



THE NOTORIOUS “RBG”

# RUTH BADER GINSBURG

Presented by:

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# BIOGRAPHY

Born Joan Ruth Bader, on March 15th 1933 in Brooklyn, New York.

Died on September 18, 2020 in Washington, D.C. Pancreatic Cancer



- Born, Joan Ruth Bader, on March 15th, 1933, in Brooklyn, New York to Jewish immigrant parents, she was the second of two daughters, the first passing when she was a baby.
- Grew up in a low-income, working - class neighborhood.
- Her mother was a major influence in her life and taught her the the value of independence and a good education. She had not attended college herself but had worked tirelessly in the garment industry to pay her brothers tuition, a selfless act that greatly impressed Ginsburg.
- Her mother died of cancer just before Ginsburg's high school graduation.
- Attended Cornell University in Ithaca, New York on a full scholarship from 1950 - 1954 earning a Bachelor's Degree in Government, finishing FIRST in her class.
- She met Martin "Marty" Ginsburg in her first semester and married him after graduation. Her first child, Jane Carol Ginsburg was born in 1955; shortly after her husband was drafted into the military for two years.



- At age 22 she entered Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she learned to balance life as a mother and law student.
- She was one of only 9 women alongside 500 men. She was chastised for taking space of qualified men but pushed on.
- Became the FIRST female member of the prestigious *Harvard Law Review*
- Her husband developed cancer, which required extensive treatment. Ginsburg tended to her ill husband, cared for her young child and attended law school. She took class notes for her husband wrote his final paper all while tending to her own course work. He made a full recovery, graduated on time with honours and got a job in New York
- Later transferring to Columbia Law School in New York City, Ginsburg was elected to the schools Law review and graduated in 1959 FIRST in her class
- She was the FIRST woman ever to serve on two law reviews both at Harvard and Columbia.



<https://www.biography.com/news/ruth-bader-ginsburg-husband-marty-love-story>

- Despite her legal accomplishments, Ginsburg still faced gender discrimination seeking employment and found it difficult to find work.
- 1960's - Ginsburg worked for the Columbia Law School Project on International Procedure, learned Swedish and co-authored a book. Her work in Sweden greatly influenced her perspective on gender equality.
- Ginsburg became a professor at Rutgers Law School and Columbia Law School, becoming their FIRST female tenured professor.
- 1970's - Acted as general counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), where she argued over 300 gender discrimination cases, 6 before the Supreme Court, winning all but one.
- Co-founded the ACLU's Women's Rights Project, the FIRST law journal to focus on women's rights.



<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/09/harvard-community-reflects-on-the-life-achievements-of-ruth-bader-ginsburg/?fbclid=IwAR2Sjjsx9z9BxAAZZRhXICRB4X8HeOAs17fccxVHJ1ONWdnla3HCCwS3Pii>



- 1980 - Appointed to the Court of Appeals for District of Columbia by President Jimmy Carter
- 1993 - Appointed to the Supreme Court by President Bill Clinton
- First Jewish woman to serve on Supreme court and second woman.
- Until recently the most senior and longest serving Supreme Court justice, serving 27 years.



# Accomplishments and Contributions

**Ginsburg was often described as the “legal architect” of the women’s liberation movement. She fought fiercely and tirelessly, winning cases for more than half a century. Her affirmative action and legal onslaught, as she poignantly noted, have benefited many women. She secured landmark decisions advancing rights of:**

- Women, LGBTQ, People of Colour
- Environmental Protection
- Health care and Disability rights
- Independence of government research agencies such as: CDC, FDA, EPA

**Ginsburg also helped build equality within society** forging a more inclusive education system and better governance on issues of climate change, clean air and water.

The legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg goes far beyond what she achieved in court; Her personal and profound challenges, her quest for social justice and her **unrelenting resilience are a remarkable remembrance**. Her struggles fueled her determination, **“I wasn’t going to sit in the corner and cry”** she once said.

**“Ginsburg’s refusal to crumble in a heap of defeat is a defining and inspiring part of her legacy”** - Harvard Gazette





**FIGHT**

for the things that  
**YOU CARE ABOUT,**  
**BUT DO IT IN A WAY**  
that will lead  
others to join you.

~ Ruth Bader Ginsburg

FRANK  
2018

# Landmark Law

Ginsburg believed that the law was gender-blind and everyone is entitled to equal rights. She was considered part of the Supreme Court's moderate-liberal bloc with a strong voice in favor of gender equality, the rights of workers and the separation of church and state. Many of her cases hinged on the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause, which states that “people shall be equally protected by the U.S. laws.” With a barrage of smaller cases, she chipped away at discriminatory laws.

1971 - Reed v. Reed, A minor had died, both mother and father applied to be administrator of estate. Though the mother applied first, the father was automatically approved due to Idaho statute “males must be preferred to females”. Relying on the 14th amendment, Ginsburg argued that this violated the Equal Protections Act. Unanimously struck down by Supreme court and **first time the Court had applied the Equal Protection to law that discriminated based on gender.**

1996 - United States v. Virginia, the state supported Virginia Military Institute **could not refuse to admit women.**

1999 - Won The American Bar Associations Thurgood Marshall Award for her **contributions to gender equality and civil rights.**

2015 - King v. Burwell, Upheld the 2010 Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). One of six justices to uphold the critical decision which allows the federal government to provide **subsidies to Americans who purchase health care.** A major victory for President Barack Obama and made the Act difficult to undo.

2015 - Awarded the Radcliffe Medal - **Harvard's highest honour.**

2015 - Obergefell v. Hodges, made **same-sex marriage legal in all 50 states.**

2018 - Sessions v. Dimaya, Struck down a provision of the **Immigration and Nationality Act** that allowed the deportation of any foreign national convicted of a “crime of violence”.

“Women belong in  
all places where  
decisions are being  
made.”

- Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg



# I Dissent.

Ginsburg was known for her outspokenness and her dissenting opinions which often led to sweeping governmental policy changes. Throughout her career she concluded her infamous dissents with **“I dissent” rather than the conventional “I respectfully dissent”** which she considered to be unnecessary and a disingenuous nicety. **Several cases of note are listed below:**

**2000** - One of Ginsburg’s most noteworthy dissents, she **argued against the decision to block Florida’s recount of its presidential-election ballots**, which effectively installed George W. Bush as president. “No credible interpretation of the US constitution could use impracticality as a basis for over-ruling the Florida Supreme Court’s decision to block the recount of votes.”

**2007** - *Gonzales v. Carhart*, upheld the federal Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act. Ginsburg criticised judgement as “alarming” arguing that it “cannot be understood as anything other than an effort to chip away at a right (**the right of women to choose to have an abortion**) declared again and again by this Court”

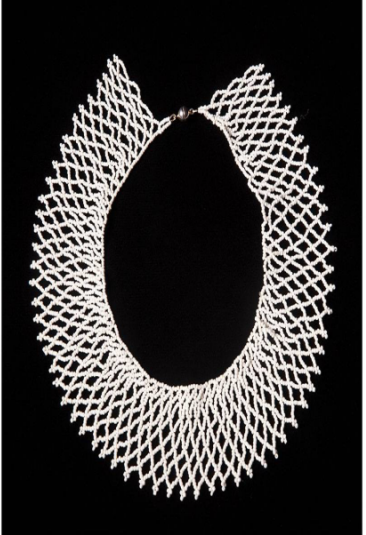
**2007** - *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company*, Ginsburg criticised that a woman could not bring a federal civil suit against her employer for having paid her less than it had paid men on a technicality of 180 days (the plaintiff did not become aware of her right to file suit until after the filing period had passed). To amend the gender wage gap, **The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act** was later signed in 2009 by President Obama as his first bill signed into law when he took office.

**2013**- *Shelby County v. Holder*, Conservative majority struck down as unconstitutional the Voting Rights ACT (VRA) of 1965, requiring states and local jurisdictions to obtain “preclearance” from federal Justice Department of any proposed changes to voting laws or procedures. Ginsburg’s dissent declared **“hubris” of majority’s “demolition of the VRA”** and “throwing out preclearance when it has worked and is continuing to work to stop discriminatory change is like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet”

**2014** - *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.* The decision recognised the right of for profit corporations to refuse on ‘religious grounds’ to comply with the Affordable Care Act’s requirement that employers pay for coverage of certain contraceptive drugs and devices in their employees health insurance plans. Ginsburg declared this **“falters at each step of its analysis” ... “that commercial enterprises can opt out of any law .... they judge incompatible with their sincerely held religious beliefs”**



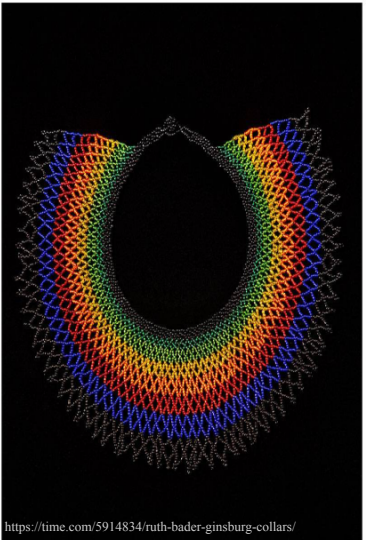
“Dissent Collar”



# The Infamous Collars

“Her collars were her weapon”

“My mother told me two things constantly. One was to be a lady, and the other was to be independent.”





### **The Original**

This is the jabot (lacy ruffle) she wore when she first took seat on the bench in 1993. She later branched out to more ornate “collars”



### **The Favorite**

This is her “favorite” collar that she acquired in Cape town, South Africa. She appeared with it in many events including President Barack Obama’s state of the union 2012, her 20th anniversary on the bench and in a number of photo sessions.



### **Majority Opinions**

She wore this collar when announcing an opinion for the court, “...not only is the design fun and colorful, it holds deep sentimental value, making it perfect for court rulings that I agree with”



### **Back in Business**

She wore this gold bib collar that resembled wings on her first appearance back from a few weeks off she took when she fractured her ribs in November 2018. The collar showed that no injury would stop her from rising to the occasion and performing her duty.

Ginsburg endured several health scares after reaching the bench: Surgery for colon cancer, lung cancer and pancreatic cancer.

Her Husband died in 2010, also of a recurrence of cancer. She returned to work the following day saying “it’s what he would have wanted”.

In July 2020, she began chemotherapy treatment for a recurrence of cancer on her liver. By September 2020, it had progressed and she died of complications with metastatic pancreatic cancer.

Her dying wish was that her replacement not be chosen “ until a new president is installed” in regards to then president Donald Trump (He did not comply). She had garnered criticisms for not retiring sooner under President Obama when a more liberal candidate would’ve been selected.

She chose to fight until the very end, so long as she was able to perform her job “full steam” she would remain on the bench.

Upon her death, she lied in repose at the Supreme Court, giving the public a chance to pay their respects.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg became the FIRST woman to lie in state in the Capitol, a final of many firsts for this fierce female.



<https://www.pennlive.com/galleries/E3JOKZZBVNB35FHBOEQCM2PFA/>

RIP RBG

## Fun Facts

During the Obama Administration (2009-17) Ginsberg's outspokenness garnered her new attention and became known as a progressive and feminist folk hero.

Her nickname "Notorious RBG" came about after her stinging dissent in *Shelby v. Holder*, the 2013 decision that gutted the Voting Rights Act of 1965, capturing the imagination of a new generation. She inspired some second-year law students at New York University who created a Tumblr blog entitled "Notorious R.B.G." which is a play on the stage name of American rapper Christopher Wallace, "Notorious B.I.G."

Popularity and status have inspired Opera's, biopics, fashion, Halloween costumes, and even a praying mantis has been named in her honour (*Ilomantis ginsburgae*).



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