



# Ordinary Heroes and American Democracy

*Gerald M. Pomper*

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## **Ordinary Heroes and American Democracy** Gerald M. Pomper

True American heroes need not have superhuman abilities nor do they need to act alone. Heroism in a democracy is different from the heroism of myths and legends, says Gerald Pomper in this original and thoughtful book. Through the remarkable stories of eight diverse Americans who acted as heroes during national crises, he offers a new definition of heroism and new reasons to respect American institutions and the people who work within them. Pomper describes how responsible, good individuals can emerge as heroes from such core democratic institutions as the House of Representatives, the Senate, the courts, the presidency, and the press. From the censure of Senator Joseph McCarthy to the prohibition of the dangerous drug thalidomide in the United States, American heroes "just doing their jobs" have played crucial roles in resolving national problems. Pomper considers why democratic heroism is unique and explores the special bond between America's political institutions and the heroes they empower.

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