

William O. Douglas

Quotes

Men, Government, People, Law, Liberty, Thinking, Ideas, Mean, Rights, Expression, Exercise, History, Court, Political, Doe, Journey, Spiritual, Meaningful, Literature, Adventure

Freedom of movement is the very essence of our free society -- once the right to travel is curtailed, all other rights suffer.

~William O. Douglas

Restriction of free thought and free speech is the most dangerous of all subversions. It is the one un-American act that could most easily defeat us.

~William O. Douglas

We are rapidly entering the age of no privacy, where everyone is open to surveillance at all times; where there are no secrets from government.

~William O. Douglas

To be whole and harmonious, man must also know the music of the beaches and the woods. He must find the thing of which he is only an infinitesimal part and nurture it and love it, if he is to live.

~William O. Douglas

The Fifth Amendment is an old friend and a good friend, one of the great landmarks in men's struggle to be free of tyranny, to be decent and civilized.

~William O. Douglas

The liberties of none are safe unless the liberties of all are protected.

~William O. Douglas

Since when have we Americans been expected to bow submissively to authority and speak with awe and reverence to those who represent us?

~William O. Douglas

As night-fall does not come at once, neither does oppression...It is in such twilight that we all must be aware of change in the air - however

slight - lest we become victims of the darkness.

~William O. Douglas

Those in power need checks and restraints lest they come to identify the common good for their own tastes and desires, and their continuation in office as essential to the preservation of the nation.

~William O. Douglas

The way to combat noxious ideas is with other ideas. The way to combat falsehoods is with truth.

~William O. Douglas

The Constitution is not neutral. It was designed to take the government off the backs of people.

~William O. Douglas

I do not know of any salvation for society except through eccentrics, misfits, dissenters, people who protest.

~William O. Douglas

Tell the FBI that the kidnapers should pick out a judge that Nixon wants back.

~William O. Douglas

The Second Amendment reveals a profound principle of American government - the principle of civilian ascendancy over the military.

~William O. Douglas

Man must be able to escape civilization if he is to survive. Some of his greatest needs are for refuges and retreats where he can recapture for a day or a week the primitive conditions of life.

~William O. Douglas

The great and invigorating influences in American life have been the

unorthodox: the people who challenge an existing institution or way of life, or say and do things that make people think.

~William O. Douglas

Man is whole when he is in tune with the winds, the stars, and the hills... Being in tune with the universe is the entire secrets.

~William O. Douglas

A people who extend civil liberties only to preferred groups start down the path either to dictatorship of the right or the left.

~William O. Douglas

We who have the final word can speak softly or angrily. We can seek to challenge and annoy, as we need not stay docile and quiet.

~William O. Douglas

The dominant purpose of the First Amendment was to prohibit the widespread practice of government suppression of embarrassing information.

~William O. Douglas

The right to be let alone is indeed the beginning of all freedom.

~William O. Douglas

There have always been grievances and youth has always been the agitator.

~William O. Douglas

Sunlight is the best disinfectant.

~William O. Douglas

Power that controls the economy should be in the hands of elected representatives of the people, not in the hands of an industrial oligarchy.

~William O. Douglas

The day should come when all of the forms of life... will stand before the court - the pileated woodpecker as well as the coyote and bear, the lemmings as well as the trout in the streams.

~William O. Douglas

Acceptance by government of a dissident press is a measure of the maturity of a nation.

~William O. Douglas

Security can only be achieved through constant change, through discarding old ideas that have outlived their usefulness and adapting others to current facts.

~William O. Douglas

It is better, so the Fourth Amendment teaches us, that the guilty sometimes go free than the citizens be subject to easy arrest.

~William O. Douglas

The court is really the keeper of the conscience, and the conscience is the Constitution.

~William O. Douglas

We deal with a right of privacy older than the Bill of Rights-older than our political parties, older than our school system.

~William O. Douglas

The Court's great power is its ability to educate, to provide moral leadership.

~William O. Douglas

Our upside down welfare state is socialism for the rich, free enterprise for the poor.

~William O. Douglas

The right to revolt has sources deep in our history.

~William O. Douglas

My faith is that the only soul a man must save is his own.

~William O. Douglas

I learned that the richness of life is found in adventure. . . . It develops self-reliance and independence. Life then teems with excitement. There is stagnation only in security.

~William O. Douglas

Free speech is not to be regulated like diseased cattle and impure butter. The audience (in this case, the judge or the jury) that hissed yesterday may applaud today, even for the same performance.

~William O. Douglas

One who comes to the Court must come to adore, not to protest. That's the new gloss on the First Amendment.

~William O. Douglas

Literature should not be suppressed merely because it offends the moral code of the censor.

~William O. Douglas

No patent medicine was ever put to wider and more varied use than the Fourteenth Amendment.

~William O. Douglas

I would rather create a precedent than find one.

~William O. Douglas

The one governmental agency that has no ambition.

~William O. Douglas

We do not sit as a super-legislature to weigh the wisdom of legislation.

~William O. Douglas

The First Amendment makes confidence in the common sense of our people and in the maturity of their judgement the great postulate of our democracy.

~William O. Douglas

Absolute discretion is a ruthless master. It is more destructive of freedom than any of man's other inventions.

~William O. Douglas

It seemed to me that I had barely reached the Court when people were trying to get me off.

~William O. Douglas

The right to dissent is the only thing that makes life tolerable for a judge of an appellate court... the affairs of government could not be conducted by democratic standards without it.

~William O. Douglas

The law is not a series of calculating machines where answers come tumbling out when the right levers are pushed.

~William O. Douglas

Common sense often makes a good law.

~William O. Douglas

What a man thinks is no concern of the government.

~William O. Douglas

I hope to be remembered as someone who made the earth a little more

beautiful.

~William O. Douglas

At the constitutional level where we work, 90 percent of any decision is emotional. The rational part of us supplies the reasons for supporting our predilections.

~William O. Douglas

The critical point is that the Constitution places the right of silence beyond the reach of government.

~William O. Douglas

We must realize that today's establishment is the new George III. Whether it will continue to adhere to his tactics, we do not know. If it does, the redress, honored in tradition, is also revolution.

~William O. Douglas

The use of violence as an instrument of persuasion is therefore inviting and seems to the discontented to be the only effective protest.

~William O. Douglas

Marriage is a coming together for better or for worse, hopefully enduring, and intimate to the degree of being sacred.

~William O. Douglas

The Constitution favors no racial group - no political or social group.

~William O. Douglas

Racial discrimination against a white is as unconstitutional as race discrimination against a black.

~William O. Douglas

A road is a dagger placed in the heart of a wilderness.

~William O. Douglas

Why cannot we work at cooperative schemes and search for the common ground binding all mankind together?

~William O. Douglas

A reporter is no better than his source of information.

~William O. Douglas

The rules when the giants play are the same as when the pygmies enter the market.

~William O. Douglas

Hiking a ridge, a meadow, a river bottom, is as healthy a form of exercise as one can get.

~William O. Douglas

The free state offers what a police state denies - the privacy of the home, the dignity and peace of mind of the individual.

~William O. Douglas

We need be bold and adventuresome in our thinking in order to survive.

~William O. Douglas

I have the same confidence in the ability of our people to reject noxious literature as I have in their capacity to sort out the true from the false in theology, economics, or any other field.

~William O. Douglas

When a man knows how to live amid danger, he is not afraid to die. When he is not afraid to die, he is, strangely, free to live.

~William O. Douglas

The interests of the corporation state are to convert all the riches of the earth into dollars.

~William O. Douglas

Ideas are indeed the most dangerous weapons in the world. Our ideas of freedom are the most powerful political weapons man has ever forged.

~William O. Douglas

Trees have judicial standing, and probably grass too.

~William O. Douglas

The struggle is always between the individual and his sacred right to express himself and the power structure that seeks conformity, suppression, and obedience.

~William O. Douglas

The Framers [of the Constitution] . . . created the federally protected right of silence and decreed that the law could not be used to pry open one's lips and make him a witness against himself.

~William O. Douglas

The right to work, I had assumed, was the most precious liberty that man possesses. Man has indeed as much right to work as he has to live, to be free, to own property.

~William O. Douglas

Fear of ideas makes us impotent and ineffective.

~William O. Douglas

Religious experiences which are as real as life to some may be incomprehensible to others.

~William O. Douglas

The conscience of this nation is the Constitution.

~William O. Douglas

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