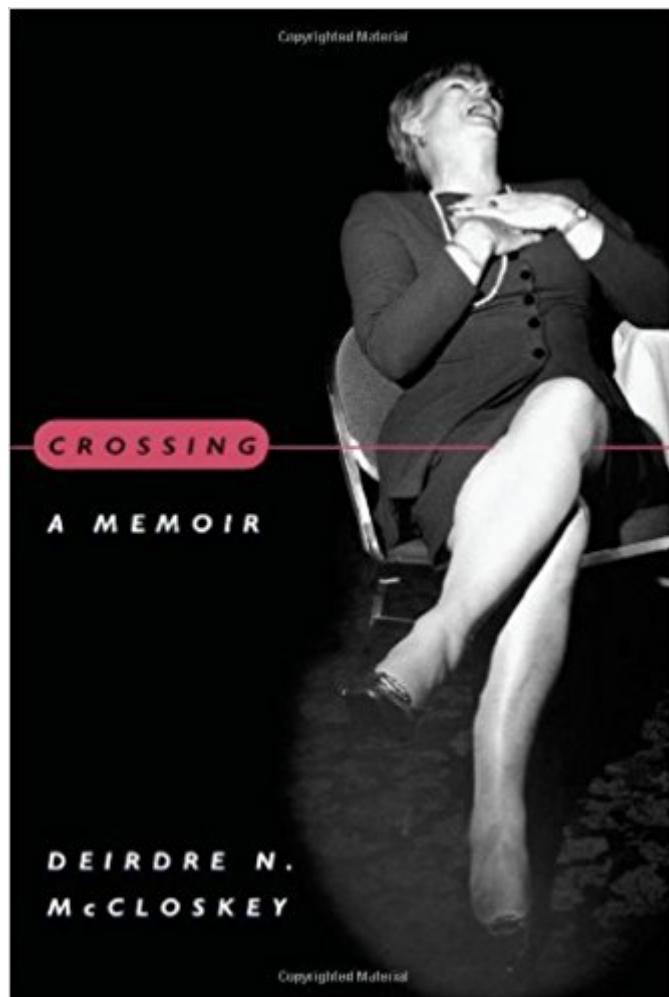


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# Crossing: A Memoir



## **Synopsis**

We have read the stories of those who have "crossed" lines of race and class and culture. But few have written of crossingâ "completely and entirelyâ "the gender line. Crossing is the story of Deirdre McCloskey (formerly Donald), once a golden boy of conservative economics and a child of 1950s and 1960s privilege, and her dramatic and poignant journey to becoming a woman. McCloskey's account of her painstaking efforts to learn to "be a woman" unearth fundamental questions about gender and identity, and hatreds and anxieties, revealing surprising answers.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This fascinating memoir chronicles Deirdre McCloskey's transformation from Donald McCloskey, an economist at the University of Iowa and married father of two, into the woman he finally accepted he had always wanted to be. McCloskey had been dressing in women's clothes since he was 11, but after his daughter went to college in 1994, the 52-year-old man grew increasingly aware that he was more than "just a heterosexual crossdresser." As he moved toward the decision to become a transsexual, his wife reacted angrily, and his sister tried twice to have him declared insane. The passages detailing McCloskey's ordeal within the psychiatric and legal establishment are as gripping as a topnotch thriller. But the memoir's deeper interest lies in the author's reflections on the nature of gender and identity. Donald was a macho academic who dominated every discussion, viewing conversation as an exercise in one-upmanship. As he surgically altered his appearance and began to take estrogen on the road to "The Operation," he found himself relating to people in a

more conventionally female way: listening to others, considering feelings. "The hormones are working, he thought at first. Or was it merely that the real person could now stand up?... Biology or core identity?" There are no final answers to such questions, but McCloskey poses them with sensitivity and insight. --Wendy Smith

Transsexuality has fascinated mainstream readers since 1953, when former U.S. serviceman George Jorgensen went to Sweden and, to banner headlines, returned as Christine. Since then, there has been a string of notable memoirs of gender crossing, including Geoff Brown's sincere *I Want What I Want* (1966), Jan Morris's meditative *Conundrum* (1974) and Holly Woodlawn's campy *A Low Life in High Heels* (1994). McCloskey's own odyssey from Donald to Deirdre is closest to noted journalist Morris's, in that it charts the life change of a highly regarded public figure. McCloskey is a world-famous conservative economist who finds fulfillment as a woman after four decades of living as a man. McCloskey forthrightly describes her upper-middle-class youth in Boston, her early and lifelong interest in cross-dressing, her education and eventual success as an academic and her marriage and children. In her late 40s, McCloskey decided that she was not simply a heterosexual cross-dresser but a transsexual and decided to undergo a series of operations to become an anatomical woman. Her memoir effectively details the pain involved: a bitter divorce, insurance companies' refusal to cover surgeries and her sister's repeated attempts to block the process legally. McCloskey's proclivity to jump around in time, her tendency to disrupt the flow of her story with social and political digressions and the constant placing of additional thoughts and ideas in bold text throughout the narrative distract from her story. But her courage nevertheless shines through. (Nov.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

A very interesting story. I loved the use of "crossing" as a metaphor for crossing from one culture/gender to another. Told from a unique, largely third person perspective. It occasionally includes some first person thought quotes, like, "just a part time cross dresser". Yup, nothing to see here, move along. Uh huh.,

It is both an amazing memoir about a truly extraordinary human being as well as an interesting source of information regarding prejudices in our society. Furthermore it is a story about someone trying to be their true self in despite of rejection by loved ones.

I've read a few of her economic history books which are excellent. This is a memoir not professional

research work. It's very personal, less objective but provides great insight into the motivations and consequences of making the decision to cross. She is a unique and remarkable person with unique and remarkable insight on people and the history of how the world works at least for the past 300 years. I will continue to read her forth coming books.

Gives good insight into the transgender phenomenon. Every personal story is different and this memoir doesn't necessarily follow the stereotypical transsexual narrative.

Excellent information.

A fascinating book. Perhaps as fascinating as the story of her transition from Donald to Deirdre are her observations on the essence of what it means to be a woman.

Book arrived in condition as describer!

As a woman, I was stunned at the degree of Deirdre's commitment -- time, money, painful electrolysis -- set against the loss of children and a monster sister who put her on a psych ward, twice! It's good to see her pleasure in female friendship, even on small stuff, but so much interest in hair and make-up?? Not so much. A path-breaking economist, before and after the change. Looking backwards, maybe the interest in rhetoric [my first acquaintance] and virtue might have given a hint of a female mind??

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