

CT Opinions

Quote of the week

"Women will have achieved true equality when men share with them the responsibility of bringing up the next generation."

— RUTH BADER GINSBURG



Illustration by Lauren Johnson

Tea Time with Tagwa

RBG ARGUED THAT WOMEN NEEDED EQUALITY, AND SCOTUS LISTENED

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Tea timers, when I think of revolution and progress in the Supreme Court, I think about one woman: Ruth Bader Ginsburg. An icon and shepherd for gender equality, the passing of former Supreme Court Justice Ginsburg is devastating.

On Sept. 18, Ginsburg passed away due to complications related to metastatic pancreatic cancer. Nominated in 1993 by former President Bill Clinton, she served a long and respectable tenure on the court.

Ginsburg delivered progressive votes on an array of controversial subjects and ushered a wave of liberalism that our country direly needed.

As a woman, she was an inspiration to many. She served on the highest and most prestigious court in the nation, completely debunking stereotypes that a woman is too emotional for the position. She took firm stances on a woman's right to an abortion and reigned in the legalization of same-sex marriage.

Most importantly, Ginsburg was a pioneer in the fight for equality. In her early days as an attorney, she argued case after case against sexual discrimination.

When a mother wanted the right to her dead son's estate, it was Ginsburg who helped Sally Reed get that. In *Reed v. Reed*, Ginsburg argued that an Idaho law was discriminatory against women because it unquestionably appointed the father to his son's estate. Thanks to

Ginsburg's tenacity and comprehension, the court voted against the state law.

For the first time in more than 100 years, the court struck down a state law on the basis that it discriminated against women in violation of the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause.

Ginsburg directed the American Civil Liberties Union's Women's Rights Project in 1972. The project took on hundreds of cases, ranging from education to reproductive rights to prisons and military involvement.

In a time where a woman was nothing more than a second thought, Ginsburg made it her priority and mission to bring justice to women across the nation.

It impressed me that Ginsburg seemed to find equality in everything.

In *Duren v. Missouri*, Ginsburg argued against a Missouri law that made jury duty mandatory for men, yet optional for women.

To many people, this was strange. Why would a woman fight for something that men did not want? Jury duty has always been viewed as a drag, so it was confusing that Ginsburg rallied so hard to make it mandatory for women.

However, I understood it. She reasoned that optional jury duty for women weakened their stance for equality. She argued that the law devalued the contributions of female citizens.

In *Frontiero v. Richardson*, U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Sharron Frontiero fought for a dependent's allowance for her husband. Ginsburg argued — in front of the same court she would later find herself sitting on — that men could be financially dependent on their wives, and that the federal law was unconstitutionally discriminatory.

This case was Ginsburg's defining moment. She stood in front of uninterested men and fought to convince them that sex-based discrimination was an actual problem in our nation. She had to draw from her own trauma of discrimination to enlighten these men — all in the name of equality.

While she was a liberal justice, there is no denying that Ginsburg completed her role eloquently. She dissented in *Bush v. Gore*, clarifying the confusion surrounding Democratic candidate Al Gore's loss and former President George W. Bush's victory. Her opinions focused on constitutionality instead of potential political gain. By favoring a Republican candidate, she set a standard for seeing the bigger picture: democracy and fairness.

Ginsburg also worked well with conservative fellow justices. Former Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and Ginsburg shared a beautiful friendship. Scalia was notably one of the more conservative justices and did not share similar voting habits as Ginsburg.

Party alignment aside, she was a memorable justice and an icon.

While respecting and honoring the actions and legacy of Ginsburg are important, I can't help but wonder: What's next?

I cannot imagine the idea of President Donald Trump nominating yet another Supreme Court justice. I think appointing Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh — a man who was accused of raping and disrespecting women — was enough toxic white masculinity to last me a lifetime.

The day after Ginsburg died, the president took to Twitter and demanded the selection of the next justice be done "without delay."

I'm sorry, but I don't remember such urgency when former Scalia died and the Republican party blocked former President Barack Obama from making a nomination. Out of respect for Ginsburg and her wish to not be replaced until a new president is elected, we should wait for the November election results.

Without Ginsburg, the court is filled with six men and only two women. While President Trump has assured the nation he would nominate a female justice, nobody can live up to the work and success of Ginsburg.

Ginsburg has been an inspiration to this nation. She has been a pioneer in a multitude of ways. Supreme Court justice. Author. Attorney. Columbia Law School alumna. Trailblazer. Without Ginsburg, the feminist movement would not be where it is today. And that's the tea.

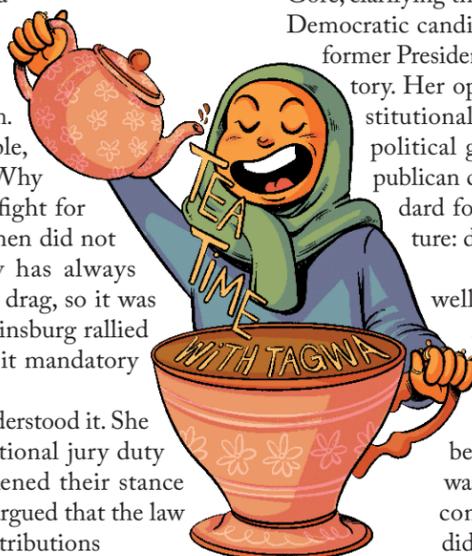


Illustration by Karly Andersen