



# Call Me Tom: The Life of Thomas F. Eagleton (MISSOURI BIOGRAPHY SERIES)

*James N. Giglio*

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**Call Me Tom: The Life of Thomas F. Eagleton (MISSOURI BIOGRAPHY SERIES)** James N. Giglio *Call Me Tom* is the first book-length biography of one of Missouri's most successful senators. A moderate liberal in a conservative state, Thomas F. Eagleton was known for his political independence, integrity, and intelligence, likely the reasons Eagleton never once lost an election in his thirty years of public service.

Born in St. Louis, Eagleton began his public career in 1956 as St. Louis Circuit Attorney. At 27, he was the youngest person in the history of the state to hold that position, and he duplicated the feat in his next two elected positions, attorney general in 1960 and lieutenant governor in 1964. In 1968, he was elected to the U.S. Senate, where he served until 1987. He was thrown into the national spotlight in 1972 when revelations regarding his mental health, particularly the shock treatments he received for depression, forced his resignation as a vice presidential nominee of the Democratic Party. All of that would overshadow his significant contributions as senator, especially on environmental and social legislation, as well as his defense of Congressional authority on war making and his role in the U. S. military disengagement from Southeast Asia in 1973.

Respected biographer James N. Giglio provides readers with an encompassing and nuanced portrait of Eagleton by placing the man and his career in the context of his times. Giglio allows readers to see his rumpled suits, smell the smoke of his Pall Mall cigarettes, hear his gravelly voice, and relish his sense of humor. At the same time, Giglio does not shy away from the personal torments that Eagleton had to overcome. A definitive examination of the senator's career also reveals his unique ability to work with Republican counterparts, especially prior to the 1980s when bipartisanship was more possible.

Measuring the effect his mental illness had on his career, Giglio determines that the removal of aspirations for higher office in 1972 made Eagleton a better senator. He consistently took principled stands, with the ultimate goal of preserving and modernizing the agenda of Franklin D. Roosevelt, his favorite president.

Thoroughly researched using the Eagleton Papers and interviews with more than eighty-five people close to Eagleton, including family, friends, colleagues, subordinates, and former classmates, *Call Me Tom* offers an engaging and in-depth portrayal of a man who remained a devoted public servant throughout his life.

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