December 1853

"Was invited to sit in the Chief Justice's seat. As I took the place, I involuntarily exclaimed: 'Who knows, but this chair may one day be occupied by a woman.' The brethren laughed heartily."

—abolitionist feminist Sarah Grimké



July 19–20, 1848

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal."

—Declaration of Sentiments at Seneca Falls

January 1, 1897: A woman abducted from her home at gunpoint wasn't raped, the Supreme Court says in *Mills v. United States*, because for an act to be rape, "more force is necessary."

1820 1830 1840 1850 1860 1870 1880 1890 1900

1828: Supreme Court justices bunk together, until one lady ruins it for everyone by insisting on living with her husband.



July 28, 1868: The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, recognizing the citizenship rights of ex-slaves, promises equal protection under the law, but makes it clear only men's voting rights count.

April 15, 1873: The Supreme Court allows Illinois to block Myra Bradwell from practicing law just because she's a woman. In a 2011 reenactment of the case, RBG rules for Bradwell.

"The paramount destiny and mission of women are to fulfill the noble and benign offices of wife and mother. This is the law of the Creator."

—Justice Joseph P. Bradley, in a concurrence in *Bradwell v. Illinois*

"The method of communication between the Creator and the jurist is never disclosed."

—RBG, brief to the Supreme Court, 1972



August 18, 1920: The Nineteenth Amendment recognizes women's right to vote, though violent barriers remain for women of color.

"When you say you have 'no available graduates' whom you could recommend for appointment as my clerk, do you include women? It is possible I may decide to take one, if I can find one who is absolutely first-rate."
—Justice William O. Douglas, 1944

June 10, 1932: Martin D. Ginsburg, future husband of RBG, is born.



1911: Lucille Lomen becomes the first female clerk at the Supreme Court.

1900 1910 1920 1930

1903: Celia Amster, RBG's mother, is born.





March 15, 1933: Joan Ruth Bader, nicknamed Kiki, is born in Brooklyn.

June 1950: Celia Bader dies one day before her daughter's high school graduation.



Fall 1950: RBG enrolls at Cornell.

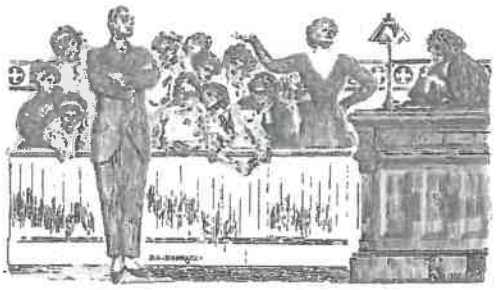


May 17, 1954: In *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka,* the Supreme Court reverses itself on "separate but equal."

June 1954: Ruth Bader graduates from Cornell. She marries Marty at his family's home.

July 21, 1955: Jane Ginsburg is born.

November 20, 1961: The Supreme Court signs off on making jury service optional because "woman is still regarded as the center of home and family life."



"NOT GUILTY!"—ON ACCOUNT OF HIS GOOD LOOKS

December 1962: Civil rights activist Pauli Murray proposes using the Fourteenth Amendment to argue against sexist laws.

1940 1950 1960

1953: Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* is published in the United States.

1956: RBG enrolls in Harvard Law School, one of only nine women in her class. In her second year, Marty is diagnosed with cancer.

"The study of law was unusual for women of my generation. For most girls growing up in the 1940s, the most important degree was not your B.A., but your M.R.S."

—RBG



1958: Marty graduates from Harvard Law School. RBG transfers to Columbia University School of Law.



1959: RBG graduates from Columbia Law at the top of her class but can barely get a job.

1963: RBG becomes the second woman to teach full-time at Rutgers School of Law.



RUTH B. GINSBURG
Assistant Professor of Law
B.A. Cornell Univ.
LL.B. Columbia Univ.

"[The dean explained] it was only fair to pay me modestly, because my husband had a very good job."

—RBG



June 10, 1963: President John F. Kennedy signs the Equal Pay Act, which bans discrimination in pay on the basis of sex. It's full of loopholes.

June 7, 1965: The Supreme Court finds that Connecticut's birth control ban violates a "right to marital privacy."





June 13, 1967: President Johnson nominates famed civil rights litigator Thurgood Marshall (and RBG inspiration) to be the first black justice of the Supreme Court.

1960

September 8, 1963: RBG's son, James Ginsburg, is born.

July 2, 1964: President Lyndon Johnson signs into law the Civil Rights Act, which contains a last-minute ban on sex discrimination in employment.

1965: RBG publishes her first book, *Civil Procedure in Sweden,* with Anders Bruzelius.

Spring 1970: RBG teaches her first class on women and the law.



"That's why when the Supreme Court faces a tricky question of Swedish civil procedure, we always go straight to Justice Ginsburg."

—Justice Elena Kagan



"Unless [sex discrimination is banned], the white women of this country would be drastically discriminated against in favor of a Negro woman."

--Representative Glenn Andrews of Alabama

"The Department of Justice, I am sure, doesn't have any male secretaries. . . . They hire women secretaries because they are better."

—Chief Justice Warren Burger at oral argument for *Phillips v. Martin-Marietta*, December 9, 1970

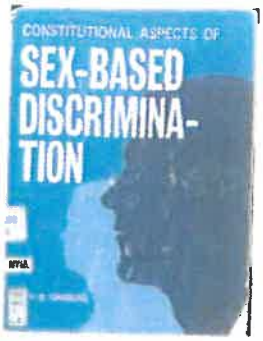
June 25, 1971: RBG writes her first brief to the Supreme Court in *Reed v. Reed*.



January 1972: RBG becomes the first female tenured professor at Columbia Law School.

June 23, 1972: Richard Nixon signs into law Title IX, which bans sex discrimination in education.

1974: RBG publishes the first-ever casebook on sex discrimination. She insists that the authors' names be listed alphabetically, even though doing so means the one man's name will come first.



1970 — 1980

Spring 1972: RBG cofounds the Women's Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union.



January 22, 1973: In *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, the Supreme Court makes abortion legal throughout the United States. RBG is uneasy about how the court got there, and how fast.



"This right of privacy . . . is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy."

—Justice Harry Blackmun, *Roe v. Wade*

April 11, 1980: President Jimmy Carter nominates RBG to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.





June 14, 1993: President Bill Clinton nominates RBG to be an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court.

May 13, 1994: President Clinton nominates Stephen Breyer to replace Harry Blackmun as associate justice.

June 26, 1996: RBG writes the majority opinion in the landmark case *United States v. Virginia,* requiring the Virginia Military Institute to admit women.

1980 1990

August 19, 1981: President Ronald Reagan nominates Sandra Day O'Connor to be the first woman on the Supreme Court. Male justices who had made noises over the years about resigning if a woman ever joined their ranks stay put.



Summer 1999: RBG is diagnosed with colorectal cancer. She does not miss a day on the bench.

December 12, 2000: RBG is one of four dissenters in *Bush v. Gore,* which effectively declares George W. Bush president.

"The wisdom of the court's decision to intervene and the wisdom of its ultimate determination await history's judgment."

—RBG, *Bush v. Gore* dissent

July 1, 2005: Sandra Day O'Connor announces her retirement. President George W. Bush nominates D.C. Circuit judge John Roberts as her replacement.

"To my sorrow, I am now what [O'Connor] was her first twelve years on the court—the lone woman."

—RBG

September 2005: Chief Justice Rehnquist, whom RBG would continue to call "my chief," dies. President Bush switches Roberts's nomination to chief justice and nominates Appeals Court Judge Samuel Alito to replace O'Connor.

May 29, 2007: RBG reads her dissent from the bench in the sex discrimination case of Lilly Ledbetter.

May 26, 2009: President Obama nominates Federal Appeals Court Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court. She is the first Latina justice.

"I like the idea that we're all over the bench. It says women are here to stay."

—RBG

2000 2010

April 18, 2007: RBG launches her era of furious dissent with the abortion case *Gonzales v. Carhart.*

"The Court . . . pretends that its decision protects women."

—RBG, summarizing her dissent from the bench

February 5, 2009: RBG has surgery to remove a cancerous tumor.

February 23, 2009: RBG is back on the bench.

February 24, 2009: RBG attends President Obama's first speech to Congress.

"I wanted people to see that the Supreme Court isn't all male."

—RBG



November 4, 2008: Barack Obama is elected the first black president.

"I don't know. I hear that Justice Ginsburg has been working on her jump shot."

—Barack Obama, after being invited to play basketball at the nation's highest court



June 27, 2010: Marty Ginsburg dies after complications from metastatic cancer.

March 27, 2013

"There's full marriage and then there's sort of skim milk marriage."

—RBG at oral argument in *United States v. Windsor*, the successful challenge to the Defense of Marriage Act

June 25, 2013: As RBG dissents in a case gutting the Voting Rights Act, Notorious R.B.G., the Tumblr, is born.

June 30, 2014: In *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*, the Supreme Court allows corporations to refuse contraceptive coverage to women based on the employer's religious belief.

2010 2020

May 10, 2010: President Obama nominates Solicitor General Elena Kagan to the Supreme Court.



August 2013: RBG becomes the first Supreme Court justice to officiate a same-sex wedding.

February 28, 2015: RBG becomes a recurring character on *Saturday Night Live*'s Weekend Update, issuing "Ginsburns" between dance moves.

February 12, 2015: RBG admits she was not "100 percent sober" at the State of the Union.



"I think it will be one more statement that people who love each other and want to live together should be able to enjoy the blessings and the strife in the marriage relationship."

—RBG on performing same-sex weddings