

PUBLICATION

Baker's Dozen: Remembrances of RBG

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For this issue's Baker's Dozen, we asked our associates, "How has Justice Ginsburg influenced you? What does Justice Ginsburg's legacy mean to you?"

1. In 2015, when asked what advice she would give young women today, Ruth Bader Ginsburg replied, "Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you." RBG fought for women's rights, constantly advocating for the advancement of women in many fields of human endeavor. As a woman, and specifically a woman of color, it is my duty to carry on this fight. It is my duty to continue advancing the ball for my gender and race until we, collectively, reach a point where equity is not the exception, but the expectation. Thanks for paving the way, RBG.

— *Janelle E. Alleyne*

2. The passing of "The Notorious R.B.G." is an incredible loss. Unknown to many, she candidly embraced "The Notorious R.B.G." moniker – a play on rapper Biggie Smalls' Notorious B.I.G. nickname. In her words, the comparison "seems altogether natural." As a supporter of both born and bred Brooklyn, New Yorkers, I believe RBG's body of work, like Biggie's, will furnish us all with "[Life After Death](#)." She was a brilliant legal mind, a trailblazer for women in the legal field, and a complete inspiration (especially for me). Could you imagine tying for first place in your law school and being turned down at ALL 12 law firms you applied to? Despite facing adversity in other areas of life, I've never had to face this type of adversity because women like her paved the way. So, here's to strong women. May we be them, may we know them, may we raise them.

— *Tanisha Pinkins, Associate, Atlanta*

3. Justice Ginsburg was unarguably one of the greatest legal minds in modern history, but she was also a mother and a wife, and someone who had every door slammed in her face as she was trying to begin her legal career. She believed in herself and she surrounded herself with people who believed in her. She took advantage of every opportunity that peeked from behind the curtain. Even in death, she is a living example of the life changing value of determination, persistence, and positivity. She is the inspiration of every person who has been left out by our society, but still dared to live her dream.

— *Stefanie Doyle, Associate, Baltimore and Washington, D.C.*

4. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, The Notorious R.B.G., will always be remembered for her accomplishments for gender equality. But it was her friendship with Justice Antonin Scalia that truly demonstrates her legacy for me. Despite their clearly conflicting ideologies, the two were dear friends. Justice Ginsburg once said of Justice Scalia, "I disagree with most of what he said, but I love the way he said it." In a society that continues to become more and more polarized, Justice Ginsburg was, as usual, a shining example of how we should all aspire to interact with one another despite our differences.

– *Elizabeth Liner, Associate, Baton Rouge*

5. Growing up, there were no attorneys in my family, let alone any female judges in my community. I always joke that Elle Woods was the first popularized female attorney figure, but thankfully I had the opportunity to work with then-Pennsylvania's First Lady and current U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit Senior Judge, Marjorie "Midge" Rendell on civic engagement endeavors and learn about Justice Ginsburg. As both an employment litigator and female, RBG's expansive legacy is felt every day. Not only was she a pop icon, she was a role model – especially to our group of female associates. We would exchange RBG-themed valentines and gifts. We even coordinated a summer associate event to see the documentary, *RBG*, and attend a Q&A discussion with a local filmmaking nonprofit. As Fatima Goss Graves, president of the National Women's Law Center, said in a statement earlier this month, "Ginsburg's ethos was greater than just the law. She was an icon and a living symbol of a north star, so we must unite and do for her what she did for us – fight for what is right." The Birmingham associates will greatly miss Justice Ginsburg.



– *Daisy C. F. Karlson, Associate, Birmingham*

6. Justice Ginsburg will always be a shining example in my mind of how to embrace the power we have as advocates and use that power for the benefit and good of others. She taught so many how to have confidence in their beliefs and to fight for what is just – all the while doing so with grace and respect for others. I admire Justice Ginsburg's friendship with Justice Scalia with whom she often disagreed, but always treated with civility, decency, and class. And as the father of a daughter, I am so grateful for Justice Ginsburg's trailblazing legacy – not only for her lifetime of legal accomplishments, but also for her role in empowering and inspiring the next generation.

– *Clay Johnson, Associate, Birmingham*

7. Justice Ginsburg's passion for the law was inspiring. Talking about the first time that she appeared before the U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ginsburg said she "looked up at the bench and thought, 'Here are the most important judges in the country, maybe the world, and they have to listen to me. I have a captive audience.'" She used the law as a tool to champion the equal dignity of all people. To me, Justice Ginsburg is a powerful reminder of how important this work is, and how fortunate we are to take part in it.

– *Allie Weiss, Chattanooga*

8. Justice Ginsburg is known simply as "Ruth" in our home. She is so woven into the fabric of our lives that I'm not sure what our family would look like without her. Because of Ruth, being a woman didn't keep me from going to law school. Because of Ruth, being pregnant didn't keep me out of the courtroom. Because of Ruth, my husband considers my work as important as his. And because of Ruth, my daughter has no hesitation in saying she will be a lawyer and a judge one day. All of this because of Ruth.

– *Kimberly A. Chojnacki, Associate, Houston*

9. It's difficult to overstate the impact Justice Ginsburg's tenacity, dedication, and clear-eyed resolve – all perfectly contained in her elegant, tiny frame – have had on my career. When I entered private practice with a four-month-old daughter, I found encouragement in her experience as a young mother in law school and her perspective that each role could be a "respite from the other." When I cut my teeth as a "baby litigator," advocating for my clients (and often myself) against more experienced opposing counsel, I found a model to emulate in her respectful but formidable approach with her colleagues and advice to fight for the things that matter "in a way that will lead others to join you." And when the stress of practicing law has made me bone-tired, I have continually found renewed energy in her tireless example and the ideal she set to strive to be someone who "used whatever talent she had to do her work to the very best of her ability." No one could say she did any less, and for that, and for all she accomplished, I am forever grateful.

– *Blythe K. Lollar, Associate, Jackson*

10. For me, Justice Ginsburg was a role model, not only because she was the second woman and the first Jewish female to serve on the Supreme Court, but because of her lifelong fight for equality, gender, and otherwise. I think we can see the effects of Justice Ginsburg's work in our everyday lives as a result of her significant impact on the law, feminism, and even in pop culture as The Notorious R.B.G. At her core, Justice Ginsburg was a trailblazer who paved the way for female attorneys, and I'm thankful for her legacy in normalizing the idea that women can do whatever and be whoever they want, without boundaries.

– *Shayna Giles, Associate, Memphis*

11. "I ask no favor for my sex. All I ask of our brethren is that they take their feet off our necks." Deliberate. Decisive. Determined. Justice Ginsburg empowered women and ultimately, the world, with an unwavering quest for equity. In a society that has too long made equity synonymous with equality, Justice Ginsburg has been a master architect in the pursuit of justice to level the playing fields for every American while showing us that the sky is merely just another ceiling that can be broken.

– *Victoria E. Young, Associate, Memphis*

12. "I dissent." To me, those two words have so much meaning when viewed through the life of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Justice Ginsburg faced every obstacle and roadblock that life could – and did – throw at her with the same style and tenacity that made her such an outstanding role model, advocate, and Supreme Court Justice. When she encountered those roadblocks, she "dissented," improved the way for others to come behind her, and tackled the next hurdle. She understood and embodied the idea that it is not always the loudest voice which makes the most progress, but the voice that opens others to accepting a better way of thinking and living. Even when she did not stand in the majority on an issue, she used her formidable logic and reasoning to outline a path for future generations to pursue in the name of progress and change. In the charged political

climate we currently live in, her close friendship with Justice Scalia stands as a strong reminder that individuals with fundamentally opposed ideologies can co-exist and better each other. Above all else, her strength, tenacity, and perseverance allowed her to become a role model for how future generations should deal with adversity. She is the reminder that, when life tries to slow you down, tell you no, or overwhelm you, a person can dissent with their circumstance, do their pushups, and then make a better way forward for those who come behind them.

– *Paul Madden, Associate, Nashville*

13. Justice Ginsburg was a mother and a wife when she began her legal career, and she faced prejudice, bias, and adversity for those exact reasons. She was neither discouraged nor deterred. Instead, she chose to flourish and utilize her talents to advance principles of social justice and equality at the highest level. She successfully challenged outdated views of women (and their abilities and needs), indirectly catalyzed diversity and inclusion campaigns, and set in motion entirely new conversations on issues like implicit bias that have significantly influenced me and my life as an attorney. Her lasting impact on women's rights cannot be overstated, and her legacy is a constant reminder to me, as a new mom, that I can have it all.

– *Lauren Brink Adams, Associate, New Orleans*