



A Tenured Professor

John Kenneth Galbraith

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John Kenneth Galbraith's third novel, *A Tenured Professor*, is at once an intriguing tale of morality and a comic delight. Montgomery Martin, a Harvard economics professor, creates a stock forecasting model, which makes it possible for him to uncover society's hidden agendas. Seeking proof that human folly has no limit when motivated by greed, Martin initiates mass hysteria that causes investors to assume that up is the only direction. Hailed as "Galbraith's wisest and wittiest" novel (New York Times), *A Tenured Professor* is an impudently satirical tale.

A Tenured Professor Details

Date : Published October 9th 2001 by Mariner Books (first published February 21st 1990)

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Author : John Kenneth Galbraith

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From Reader Review A Tenured Professor for online ebook

Patrick Koval says

An interesting read. I'm not entirely sure how much I agree with the sort of take-home message, but the descriptions of academia ring true.

Holly Jordan says

This book was a fun bit of satire on the markets in the late 80s and early 90s. It suffered particularly from clunky writing at times and problems with timeline and flashbacks. A quick read.

Ci says

This book foresaw the coming of behavioral investing. Very cleverly written although the marriage relationship of the main characters are just sketches; it seems that the author wanted to do something about it, but in the end gave up and left it in its unfinished form.

Mary-Ann says

A short satire written by the noted Keynesian economist Galbraith that pokes fun at two of my favorite topics for lampooning: academic snobbery and investment folly. You can tell Galbraith isn't a novelist at heart, but he manages to keep the plot moving anyhow.

David says

It was ok, a novel by a famous economist about an economics professor at Harvard, and the antics that ensue when he perfects a method of anticipating the direction of stock prices, gets wildly rich using it, and then along with his wife and an eccentric friend uses the wealth to play political hardball on behalf of left-wing causes. Lots of Cambridge, MA-o-centric scene setting and mildly amusing shots at academic/university culture.

I picked this up at a university book swap, and it's a quick read, so my investment was minimal. Probably otherwise I wouldn't have bothered, as I usually do not have the patience or interest to read novels.

Eric_W says

This quote about sums it up: "Tenure was originally invented to protect radical professors, those who

challenged the accepted order. But we don't have such people anymore at the universities, and the reason is tenure. When time comes to grant it nowadays, the radicals get screened out. That's its principal function. It's a very good system, really -- keeps academic life at a decent level of tranquillity."

Erin says

Surprisingly funny and brutally honest look at wealth and power among the American elite during the Reagan era that (unfortunately) could have been written today. And you do NOT need knowledge of economics nor academia to appreciate Galbraith's satirical genius.

Eugenia says

This must have been very funny when it was written, but reading it now, after its most outrageous predictions about "irrationality" in the stock market and our inability to legislate PACs have come to pass, it's uncannily prescient but not amusing. The fact that it's so smart makes me want to read some of his economic tomes. It's a shame he died before the current "behavioral economics" revolution.

Peter says

Identity Alert: I was a young Harvard economics professor in an office adjacent to John Kenneth Galbraith. This book is Galbraith's cynical shot at the academy in general, and Harvard in particular, and perhaps at himself in particular. A Harvard professor develops a way to accurately predict the stock market, leading to investigation by the SEC of the possibility that he has engaged in insider trading by using his own self-developed methods. If you are an economist, especially a Harvard economist, you might find this amusing; I am, and I didn't. It simply drips with Galbraith!

Rick says

Published in 1990, this book is not "timeless." I should have known how dated it would be when I read the following in the preface: "As this book goes to press, the President and the Congress of the United States are contemplating reform as regards Political Action Committees, the PACs. Whatever the outcome, the solution here offered is preferred." Let's just say that Galbraith's "solution" did not prevail.

Joanne says

Packed up Kitty Galbraith's papers recently and her son gave us each a copy of his father's only novel

Jennifer says

I had to let this one go. I thought it would be a sarcastic peek into academia, and it is that...but it's also really fiction for economists at its core, and if you don't remember anything about your econ classes from college, much of it makes no sense at all. Too bad. If I were going to recommend a good book about the university tenure race, I would recommend "MOO" by Jane Smiley...a book that made me laugh out loud!

Nan Williams says

Very cute. Satirical. Enjoyable. Quick romp through Harvard and through US economics of the 80s.

My only real question is how come this was a new [hardback] book at my public library when it was published 25 years ago. I looked to see if it had been re-published, but didn't see where it had.

It reminded me a lot of one of my favorites, "The Rosie Project," but wasn't nearly so good.

Steve Kettmann says

This is a remarkable book. I came to it fresh as someone who has not read much JKG and found it's message amazingly timely: It would not be a stretch to say the book predicts the recent financial upheavals. I found the satire deliciously acidic at times and nicely sustained - no one expects JKG to have a full-time novelist's top-to-bottom polish, and he doesn't, but I still found it a delightful read.

Karla Huebner says

I'm unsure how I ended up with this novel, which evidently I've had for years unread, but I thought I'd give it a try while in bed with some sort of nasty virus (flu?). It's charming and funny, and, having been written about American economics of the 1980s, proves astonishingly relevant today. I suppose a reader would have to be my age or older to recognize the various references--I know next to nothing about economics but recognized most of what/who was being satirized. In brief, this is the tale of a liberal Harvard econ professor who takes the advice not to do anything noticeable to save the world until after tenure. Thus, he does all of his scholarly work on the refrigeration industry, but develops a system to make money on the stock market by in essence betting against other people's irrationally high expectations. (The one thing I was not clear on in terms of economics was how he did that, as I'm not sure how you would do "short sales" in stock.) He and his fellow-economist wife become fabulously wealthy and attempt to use their income for peace and social justice, but of course ultimately run into snags with the SEC, which assumes great wealth must be the result of illegal dealings.

A fast and enjoyable read. And one quotation that, much more than references to Dan Rather, Ed Meese, and Ivan Boesky, shows the novel is over 20 years old: "Without quite knowing it, Marvin and Marjie had crossed the great divide, that which separates benign and agreeable liberalism, of which all politicians are known to be tolerant, from action, which often means serious and highly unwelcome trouble."

