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Kennedy, John F., Jr.; Pixar; Religion and Spirituality in Canada; Religion and Spirituality in the United States; Search Engines; Supreme Court Decisions.

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Kennedy, John F., Jr.

Identification  American lawyer, publisher, and celebrity

Born  November 25, 1960; Washington, D.C.
Died  July 16, 1999; Atlantic Ocean, eight miles off Martha's Vineyard

Heir to America’s leading political dynasty, charismatic, and adventurous, Kennedy was closely watched for his celebrity status, publishing venture, and growing political aspirations.

The only surviving son of the late president John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, John F. Kennedy, Jr., had been accorded celebrity status for his entire life. When he passed the New York bar exam on his third attempt on July 24, 1990, it was national news, allowing Kennedy to retain his appointment as an assistant district attorney in Manhattan. Over the next few years, the media followed Kennedy closely: both for his romances as People magazine’s “Sexiest Man Alive,” most notably with well-known actors Sarah Jessica Parker and Daryl Hannah, and for possible political aspirations as the leading heir of the Kennedy political dynasty.

When his stint as a prosecutor ended in 1993, Kennedy combined his media and political status by starting the unique magazine George. The novel approach of the magazine was indicated by its motto, “Not just politics as usual.” The first issue was published in September, 1995, to great publicity, with supermodel Cindy Crawford posing as George Washington on the cover. With numerous successful issues of George over the succeeding years, Kennedy could point to a signal achievement. He was no longer famous merely for his name but had become publisher and editor in chief of a national magazine with a fresh and breezy approach to politics, which mirrored the perspective of many in his generation.

A further sign of his maturation came on September 21, 1996, when he married the glamorous Calvin Klein publicist Carolyn Bessette.

Kennedy was considering a possible run for the
U.S. Senate in 2000 or for New York governor in 2002. Famously married, nationally celebrated, professionally accomplished, Kennedy seemed poised for a dramatic entrance into political life, one that perhaps could have ended in the White House. Tragedy struck, however, on July 16, 1999, when the small airplane that Kennedy was flying crashed into the Atlantic Ocean, several miles off Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts. Kennedy, an amateur pilot, was flying at night from New York to Massachusetts with his wife Carolyn and her sister Lauren to attend a wedding. President Bill Clinton ordered an extensive maritime search and rescue operation. The remains of the bodies were found five days later and were cremated and scattered into the ocean.

Impact John F. Kennedy, Jr., represented the intersection of two cultural trends of the 1990’s: the increasing popularization of politics and the fascination with media celebrities. He fruitfully cultivated this union in his magazine George, which strove for serious political commentary with a lively people-centered perspective. However, Kennedy’s greatest impact was more one of loss than of accomplishment, as his life was tragically ended just as he seemed poised to realize his full potential.

Further Reading

See also Journalism; Publishing.
Pixar

Identification  American computer animation and film studio

In the 1990’s, Pixar was at the center of the computer revolution transforming communications in America. Largely owned by computer pioneer Steve Jobs, Pixar was a leader in creating software and hardware to render computer-generated images onto film. Combining their technological progress with artistic imagination, Pixar animators made three feature-length, fully computer-animated films that took Hollywood by storm.

In 1990, Pixar was a five-year-old computer company with a limited market for its expensive Pixar Image Computers, narrowly staving off bankruptcy by producing computer-animated commercials. Its owner, chairman of the board, and eventual chief operating officer was Steve Jobs, the creative cofounder of Apple Computer. With Pixar’s computer-animated short film Knick Knack (1989) winning numerous prizes, Pixar and Walt Disney Studios in 1991 entered into a $26 million agreement to produce and distribute three feature-length computer-animated films.

As Pixar continued to make award-winning commercials and develop computer-imaging technologies through its RenderMan development team, Pixar animator John Lasseter took charge of developing Pixar’s first feature film. Although beginning with hand-drawn sketches, Lasseter’s team rendered each frame of the film on computers. It was a laborious, multistep process but promised the ability to show three-dimensional representation of lighting, perspective, and tactile surfacing in a realistic manner beyond the capabilities of traditional animation.

The First Computer-Animated Film  On Thanksgiving, 1995, *Toy Story* opened in theaters, the first completely computer-animated feature film in history. In a thoroughly charming story, the memorable lead characters—toys cowboy Woody and space ranger Buzz Lightyear—overcome their rivalry for the attention of their owner, nine-year-old Andy, to save each other from threatened destruction. The talented actors Tom Hanks and Tim Allen dexterously supply the voices of Woody and Buzz, respectively. The other toys, such as grouchy Mr. Potato Head (Don Rickles), self-centered piggy bank Hamm (John Ratzenberger), loyal Slinky Dog (Jim Varney), and angst-ridden dinosaur Rex (Wallace Shawn),
have personalities rooted in their aspects as toys. Randy Newman and Lyle Lovett composed and sang the musical score, carefully calibrated to each character and including the Academy Award-nominated song “You’ve Got a Friend in Me,” perfectly capturing the theme of the film.

Pixar’s union of technological achievement and dramatic skill is well demonstrated in the first moments of the film. Andy is playing with his toys, twirling them around and speaking their words so as to give them a semblance of life. Andy then leaves the room and all is still. Suddenly the toys spring to life, the film audience for the first time seeing fully realized, three-dimensional animation of inanimate objects. From that opening to the last rousing scene when the toys are joyfully reunited, *Toy Story* was a critical and popular hit, the largest revenue-grossing film of 1995. To make *Toy Story*, Pixar animators filled over one thousand CD-ROMs with 110,000 individually rendered frames. Woody himself required one hundred animation variables, or “avars,” to animate his face and fifty-nine motion controls to animate his mouth alone.

Pixar directors and animators never allowed their technological skills to overwhelm the film’s plot and human—or perhaps better said, toy—warmth and authenticity. The Online Film Critics Society ranked *Toy Story* as the greatest animated film of all time. The American Film Institute included it as one of the one hundred greatest American films ever made.

**Pixar Animation Studio** In 1995, Pixar became a publicly traded company, raising $140 million in the biggest initial public offering (IPO) of the year. With the success of *Toy Story*, it was clear that Pixar’s future lay with its animation studio. Pixar’s animated short film *Geri’s Game* (1997), an ingenious tale of a chess-playing senior citizen in a park matching wits against himself, reflected dramatic improvements in the ability to computer-animate human skin and clothing. Pixar showed its new techniques to good effect in its next two films. *A Bug’s Life* (1998) is a stirring story of a colony of ants and a troupe of comical bugs learning to stand up to a bullying grasshopper. In *Toy Story 2* (1999), the friendship of Woody and Buzz is deepened as they team up to save other toys from exile to a collector’s museum. A sequel that measured up to the high dramatic and artistic standards of the original, *Toy Story 2* grossed over $485 million worldwide. Demonstrating the genius of the Pixar-Disney collaboration, Woody, Buzz, and the poignant toy cowgirl Jessie of *Toy Story 2* (voiced by Joan Cusack) joined the pantheon of Disney icons in Disney parades, ice shows, and amusement parks.

By the end of the 1990’s, it was evident that Pixar had become not only a technological leader in computer development and animation but also one of the finest film studios in American history. Every Pixar film was charming, witty, wholesome, and an artistic success, the exquisite details rendered in its computer-animated frames outdone only by the care and attention Pixar animators lavished on character and story. The inspiring message of each film: the
willingness of humans—although enacted by animated toys and bugs—to sacrifice for their friends.

**Impact** Pixar, based in Emeryville, California, was one of the most creative, innovative, and in the end successful companies of the 1990's. It pioneered three-dimensional computer-animated technology. As a computer hardware, software, and media company, it represented the successful return of entrepreneur Jobs and shared in the glory and rising stock prices of the dot-com craze. However, Pixar’s greatest impact was derived not only by looking forward but also by looking to the past. Its three high-grossing feature films, *Toy Story*, *A Bug’s Life*, and *Toy Story 2*, and the entertaining shorts it showed before each one, recalled the golden age of Hollywood, now rendered through digital technology. With compelling stories, engaging dialogue, attention to detail, stirring music, and a commitment to warm and wholesome entertainment, Pixar Animation Studios created the films in the 1990’s that were perhaps most destined to endure as classics in the decades to come.

**Further Reading**


Howard Bromberg

**See also** Advertising; Amazon.com; Apple Computer; CGI; Computers; Dot-coms; Film in the United States; Internet; Jobs, Steve; Science and technology; Stock market; Toys and games.
Religion and spirituality in Canada

Identification  Organized and nonorganized expressions of spiritual belief and practice among Canadians

Traditionally characterized by the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and United Church of Canada denominations, religion in Canada in the 1990's also embraced an increasing variety of religious faiths and spiritualities.

Reflecting a long-term trend, Canada's religious life in the 1990's was marked by its increasing pluralism, sharing the increasing multiculturalism of Canada. At the same time, there was a seeming decline in formal religious membership, accompanied by a reduced role for the religious perspective in civic life.

Demographics of Religion   Unlike the United States, Canada asks about religious preference in its census data. The 1991 Canadian census indicated that Canadians were 45 percent Roman Catholic, 35 per-
cent Protestant, and 1.4 percent Eastern Orthodox. Jews represented about 1.2 percent of the Canadian population. Reflecting the changing sources of immigration and Canada’s increasingly multicultural society, these demographics changed significantly over the decade of the 1990’s. The total number of Christians in percentage terms declined from 81 percent in 1991 to 74 percent in 2001, with Catholics falling to 43.6 percent of the population and Protestants to 29 percent of the population. Meanwhile, there was a significant increase in adherents of Islam (doubling in population over the 1990’s to become 2 percent of the Canadian population). Likewise, there was a large increase of adherents to Hinduism and Sikhism (both increasing by 89 percent) and Buddhism (increasing by 84 percent), with all three of these religions growing to about 1 percent each of the Canadian population by decade’s end. This increase is largely explained by the large number of adherents of these religions who were part of the 1.8 million immigrants to Canada during the 1990’s.

The most influential faiths in Canada have traditionally been Roman Catholic, Anglican, and the United Church of Canada (formed by a union of Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, and other churches in 1925). These three denominations were traditionally granted special prerogatives under Canadian law, especially in the field of education, and played a dominant role in Canadian society. All three underwent significant changes in the latter half of the twentieth century, including the 1990’s. While the number of adherents and the traditions of Catholicism did not diminish, the same cannot be said of the influence on society of the Catholic hierarchy and priests, especially in Quebec. (Particularly damaging to the Catholic Church in Canada were disclosures of abuse at the Mount Cashel Boys Home in Newfoundland, which was closed in 1990.) The Anglican and United Churches seemed to show a decline in both numbers and influence. It seems that the progressive social attitudes of the mainline Protestant denominations on such issues as homosexual and abortion rights did not draw more adherents to these churches. In fact, the Protestant groups that showed the most growth were those of an evangelical and freestanding character. A vivid example is the “Toronto Blessing” revival that began in the Toronto Airport Vineyard Fellowship in January, 1994, and attracted millions of participants to its physically charismatic worship services.

The heartland of Canadian Catholicism has always been French-speaking Quebec. The Quiet Revolution of the 1960’s and 1970’s had already seen the secularization of the once clericalist Quebec society. This trend was to continue through the 1990’s. A symbol of this changed status occurred in 1990. The chairman of the Montreal Catholic School Commission called upon the Quebec provincial government to encourage immigration by people who shared Judeo-Christian values. This call was immediately repudiated by the provincial leaders as conflicting with Quebec’s secular character.

Another sign of Canada’s determination to accommodate a broader faith experience than the traditional Catholic and Protestant religions inherited from the mother countries of France and England was illustrated in a debate over national prayer. The federal parliament in Canada traditionally began its daily sessions with a prayer dedicated in part to Jesus Christ. In February, 1994, the Canadian Parliament voted unanimously to substitute the nondenominational reference to “Almighty God” for the Christian reference.

The Canadian government traditionally funded, at least to some extent, Catholic and Protestant schools; this led to controversy in the 1990’s. In 1991, protesters took over an Amherstburg public school to protest the increasing jurisdiction of the Catholic school system over formerly public schools. In 1994, a suit by Jewish parents to obtain public funding for their schools was rejected by the Ontario Court of Appeal. In 1996, the Supreme Court in its Adler v. Ontario decision upheld the Province of Ontario in funding Catholic schools to the exclusion of Jewish schools as part of the political compromise that made the 1867 confederation possible. While accepting the advantages granted to Canada’s largest denominations in school funding, however, the courts were eager to show that Canada welcomed all faiths. In the same year, for example, in the case of Ross v. New Brunswick School District No. 15, the Supreme Court found that a school board was liable for discrimination for failing to take action against a teacher who made vituperative comments against Jewish people during his off-duty time.

Despite these debates over Canada’s increasingly pluralistic and even secularized approach to faith and spirituality, there is an academic consensus on the different role that religion plays in Canadian political life from that of its southern neighbor, the
United States. In the last decades of the twentieth century, religion played a potent, persuasive, and at times divisive role in U.S. politics, but organized religion did not play a similar role in Canada during the 1990’s. Despite Canada’s traditional conservatism, a consensus had emerged accepting Canada’s diverse and personalized approach to religion, separated from the tumult of politics.

**Impact**  Religion in Canada in the 1990’s reflected the changes in Canadian society. From its French and English roots, Canadian religion took on a more diverse character, with the greatest increases registered among non-Christian religions and among religious nonadherents. Whether because of the declining influence of the Catholic Church in Quebec, the sometimes extreme stands of the Protestant mainline churches, or the more personal, expressive faith of the evangelical denominations, Canadian religion did not seem to play a major role in Canadian politics of the 1990’s.

**Further Reading**


*Howard Bromberg*

**Religion and spirituality in the United States**

**Identification**  Organized and nonorganized expressions of spiritual belief and practice among Americans

Religion and spirituality played an important, if at times contradictory, role in political and social life of the United States in the 1990’s.

Like much of American history, the 1990’s were marked by both religious and spiritual dynamism and by growing secularism. These somewhat paradoxical tendencies are well exemplified in the results of a public opinion data poll that identified 1992 as both the “Year of the Evangelical” and the “Year of the Secular.” New religious movements and spiritualities partook both of traditional devotions and a practical, entrepreneurial spirit that has always been an American characteristic. America’s ability to harmonize the conflicting strands of religiosity and secularism in the 1990’s was perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in politics. Although the United States prides itself on separation of church and state, changing religious affiliations played a crucial role in national and local politics.

**Demographics**  Most American adults identify themselves with one particular religion or denomination. There is no quicker way of understanding the social landscape of the 1990’s than by surveying the demographics of religious adherence in the United States. Although the U.S. Census does not ask about religious affiliation, the Graduate School of the City University of New York conducted a National Survey of Religious Identification in 1990, one of the most extensive surveys of religious affiliation ever undertaken. This comprehensive survey found that of the total adult civilian population of approximately 175 million Americans, 86 percent were identified as Christian. The largest Christian denomination was Roman Catholic, with approximately 46 million adult adherents, a little more than a quarter of the adult population. The largest Protestant denomination was Baptist, with about 34 million adherents, or about one-fifth of the adult population. About 17 million American adults—one-tenth of the population—were identified as nondenominational Protestants. The next largest Protestant denominations were Methodist, with ap-
proximately 14 million adult members, Lutheran with 9 million, Presbyterian with 5 million, Pentecostal with 3 million, Episcopalian with 3 million, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon), with about 2.5 million adult members.

Other non-Christian religions surveyed in 1990 were much smaller in comparison. Approximately 3 million adults were identified as Jewish, about 2 percent of the population. In addition, 527,000 adults were identified as Muslim, 401,000 as Buddhist, 227,000 as Hindu, 47,000 as belonging to Native American religions, 45,000 as Scientologist, 28,000 as Baha’i, 23,000 as Taoist, and about 20,000 as New Age adherents. Nonbelieving or nonclassified adults constituted about 10 percent of the population. From this it can be seen that the United States entered the 1990’s as a nation in which the vast majority of adults identified themselves as belonging to Christian denominations. Although the nation had a large number of adherents of almost every other religion in the world, making the United States the most religiously diverse country on earth, their numbers remained small in comparison with Christianity. Immigration patterns of the 1990’s would play an important role in religious demographics. In 1990, 7.2 million Americans, or 2.9 percent of the population, were of Asian origin. Increased immigration from Asia and Africa accounted for most of the rise in numbers of non-Christian religions.

Politics and Religion The influence of the Religious Right in American politics continued unabated in the 1990’s. At the beginning of the decade, Pat Robertson founded the Christian Coalition to assert the values of conservative Christianity in local and national politics. By 1995, the Christian Coalition under its director Ralph Reed had become remarkably active, claiming 1.7 million members in local chapters nationwide. These chapters registered and educated millions of voters and lobbied legislators in support of their principles. These principles were summarized in the Coalition’s Contract with the American Family, introduced on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. Likewise, the Reverend Jerry Falwell spoke of reviving his Moral Majority organization, a political force in the 1980’s, if the federal government pushed for abortion and homosexual rights. The Supreme Court decision in Lee v. Weisman (1992), which prohibited nonsectarian prayer at public school graduations, illustrated the federal judiciary’s push toward secularization.

Since September 1, 1960, when presidential candidate John F. Kennedy delivered a major address distinguishing between his private religious beliefs and his political actions, candidates for the presidency had followed an unwritten rule. Religion was not to be an issue, and matters of faith were not relevant in political campaigns. This unwritten code was stretched to the limit in the 1992 presidential race between President George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton. As political columnist William Safire noted, no presidential campaign in American history was more explicit in invoking the name and blessings of God than the 1992 campaign. For example, President Bush often invoked the religious and Christian heritage of the United States, especially in appearances before conventions of America’s largest Protestant denomination, the Southern Baptists, and before evangelical groups, which were becoming increasingly active and influential in American politics. His challenger Bill Clinton was competing for the same votes and in his speeches often quoted from the Bible and referred to the “new covenant” he wanted to make with America and the “crusade” he would carry out to reform government. Even third-party candidate H. Ross Perot found religious demographics to be one of the chief determinants of the presidential campaign. The votes for Perot came almost exclusively from one demographic category: white Protestants. As a result, the famous 1990’s pollster George Gallup, Jr., was well able to conclude that religious affiliation was one of the most accurate of political indicators.

Religion and the Media The 1990’s saw the continued visibility of religious figures on the most dominant media of the decade—television. Using the new capabilities of cable television, Paul Crouch built the Trinity Broadcasting Network and Mother Mary Angelica built her Eternal Word Television Network into international media empires. Pat Robertson, already a significant voice through his Christian Broadcasting Network featuring The 700 Club, founded International Family Entertainment in 1990 to promote and distribute family-oriented programming to cable television. The Reverend Billy Graham, perhaps the best-known and most-respected religious figure in the United States, increasingly reached out to groups beyond his fundamentalist roots. His ecumenical evangelistic crusades
attracted millions of Americans. Perhaps the most influential American Catholic prelate of the 1990’s was Joseph Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago, who developed the “seamless garment” ethic to moral questions involving human life. But certainly the most forceful and telegenic personality for American Catholics was Pope John Paul II, whose worldwide travels, charisma, and personal holiness made him a vivid presence. Traveling to the United States in the years 1993, 1995, and 1999, Pope John Paul II called on Americans to return to their moral roots, while working for a more peaceful, pluralistic, and economically just world. Under his leadership, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops reaffirmed its vigorous opposition to the practice of abortion, euthanasia, and capital punishment.

Religious broadcasting on both television and radio figured significantly in the ongoing “culture wars.” Religious leaders, networks, and groups chose sides in the bitter ethical and political debates over issues such as abortion, divorce, homosexuality, and public education. Other religious leaders stirred up different kinds of controversies, which inevitably received the widest publicity on television news and talk shows. Allegations of clergy abuse of parishioners were mushrooming into a nationwide scandal. Televangelists Jimmy Swaggert, Mike Warnke, and Robert Tilton were exposed for scandalous behavior in 1991. Minister Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam sect and organizer of the successful Million Man March on October 16, 1995, was accused of making anti-Semitic statements.

Religious Pluralism As the United States became a more pluralistic society through the 1990’s, its religious life became more diverse as well. Religions other than Christianity and Judaism had entered the mainstream. For example, during this decade the U.S. Navy commissioned its first Muslim chaplain and opened its first mosque. The 2001 American Religious Identification Survey, a follow-up to its 1990 survey by the Graduate School of the City University of New York, revealed that over the course of the decade the proportion of American adults identifying themselves as Christian had declined by 7 percent of the population. Meanwhile, adherents of non-Christian religions had increased during the 1990’s from 3.5 percent to 5.2 percent of the total population, with the number of Muslims in the United States increasing 170 percent, and Hindus 237 percent. The number of those reporting no adherence to religion increased to 15 percent of the population; it is likely that many of these nonadherents still counted themselves as spiritual but followed a syncretistic mix of religious and spiritual beliefs.

The United States has been a nation of remarkable dynamism, with its ingenuity, inventiveness, and productiveness admired throughout the world. The American approach to religion has likewise been characterized by the rapid and easy birth of new religions, denominations, and spiritual traditions, a process that defined the 1990’s as well. Promise Keepers was founded by Bill McCartney in 1990 to encourage men to commit to responsible and biblical relationships. Kwanzaa, an African American spiritual holiday, grew in popularity and was commemorated by a U.S. postal stamp in 1997.

Perhaps the most remarkable American phenomenon was the rise of the New Age movement. New Age beliefs represented a distinctly American and eclectic synthesis of Asian meditation practices, insights from modern science, and a search for a holistic balance of mind and body. One of its leading practitioners, Dr. Deepak Chopra, founded the Chopra Center for Wellbeing in La Jolla, California, in 1996.

America’s innovative approach to religion had a dark side as well, with the proliferation of several dangerous cults. In 1993, in response to the killing of four federal agents, a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) siege of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, resulted in the deaths of seventy-six cult members. In 1997, thirty-nine members of the Heaven’s Gate sect in San Diego, California, committed suicide after the sighting of the Hale-Bopp comet.

Impact In American politics, religion seemed to play a largely conservative role, as evangelical Protestants helped move local elections toward a more traditional footing and forced presidential aspirants to answer to their concerns. In spiritual and moral terms, the United States saw a resurgence in traditional religion perhaps best symbolized by the ecumenical appeal of the Reverend Billy Graham and Pope John Paul II. At the same time, the United States saw an increasingly eclectic and practical approach to the spiritual quest undertaken by many Americans. In the end, it is hard to say whether the
1990’s was an age in which religion shaped American beliefs and values or whether American pragmatism reshaped American religion.

**Further Reading**


Howard Bromberg

**See also** Bernardin, Joseph Cardinal; Chopra, Deepak; Christian Coalition; Conservatism in U.S. politics; Culture wars; Dead Sea scrolls publication; Demographics of the United States; Elections in the United States, 1992; Falwell, Jerry; Farrakhan, Louis; Heaven’s Gate mass suicide; Holocaust Memorial Museum; Jewish Americans; Kwanzaa; Promise Keepers; Waco siege; WWJD bracelets.
Definition  Technology that enabled the systematic retrieving of information from the World Wide Web

The World Wide Web contains billions of items of information located on its millions of sites. With the development of search engines in the 1990’s, Web users were able to locate quickly the information they queried. Becoming indispensable to Web use, search engines contributed to the cachet and soaring stock prices of Internet-related companies.

Various kinds of search engines retrieve data from computers, but it was the emergence of efficient Web search engines in the mid-1990’s that helped make the resources of the Internet widely available.

The Internet is the worldwide network of interconnected computers. The Web is the collection of billions of pages containing information in standardized interface that can be accessed on the Inter-
net through Web browsers. In 1990, the first search engine, Archie, was developed at McGill University, retrieving information from the then 300,000 Internet hosts. It was soon followed by rivals Veronica, Jughead, and Gopher. With the release of the Web to the public in 1991, a new generation of efficient search engines was developed that used “indexes” (the engine’s catalog of Web pages), “spiders” (programs that searched the Web to add pages to the index), and “relevancy software” that ranked retrieved pages for their match to the query. To use a search engine, the user formulates a search query, usually based on a combination of terms (Boolean) or natural language. The search engine instantly combs through billions of Web pages to retrieve those that match the search criteria. The success of a search engine depends largely on the number of Web pages in its index and its algorithms for generating the most relevant search results.

The launching of the search engine Excite in 1993 represented a breakthrough with Excite’s innovative statistical analysis of word relationships. The year 1994 saw the birth of Yahoo!, which included a directory classifying Web sites by subject category. Lycos (1994) pioneered the ranking of documents by relevance. Infoseek (1994) and AltaVista (1995) were metasearch engines, combining the results of individual search engines; AltaVista also offered a translation service and a search capability for sound and image files. Inktomi (1996) impressed with large-scale search capability made possible by using distributed network technology. Ask Jeeves (1997), now Ask, allowed for search queries in everyday language. Google, formed by two Stanford graduates in 1998, quickly became popular with its extensive search capabilities and such features as “cached,” which highlighted search terms in the document and displayed information from Web pages that had expired. By decade-end, search engines were processing tens of millions of searches daily, utilizing billions of indexed pages. With the dot-com bubble, search engine companies skyrocketed in stock price and status.

Impact The emergence of increasingly powerful search engines in the 1990’s made vast resources of human intelligence available to any inquiry. Whatever fame and profit search engine companies achieved were a small reflection of the precise access to Web information that search engines made possible.

Further Reading

Howard Bromberg

See also Advertising; America Online; Computers; Dot-coms; E-mail; Internet; Microsoft; Spam; Stock market; World Wide Web; Yahoo!.
Supreme Court decisions

Definition  Rulings made by the highest court in the United States

During the 1990’s, the United States Supreme Court, marked by controversial appointments and increasing politicization, rendered constitutional and judicial opinions that affected nearly every sphere of American life.

The 1990’s was a remarkable decade for the U.S. Supreme Court, characterized by several striking paradoxes. The decade commenced with the most controversial and disputed nominations to the Court and ended with the most stable Court in American history. Marked by the profound conservatism of Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and a series of appointments by Republican presidents, the Court had one of the most conservative temperaments of any in the twentieth century. In many ways, however, its chief legacy was to confirm the progressive decisions of the Chief Justice Earl Warren and Chief Justice Warren E. Burger Courts that preceded it. Espousing a philosophy that eschewed judicial activism and partisan factors in its decision making, the Supreme Court was in fact deeply divided along political lines.

In 1990, Rehnquist had been the chief justice for four years. The eight associate justices were William J. Brennan, Byron White, Thurgood Marshall, Harry A. Blackmun, John Paul Stevens, Sandra Day O’Connor, Antonin Scalia, and Anthony Kennedy. In 1990, David Souter replaced Justice Brennan. In 1991, President George H. W. Bush nominated African American conservative Clarence Thomas to replace the retired Justice Marshall. After Thomas’s Equal Employment Opportunity Commission subordinate Anita Hill testified that Thomas had sexually harassed her, a media and political frenzy broke loose. After weeks of nationally televised and disputed Senate hearings, often assuming a circus-like atmosphere, Thomas was narrowly confirmed on October 15, but not before the Supreme Court had been revealed to be as politicized and divided as the other branches of government.

After Ruth Bader Ginsburg was appointed in 1993 and Stephen G. Breyer in 1994, both by President Bill Clinton, the composition of the Court resumed an air of tranquility, not changing its personnel for the next eleven years, the longest such period in American history. With the Court divided on almost every controversial decision, two voting blocs had emerged: Justices Rehnquist, Scalia, and Thomas on the Right, Justices Souter, Ginsburg, Breyer, and Stevens on the Left, and Justices Kennedy and O’Connor as swing votes in the middle. With seven of these nine justices being Republican appointees, and Justices Kennedy and O’Connor often joining in majority opinions with Justices Rehnquist, Scalia, and Thomas, the Court reflected a largely conservative composition. To some commentators, the conservative bloc harked back to the era of the Court of the 1920’s and 1930’s, when, dominated by four conservative judges known as the “Four Horsemen,” the Supreme Court almost strangled the New Deal at birth. Still, the traditional leanings of the Rehnquist Court itself presented a paradox. Would this conservative Court take the radical step of uprooting the progressive decisions pioneered by the Warren Court, thus completely redirecting Supreme Court jurisprudence, or would the Rehnquist
Court's conservatism be shown in patient adherence to precedent and stare decisis, as much for recent innovative decisions as for historic ones?

Over the decade of the 1990's, the Supreme Court acted on approximately twenty thousand judicial cases that came before it. On about one thousand of these cases, the Supreme Court issued signed opinions, the most influential of which are the subject of this article. What follows is a summary and analysis of thirty-six major Supreme Court decisions of the 1990's, sufficient to observe the Court's impact on American life as well as to answer the above questions.

Social Issues The Supreme Court made numerous decisions affecting the social and moral life of Americans. Reaching into areas that federal courts had left untouched as recently as fifty years ago, the Supreme Court decided cases that reflected many of the controversial issues of the 1990's.

No decision would be more controversial than the Supreme Court's single decision directly affecting abortion. In Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey (1992), five abortion providers challenged Pennsylvania's recently enacted Abortion Control Act as unconstitutionally violating a woman's right to abortion. The Abortion Control Act required several steps that would be implicated in an abortion decision. Prior to obtaining an abortion, except for medical emergencies, a woman had to be provided with specific information regarding the procedure and had to wait twenty-four hours. If a minor, the woman needed the consent of her parents; if married, to notify her husband. The act also required recordkeeping. The Supreme Court, in a plurality opinion, invalidated only the spousal notification provision as imposing an "undue burden" on the right to abortion as set out in the famous Roe v. Wade case (1973). The opinion authored by Justices Kennedy, O'Connor, and Souter emphasized that Roe v. Wade and the right to abortion had become widely accepted in American society. Curtailing this right would disturb both the social fabric of the nation and the legitimacy of its highest court.

In contrast, in Rust v. Sullivan (1991), the Court held that its abortion rulings allowed Congress to forbid counselors in federally funded birth control clinics from discussing abortion as an option for their patients.

The Court also decided important discrimination decisions. In United States v. Virginia (1996), the Court found that the male-only admission policy of Virginia Military Institute, the oldest state military college in the nation, violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. In the cases of Shaw v. Reno (1993), Miller v. Johnson (1995), Shaw v. Hunt (1996), and Bush v. Vera (1996), the Court applied strict scrutiny to and invalidated the plans of several states to reshape and gerrymander voting districts according to racial criteria.

In one of its most anticipated decisions, Cruzan v. Director, Missouri Department of Health (1990), the Court held that the Fourteenth Amendment liberty clause provided a constitutional right for a patient to refuse life-saving measures, as long as the patient is competent and his or her wishes can be clearly determined. In what seemed a departure from this precedent, however, the Court in Washington v. Glucksberg (1997) and Vacco v. Quill (1997) upheld the bans of New York and Washington on physician-assisted suicide, as the Court found that the Fourteenth Amendment liberty clause and equal protection clause do not include a right to commit suicide, nor do they include the right for a physician to assist a patient to commit suicide.

The Court made decisions affecting other controversial social issues. In Romer v. Evans (1996), the Court invalidated Colorado's Amendment 2 as denying its citizens equal protection of the law under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Amendment 2 prohibited Colorado state entities from protecting the status of homosexual residents from discrimination. The Court held that this amendment had to be evaluated under the strict scrutiny standard. When the case was remanded for application of that standard, Amendment 2 was judged to have invalidly disabled homosexuals and only homosexuals from gaining legal protection from discrimination.

Criminal Law and Procedure With the increasing trend to subject state police actions and procedures to the protections of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth Amendments of the Constitution, the Supreme Court issued numerous constitutional decisions affecting criminal law. In the area of search and seizure, the Court decided in Ohio v. Robinette (1996) that it may be permissible to conduct a search of a suspected person stopped for a traffic offense if the
suspect consents, even if the police neglect to inform the suspect that he or she is free to go after the stop. Likewise, in Florida v. Bostick (1991), the Court found that passengers on a bus could validly consent to have their luggage searched by police who board the bus as part of an antidrug campaign. As to confessions, in Arizona v. Fulminante (1991) the Court found that when a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) informant obtained a confession from a fellow prisoner in exchange for protection from other inmates who had been threatening him with bodily harm, that confession was obtained in violation of the Fifth Amendment because of the fear of physical violence.

The Court in the 1990’s made several decisions involving application of the Eighth Amendment prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment to death penalty cases. In Payne v. Tennessee (1991), the Court overruled two earlier precedents to allow friends and relatives of murder victims to testify at the penalty stage of the bifurcated two-stage capital trial as to the impact of the killing on their lives. In McCleskey v. Zant (1991), the Court refused to grant a writ of federal habeas corpus to a prisoner on death row because he had not presented his claims in an earlier petition, which was now exhausted. The defendant was executed a few months later. Likewise, in Herrera v. Collins (1993), the Court rejected another petition for federal habeas corpus relief of a Texas murder convict who claimed newly discovered evidence demonstrated his innocence. The Court, noting that all trials, motions, and appeals in the cases had already been concluded, rejected the petition. In one of the few 1990’s Supreme Court capital punishment cases deciding in favor of the defendant, Dawson v. Delaware (1992), the Court held that prejudicial evidence concerning the beliefs and statements of a convicted murderer could not be introduced by the state in the penalty phase of the bifurcated two-stage capital trial.

The First Amendment As with previous decades, the 1990’s saw the Supreme Court make significant decisions concerning the First Amendment rights to free speech and free exercise of religion. In Barnes v. Glen Theatre, Inc. (1991), the Court rejected the claim that Indiana’s law prohibiting totally nude dancing in public establishments violated the right to free speech, thereby finding that the states retained some right to enact public indecency statutes. The Court held that states can have a legitimate interest in proscribing public nudity but are prohibited from regulating dancing any further than that limit. Likewise, in Osborne v. Ohio (1990), the Court upheld an Ohio statute prohibiting private possession of child pornography, as a state can act so as to protect minors without violating the constitutional right for adults to view sexually explicit material.

Although the Court expanded the states’ ability to prohibit obscene speech, in a controversial case it seemed to limit Congress’s power to do so. In Reno v. ACLU (1997), the Supreme Court found two provisions of the federal Communications Decency Act of 1996 to be too vague to satisfy the free speech clause. These provisions criminalized transmission of indecent messages and displaying patently offensive messages over the Internet to any person under eighteen years of age. However, the statute failed to define “indecent” or “patently offensive,” as well as suffering other defects, and thus was not narrowly tailored so as to pass constitutional muster.

An important First Amendment free exercise clause case with widespread consequences was Oregon v. Smith (1990). In Smith, a member of a Native American religion that made use of peyote for ceremonial purposes was terminated from his job, as his use of peyote was found to constitute drug abuse. In upholding the termination, the Court found that the free exercise clause cannot be used to invalidate state laws prohibiting illegal activity that generally and neutrally apply to all persons. In response to this ruling, Congress passed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to override certain portions of the Smith decision. In response, in City of Boerne v. Flores (1997), the Court held the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to be an unconstitutional interference by Congress with the powers of the Court. In contrast to the Smith case is the Court’s decision in Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye v. Hialeah (1993), striking down Florida’s prohibition of religious practices involving animal sacrifice.

A related First Amendment case was the Court’s controversial decision regarding the establishment clause in Lee v. Weisman (1992). In that case, the Court found that the First Amendment forbade any prayers at a high school graduation, even if nonsectarian, as coercive to students. This decision was consistent with decades of Supreme Court establishment clause jurisprudence that vigilantly looked to exclude religious intrusion from public schools.
Property and Antitrust  The Court acted to restrain the powers of states to regulate private property. In *Lucas v. South Carolina Coastal Council* (1992) and *Dolan v. City of Tigard* (1994), the Court found various municipal regulations of the use of property to constitute takings of private property for a public use under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. Thus, the state was required to pay just compensation to the property owners.

In *Kansas et al. v. Utilicorp United, Inc.* (1990), the Court limited antitrust lawsuits under section 4 of the Clayton Act to the business entities that “suffered injury” as opposed to state officials like the attorney general. In *Professional Real Estate Investors, Inc. v. Columbia Pictures* (1993), the Supreme Court adopted the Ninth Circuit’s refusal to characterize a lawsuit that the plaintiff had reason to institute as a sham attempt to interfere with the business relationships of a competitor—thus violating antitrust law—even though it did not survive the defendant’s motion for summary judgment.

In *City of Ladue v. Gilleo* (1994), the Court held that municipal zoning lawsuits could not ban homeowners from displaying signs on their property because such a blanket prohibition violated the residents’ rights to freedom of speech. Likewise, in *City of Edmonds v. Oxford House, Inc.* (1995), the Court struck down a zoning ordinance that excluded nonrelated persons from a neighborhood zoned for single-family residences.

Federalism  Issues of federalism concern the constitutional division of powers between the federal and state governments and have been an important area for Supreme Court jurisprudence from the beginning of the American Republic.

For several decades, the Supreme Court had seemed to approve most expansions of federal power. In the 1990’s, the Court was more careful to preserve the powers of states against federal encroachment. For example, in *Printz v. United States* (1997), the Court struck down the portion of the federal Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act that required state officers to conduct background checks of prospective purchasers of handguns pursuant to the newly created federal regulatory system. The Court held that the American system of federalism does not permit the federal government to compel the actions of state officials. Likewise, it held that the attempt by Congress to forbid handguns in schools under the Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990 unconstitutionally infringed on the powers of states to police their own citizenry. Congress purported to be acting under the commerce clause, but the Court in *United States v. Lopez* (1995) could find no connection between possession of a handgun and economic activity affecting interstate commerce. Nor could Congress abrogate the immunity of states against being sued in their own courts. The Court recognized in *Alden v. Maine* (1999) that immunity from lawsuits in one’s own courts is an inherent and traditional part of state sovereignty, which the individual states did not surrender under the Constitution. Thus, Maine’s immunity from being sued under the Fair Labor Standards Act in Maine courts was upheld.

The Court also refused to allow the president to expand his powers at the expense of Congress. In 1996, Congress enacted the Line Item Veto Act, which allowed the president to strike out portions of congressional appropriations. In *Clinton v. City of New York* (1998), the Court held that this act violated the presentment clause of the Constitution, which requires the president to sign or veto a bill in its entirety. Likewise, in *Clinton v. Jones* (1997), the Court found that the president is not immune from civil suits while in office for his actions performed in a nonofficial capacity.

Impact  The Supreme Court in the 1990’s constituted almost the precise middle decade of the Rehnquist Court, which began in 1986 and ended in 2005. It is an appropriate symbol of the politicized Court of the 1990’s, often divided in 5-4 votes between its conservative and liberal members, that following the procedure set out in the Constitution, Rehnquist presided over President Clinton’s impeachment trial in the U.S. Senate in the winter of 1999. The Senate trial ended in party-line voting that allowed Clinton to remain in office. Marked by a profoundly conservative chief justice and mostly Republican appointments, the Rehnquist Court had the most conservative composition of any Supreme Court in a half-century, and while the Supreme Court of the 1920’s and early 1930’s was equally conservative, Supreme Court jurisprudence of that era played a smaller role in the life of most Americans.

Significantly, the 1990’s Court reflected its conservatism not by overturning the more progressive
Supreme Court jurisprudence of the 1960’s, 1970’s, and early 1980’s but by ratifying it. The Court did trim away at the margins of such rights granted by earlier Courts as the right to abortion, the right to refuse many police searches and seizures, and the right to engage in unlimited speech of any character. It also trimmed the broadest reading of congressional powers, for example, by limiting congressional power to take property under eminent domain, and to regulate public schools. However, seen in their totality, the Court’s decisions were not a major scaling-back of recent jurisprudence. The Courts of recent decades have made vast changes in American social, economic, and political life. The Supreme Court of the 1990’s for all extents and purposes accepted these changes as valid precedents. By affirming in the main the jurisprudence of its predecessor Courts, the 1990’s Supreme Court helped legitimate the expansion of its own role, as the Court itself acknowledged in its Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey decision, and hence of the Court’s impact on the everyday lives and decisions of Americans.

Further Reading
Hensley, Thomas. The Rehnquist Court: Justices, Rulings, and Legacy. Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2006. A volume in the ABC-Clio Supreme Court Handbook series, this comprehensive reference work is organized around the question of whether the Rehnquist Court brought about a counterrevolution in Supreme Court jurisprudence.

Howard Bromberg

See also  Abortion; Bush, George H. W.; Clinton, Bill; Clinton’s impeachment; Conservatism in U.S. politics; Crime; Culture wars; Ginsburg, Ruth Bader; Hill, Anita; Liberalism in U.S. politics; Line Item Veto Act of 1996; Planned Parenthood v. Casey; Romer v. Evans; Rust v. Sullivan; Shaw v. Reno; Thomas, Clarence.