Ruth Bader Ginsburg is a legal icon. In more than four decades as a lawyer, professor, appellate judge, and associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Ginsburg has influenced the law and society in real and permanent ways.

This book chronicles and evaluates the remarkable achievements Ruth Bader Ginsburg has made over the past half-century. Including chapters written by prominent court watchers and leading scholars from law, political science, and history, it offers diverse perspectives on an array of doctrinal areas and on different time periods in Ginsburg's career. Together, these perspectives document the impressive — and continuing — legacy of one of the most important figures in modern law.

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The Legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Edited by

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Now in her eighties, Ruth Bader Ginsburg has spent more than twenty years as an associate justice on the U.S. Supreme Court, thirteen years as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, and seventeen years as law professor. During her teaching years, she was also general counsel for the ACLU’s Women’s Rights Project, which she co-founded. Her impact on the law over the last half-century cannot be overstated. Yet no book on Ginsburg’s legacy exists. This book will be the first to fill that gaping void.

As the second woman appointed to the Supreme Court, Justice Ginsburg’s jurisprudence is perhaps best known for influencing the law on women’s rights. In particular, her landmark opinion for the Court in *United States v. Virginia* established heightened scrutiny for gender segregation in state schools, and her dissenting opinion in *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.* helped motivate Congress to pass the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, which abrogated the Court’s cramped interpretation of federal gender-discrimination laws. In 1937, a Gallup poll asked, “Would you vote for a woman presidential candidate?” and received only 33 percent of answers in the affirmative. In 2012, the percentage had risen to 95 percent. We’ve come a long way, baby, and Ginsburg’s monumental efforts as a justice have contributed to those social changes.

Her victories on the Court have come at the tail end of a much larger project of how the law respects gender equality that Ginsburg and others began in earnest more than forty years ago. As the chief litigator for the ACLU’s Women’s Rights Project, Ginsburg litigated and won several pathmarking (as she might call them) decisions at the Supreme Court, each of which became another wave eroding the sands of antiquated notions of a woman’s place in society and in the eyes of the law. When Ginsburg was done, few doubted that the tide had turned; those waves would continue until the erosion had made the shore flat – an even playing field.
Preface

Ginsburg is no one-trick pony. As the resident proceduralist on the Court, her opinions have fundamentally affected matters of federal procedure and jurisdiction. She also has written notable opinions in the fields of federalism, international law, criminal procedure, racial equality, abortion, congressional power, and even tax. In some ways, her impact in these areas is even more important to celebrate, if only because it has been overshadowed by her triumphs in gender equality.

The person behind the bench is often seen as a source of contradiction. Diminutive yet forceful. Passionate yet rational. Strategic yet direct. Dear friend to her ideological antithesis, Justice Antonin Scalia. A daughter, student, professor, lawyer, judge, wife, and mother, she is a lover of music, opera, and fine company. Details of her character and personal life will be memorialized in biographies to come, but the way they intersect with her legal accomplishments is its own story.

This book chronicles and evaluates the remarkable achievements Ruth Bader Ginsburg has made over the last half-century. The chapters, written by prominent court watchers and leading scholars from law, political science, and history, offer diverse perspectives on an array of doctrinal areas and different time periods in Ginsburg’s career. Together, these perspectives document the impressive legacy of one of the most important figures in modern law.
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Acknowledgments usually start with the phrase “this book would not be possible without.” For this book, there’s really only one true end to that phrase, and it is an obvious one: Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Her remarkable life and career have made producing this book both easy and a pleasure.