibilities. Witcover reports the political maneuvering and manipulation that transformed the vice presidency from mere consolation prize to de facto assistant presidency. *The American Vice Presidency*, an insightful, revealing look at this oft-dismissed office, is a must-have for lovers of behind-the-scenes political history.

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