

Justice Abe Fortas



Abraham Fortas served as an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court of the United States from 1965 to 1969 and is remembered for his promotion of civil liberties and concern with social policy over legal precedent. Although Justice Abe Fortas served on the Supreme Court for four years, his short career left an immeasurable impact. Justice Abe Fortas delivered the 7-2 majority opinion in the *Tinker v. Des Moines* case, asserting that prohibiting the wearing of armbands as a form of symbolic protest does violate the students' freedom of speech protections guaranteed by the First Amendment.

Additionally, Justice Fortas upheld the Voting Rights Act of 1965, supported the Court's decision on *Miranda v. Arizona*, and legally invalidated the poll tax. Fortas began his career in law as the youngest law student at Yale Law School at twenty years old. Prior to his time on the Supreme Court, he served in the Legal Division of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration during FDR's first 100 days, the SEC, and in the office of the Secretary of the Interior. In addition to his commitment to civil liberties, Fortas' private practice defended victims of McCarthyism and litigated cases such as *Gideon v. Wainwright*, which established the rights of indigents to counsel in state criminal cases.