

A wild ride through the rock-bottom underbelly of intravenous drug addiction to the hallowed halls of justice and a hopeful story of how one woman forged her own personal path to recovery

# *From Junkie to Judge:*

*One Woman's Triumph Over Trauma and Addiction*

By Mary Beth O'Connor

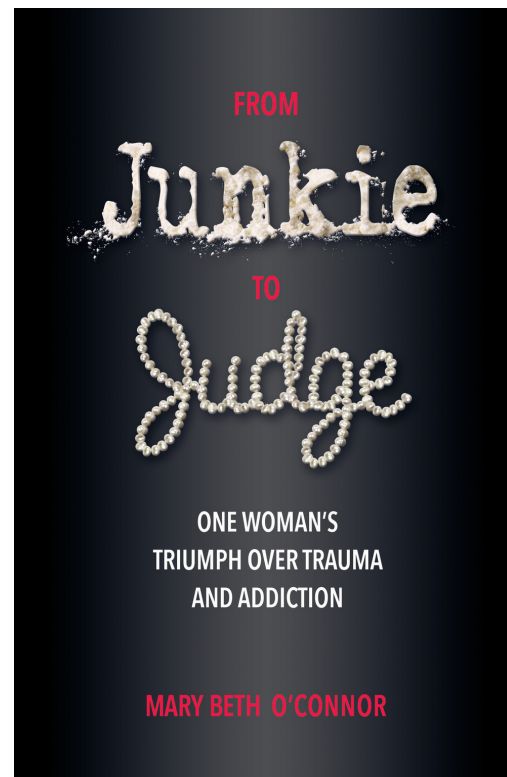
**From a junkie addicted to methamphetamines to a federal judge, Mary Beth O'Connor's memoir shares her inspiring journey from rock bottom to resilience as she forged a personal path to recovery from trauma and addiction.**

Within a week of being born, O'Connor was dropped off at a convent. When she was brought into her home, her mother focused on her own needs and desires, ignoring her young child. When she was 9, her stepfather kicked her in the stomach for spilling milk, beat her when she didn't clean a plate to his satisfaction, and molested her when she was 12. A few months later, with her first sip of Boone's Farm Strawberry Hill wine, her life changed. She felt euphoric and relaxed. So she got drunk as often as possible, adding pot, then pills, then acid. At 16, she found her drug of choice--methamphetamine. With her first snort, she experienced true joy for the first time. When this high was no longer sufficient, she turned to the needle and shot up.

During the next 16 years, she descended into a severe meth addiction, working her way down the corporate ladder, destroying relationships, and shattering her physical and emotional well-being.

At 32, she entered rehab, where she was ordered to submit to the 12-steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. As an atheist, turning her will and her life over to a higher power was not an option, and she refused to agree she was powerless. Told to comply or fail, she bravely created a new path that combined ideas from multiple programs and even incorporated some AA concepts.

Clean and sober now for nearly three decades, she is proof that anyone can find their sober self, their best self, no matter how far they have fallen. Along with her inspiring story, she offers a comprehensive checklist of questions for readers to ask themselves as they take the brave steps toward recovery, offering a powerful blueprint for personal change.



- **Title:** *From Junkie to Judge: One Woman's Triumph Over Trauma and Addiction*
- **Author:** Mary Beth O'Connor
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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary Beth O'Connor has been sober since 1994. She has also been in recovery from abuse, trauma, and anxiety. Six years into her recovery, Mary Beth attended Berkeley Law. She worked at a large firm, then litigated class actions for the federal government. In 2014, she was appointed a federal administrative law judge, which position she held until 2020.

Mary Beth is a director, secretary, and founding investor for She Recovers Foundation and a director for LifeRing Secular Recovery. She regularly speaks about multiple paths to recovery, to groups such as Women for Sobriety.

Mary Beth's op-ed, "I Beat Addiction Without God," where she described combining ideas from several secular programs to create a robust recovery foundation, appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*.



## ADVANCE PRAISE

**"In this harrowing, yet affirming, memoir, O'Connor shares her traumatic tale in page-turning prose. Recommended."** - *Library Journal*

**"Judge O'Connor casts an unflinching gaze over the past to explore the factors that contributed to her demise into drugs, abusive relationships and self-harm, and the resources that helped her build an empowered life. Harrowing and hopeful, her story assures readers that recovery is possible."**

— Jean McCarthy, podcast host of The Bubble Hour, author of the Unpickled series

**"A riveting memoir about a harrowing childhood and the deep abyss of drug addiction—followed by an inspiring story of recovery and a practical guide to building an individual recovery plan—no higher power required."**

— Mary M. French, administrative law judge, retired

**"From Junkie to Judge is an essential addition to addiction and recovery literature. Mary Beth's remarkable and gripping story smashes stereotypes about professionals and drug use. An avowed atheist, she also gives hope to those who've been told recovery requires faith."**

— Lisa F. Smith, author of *Girl Walks Out of a Bar: A Memoir* and co-host of Recovery Rocks podcast

**"What a wonderful example of the possibilities that are inside us all! This is a deeply relatable story of childhood pain that is transformed through the trials of addiction and recovery. This compelling account of triumph over adversity speaks to the challenges we all face and the hope of what is possible once we do the work of healing the past. As a person in long term recovery, I found From Junkie to Judge to be a valuable resource for those considering a life free of addictions."**

— Arlina Allen, One Day at a Time podcast host

**"From Junkie to Judge is a story of hard-won grace, and a remarkable tenacity to persevere. Mary Beth narrates an extraordinary journey of transcendence and advocacy. We are so fortunate to have her record, and this guide to recovery—and recovering well—that finds witness in her overcoming adversity, becoming oneself, and blazing the trail for others to follow."**

— John Evans, author of *Young Widower: A Memoir* and Stanford University lecturer

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