

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910972247503321
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Titolo	A Conflict of Principles : The Battle over Affirmative Action at the University of Michigan // Carl Cohen
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Lawrence, Kansas : , : University Press of Kansas, , [2014] ©2014
ISBN	9780700620432 0700620435
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (vii, 302 pages )
Classificazione	LAW013000LAW094000
Disciplina	344.774/0798
Soggetti	LAW / Discrimination LAW / Civil Rights Affirmative action programs in education - Law and legislation - Michigan Universities and colleges - Admission - Law and legislation - Michigan Discrimination in higher education - Law and legislation - Michigan
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Includes index.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Sommario/riassunto	<p>"Carl Cohen, a left-wing philosophy professor at the University of Michigan who had long fought for civil rights and individual liberty, strongly believed that racial justice can only be attained in a society that is color-blind and that does not operate on the basis of quotas related to race, gender, religion or ethnicity. These beliefs lead Cohen to become a strong opponent of affirmative action in higher education, a battle that divided him from his normal allies on the left and that was waged in part at the university with which Cohen has been associated for over 50 years. In this book he tells the story of how he came to be a strong opponent of affirmative action in university admissions policies and the battles he fought at Michigan"--</p> <p>""No state. shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." So says the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution, a document held dear by Carl Cohen, a professor of philosophy and longtime champion of civil liberties who has devoted</p>

most of his adult life to the University of Michigan. So when Cohen discovered, after encountering some resistance, how his school, in its admirable wish to increase minority enrollment, was actually practicing a form of racial discrimination--calling it "affirmative action"--he found himself at odds with his longtime allies and colleagues in an effort to defend the equal treatment of the races at his university. In *A Conflict of Principles* Cohen tells the story of what happened at Michigan, how racial preferences were devised and implemented there, and what was at stake in the heated and divisive controversy that ensued. He gives voice to the judicious and seldom heard liberal argument against affirmative action in college admission policies. In the early 1970s, as a member of the Board of Directors of the American Civil Liberties Union, Cohen vigorously supported programs devised to encourage the recruitment of minorities in colleges, and in private employment. But some of these efforts gave deliberate preference to blacks and Hispanics seeking university admission, and this Cohen recognized as a form of racism, however well-meaning. In his book he recounts the fortunes of contested affirmative action programs as they made their way through the legal system to the Supreme Court, beginning with *DeFunis v. Odegaard* (1974) at the University of Washington Law School, then *Bakke v. Regents of the University of California* (1978) at the Medical School on the UC Davis campus, and culminating at the University of Michigan in the landmark cases of *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003). He recounts his role in the initiation of the Michigan cases, explaining the many arguments against racial preferences in college admissions. He presents a principled case for the resultant amendment to the Michigan constitution, of which he was a prominent advocate, which prohibited preference by race in public employment and public contracting, as well as in public education. An eminently readable personal, consistently fair-minded account of the principles and politics that come into play in the struggles over affirmative action, *A Conflict of Principles* is a deeply thoughtful and thought-provoking contribution to our national conversation about race"--

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