



Rights and Duties: Reflections on Our Conservative Constitution

Russell Kirk

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Transcending the commonplace that conservative constitutional interpretation is chained to the bare text of the document itself, the eminent political philosopher Russell Kirk lays the foundation for a conservative understanding of the "living Constitution" in a classic popular study of the social, cultural, and political inheritance of the American Founding. Respect for the country's "unwritten constitution"-the collective customs, mores, and conventions of the nation-will, Kirk argues, simultaneously restrain judges' temptations to social engineering from the bench and endow the Constitution with the flexibility necessary to survive the passage of decades and centuries. This reasoned and urbane contribution to our understanding of the Constitution confounds facile liberal-conservative dichotomies. First published in 1990 as *The Conservative Constitution*, this important book has been thoroughly revised and greatly expanded, with a new introduction by Russell Hittinger. One of Kirk's most original works, *Rights and Duties* draws a conservative portrait of "a revolution not made but prevented," of a Constitution owing more to British whiggery and the Common Law than to Locke and the Enlightenment.

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