

The life of louis d. brandeis

Life



APUSH, Period 5 Louis D. Brandeis Louis D. Brandeis was a lawyer widely known for his contribution to the progressive movement especially his involvement in the fight against big corporations, monopolies, big trusts etc. Brandeis was born into a Jewish family to who resided in Louisville Kentucky. They raised him with relaxed Judaic principles, which did not affect his outlook on life too strongly. Brandeis enrolled to Harvard Law School graduating with the highest final average in the school's history. His law career began in Boston as a law clerk to Horace Gray of the Massachusetts Supreme Court.

To which he did not have to take an examination mainly due to his high honors. President Woodrow Wilson ultimately appointed Brandeis an associate of justice. Louis D. Brandeis was known as the people's lawyer because of his successful law career that supported the general idea of the average American. Brandeis' law career was mostly based on his positive view towards the progressive era/ movement; he was a strong advocate on natural rights and freedom of speech, Brandeis supported the union movement, women's rights, and the fight for a minimum wage.

Brandeis was in favor of small business and set out to bust the big companies from being monopolies. One of his biggest busts against monopolies was the fight against JP Morgan and his desire for a railroad monopoly in New England. His plan was to eliminate the opposing companies by buying them out. Brandeis would pursue this case for 6 years and the company would ultimately collapse on itself as he predicted. Brandeis did not agree with how life insurance was being treated so he set out to create a

new plan for it. He said that the previous insurance plan was just “ legalized robbery”.

He created the Savings Bank Life Insurance policy, which we can thank him for even today. This is insurance provided by savings banks presumably making it better for the applicant. He said “ cheaper insurance may rob death of half of its terrors for the worthy poor”. Brandeis was in support of the idea of minimum wage on a national level rather than a state level. He believed that the worker should be guaranteed a minimum pay and hours just like the unions wanted. The case Muller v. Oregon involved the issue of state v. federal law in regards to the issue of minimum wage and hours of women. Brandeis fought for the idea of it being on a national level to ensure that all workers were treated equally. He succeeded by presenting his idea with a shorter more traditional brief, but with large factual support in documents such as social worker reports, medical conclusions, factory inspector observations, and other expert testimonials to prove his ultimate point that a certain amount of time was harmful for the given worker and that if this were a possibility a higher wage must be presented.

This tactic is called the Brandeis Brief and it is still used in court cases today; it completely changed the way lawyers display their evidence. Brandeis was a big leader in supporting the progressive era and the reforms that went along with it. Some things we can thank him for are the legalization of unions or the right of labor to organize, and the Savings Bank Insurance League. He was overall a big supporter of small corporations rather than large as he set out to bust monopolies including JP Morgan and his quest for the New England railroads.