



Founding Federalist: The Life of Oliver Ellsworth (Lives of the Founders)

Michael C. Toth

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“Americans have a seemingly unquenchable thirst for knowledge of our Founding Fathers. Now Michael Toth brings us the story of Oliver Ellsworth, key member of the Constitutional Convention, sponsor of the Judiciary Act in the Senate, and chief justice for four crucial years. Ellsworth was a critical figure, and Toth describes his contributions with clear prose and an eagle eye for legal argument.”—Michael Barone

“Lucid and comprehensive, *Founding Federalist* brings to light for a modern audience one of the most important of the constitutional framers.”—David Frum

“Toth presents the enduring contributions of this pivotal and esteemed founding father to the Constitution and to all three branches of the federal government....[His] eloquent biography, peppered with quotations from Ellsworth’s contemporaries, historians, and from Ellsworth himself, brings to life an august founder who today is only acknowledged indirectly through his lasting achievements.”—*The University Bookman*

"A brief, wonderfully readable biography of the most important American you've never heard of."
— Peter Robinson, *Ricochet*

"*Founding Federalist* is clearly and gracefully written, as readable as any of David McCullough's books."
— *The Washington Examiner*

In ***Founding Federalist***, Michael C. Toth provides an in-depth look at the life and work of Oliver Ellsworth, a largely forgotten but eminently important Founding Father.

The American Founding was the work of visionaries and revolutionaries. But amid the celebrated luminaries, the historic transformations, the heroic acts, and unforgettable discourses were practical politicians, the consensus builders who made the system work. Oliver Ellsworth—Framer, senator, chief justice, diplomat—was such a leader.

Founding Federalist brings to life a figure whose contributions shape American political life even today. Vividly capturing the pivotal debates at Philadelphia in the summer of 1787, Toth shows how Ellsworth was a vital force in shaping the Constitution as a Federalist document, one that did not extinguish the role of the states even as it recognized the need for national institutions. The author illuminates what Ellsworth and other Founders understood to be the meaning of the new constitutional order—a topic highly relevant to twenty-first-century debates about the role of government. Toth, an attorney, also brilliantly analyzes Ellsworth’s most important legislative achievement: the creation of the U.S. federal court system.

With this insightful new biography, Michael Toth has reclaimed a figure who made crucial contributions to a lasting creation: a federal republic.

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