



Free to Be Ruth Bader Ginsburg: The Story of Women and Law

Teri Kanefield

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"Readers will emerge with a great deal of respect for a fiercely independent woman who battled sexism to reach the pinnacle of her profession" (Publishers Weekly).

Before taking her place as the second woman on the Supreme Court of the United States, Ruth Bader Ginsburg quietly led a revolution and forever changed life in America for both men and women. Reserved and quiet, she didn't set out to be a trailblazer, but there was something in her way: the law. Hundreds of years of legal precedent, a line of devastating Supreme Court cases, and countless statutes depriving women of equal citizenship and keeping them from full participation in the legal and political process.

Mixing social and legal history with a moving and intimate biography, award-winning author Teri Kanefield captures a turbulent era and tells the story of how Ruth Bader Ginsburg defied expectations to become one of the most influential and powerful women in America.

"We hear many voices in this wonderfully engaging biography of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and come away with a far richer understanding of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and of what the rise of feminism has meant for all of us, whatever our gender, whatever our politics."

--Kathleen Vanden Heuvel, Law Library Director, Adjunct Professor of Law, University of California, Berkeley School of Law

"An absorbing personal biography of Ruth Bader Ginsburg that is also equal parts legal history and political philosophy. Like Ginsburg herself, Kanefield's narrative is precise, candid, logical, yet filled with humor and irony. She shows the reader the warmth and humility behind a serious legal mind. Free to Be Ruth Bader Ginsburg will appeal to a wide range of readers and is a valuable addition to all types of libraries."

--Suzy Szasz Palmer, Past President, Virginia Library Association

"An engrossing biography of Ruth Bader Ginsburg that doubles as a primer on how America's champions for gender equality pressed their cause in the courts. Recommended for every law student, lawyer, and lay reader looking for an authoritative yet readable treatment of how the law shapes women's lives, and vice-versa."

--Kathleen Morris, Associate Professor of Law, Golden Gate Law School

"Free to Be is a richly detailed biography offering fascinating insights into the groundbreaking career of Ruth Bader Ginsberg and at the same time charting for readers a thorough and engaging history of the law of sex discrimination and equal protection jurisprudence that she helped to shape. Kanefield's book is a must read, not only for fans of RBG but for anyone interested in a more complete understanding of the evolution of women's rights and legal status in the U.S."

--Sharmilla Lodhia, Associate Professor, Women's and Gender Studies, Santa Clara University

"Free to Be is a must read for those who love history, want to know more about the women's rights movement, or have an interest in modern politics and culture. I highly recommend it!"

--Kristi Jensen, Librarian, University of Minnesota

Free to Be Ruth Bader Ginsburg: The Story of Women and Law Details

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From Reader Review Free to Be Ruth Bader Ginsburg: The Story of Women and Law for online ebook

Larisha says

This is a great book for anyone who wants to understand how far Womens' rights have come in this country and yet how far we still need to go.

It is also a great love story on how Ruth and Marty, her husband, believed in each other, supported each other, and truly allowed each to be the person they needed to be with love and compassion.

P Dreadful says

Received a free copy from StoryCartel in return for an honest review

Free to Be Ruth Bader Ginsburg by Teri Kanefield, which primarily focusses on Ginsberg's life and her gender discrimination cases, was an enlightening read.

The arbitrary distinctions made by courts of 1800s and early 1900s were appalling. For instance, one court declared that "The natural and proper timidity and delicacy which belongs to the female sex evidently unfits it for many of the occupations of civil life... 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." Moreover, married women were legally considered to be their husband's properties so they had to ask their husband's permission for even entering into a contract. Such kind of an attitude, known as "romantic paternalism", stifled the liberties of women and was essentially unconstitutional.

See full review here: <https://mostlywaffle.wordpress.com/20...>

Jill says

This is a well-rounded look at the life and career of Ruth Bader Ginsburg that begins with historical background on her family and women and career in general up through her career as a Chief Justice. What stood out are the relationships between family, friends, and colleagues. There are snippets of key events, encounters, cases, and ruling that provide context for Ginsberg's development as a lawyer and judge. Kanefield supports her biography on Justice Ginsberg with over three hundred footnotes. The extensive bibliography covers hearings, interviews, speeches, oral arguments, essays, court briefs, cases, books, periodicals, and other sources. The electronic book includes links to web sites when available. There is also a summary of applicable law and glossary of legal terms.

Maureen says

RBG is a fascinating woman, and her background shows how strong and determined she is. Even for me, this

got a little too deep in the weeds on certain cases she argued and decided. Her husband, Martin, was a star!

Amy Simper says

Very readable and informative. This should be suggested reading for anyone with lack of appreciation for human rights, and the slow moving dynamics of our legal system. Ginsberg is a formidable woman who is one of my heroes.

Andrea Eckelman says

This is a fantastic read that anyone with an interest in RBG or in trailblazing women should read. Ginsberg's life is so interesting, and this is a fascinating look at how women in the law were overlooked for so long.

Donna says

Captivating story about a remarkable and fascinating woman. Kanefield did an excellent job of integrating aspects of Ginsburg's personal life with the challenges she faced in her professional life. A smooth writing style coupled with an ability to describe legal aspects in layman's terms made for a compelling read. Enjoyed it immensely.

Steve says

Teri Kanefield's "Free to be Ruth Bader Ginsberg: The Story of Women and Law" is so much more than the title suggests.

American history began as and has been a constant quest for freedom. From multiple forms of oppression. The Union (of the original 13 states) was far from perfect. Hence the Preamble to the Constitution, "We the People... in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility..."

Even now, 240 years after declaring independence from England, we have so much work to do to perfect the Union. Our nation's stories often revolve around heroes. Kanefield offers a dynamic, delightful and compelling telling of the story of a diminutive giant of a heroine, one of the most important contemporary figures in the ongoing quest for a Just, domestically Tranquil society.

Ruth Bader Ginsberg personifies, regarding civil rights law, particularly on gender and racial issues, Teddy Roosevelt's oft quoted adage, "Speak softly, but carry a big stick." Ginsberg's stick, for more than fifty years, has been the practice of law, including as a law school professor, appeals court judge for DC circuit and Supreme Court Justice.

Setting the stage by illustrating with female law pioneer Myra Bradwell's experience, Kanefield weaves together a wonderful patchwork of case law and life experiences on how Ginsberg patiently but persistently knocked down immense walls precluding women and men from opportunities to lead fulfilling lives

according to how each sees fit. Bradwell, in 1869 passed the Illinois Bar exam with high honors but was denied a license to practice because “a woman had no legal existence apart from her husband.”

The barriers to women's – and because rights can be a double-edged sword, certain men's – rights have been challenged many times since. In 2016, barriers still do exist.

For example, as a practicing attorney and law professor, Ginsberg took on the case of Stephen Wiesenfeld, whose wife died in childbirth. Even though his wife was the primary breadwinner in the family, Social Security denied the man survivor benefits which he needed in order to raise his newborn son. A law student at the time, Sandra Grayson, said “working alongside Ruth was like fighting an uphill battle that you might actually win.”

Kanefield relates that (according to legal scholar Herma Hill Kay) “Quite literally, it was her [Ginsberg's] voice, raised in oral argument and reflected in the drafting of briefs, that shattered old stereotypes and opened new opportunities for both sexes. She built, and persuaded the Court to adopt, a new constitutional framework for analyzing the achievement of equality for women and men. In doing so, Ginsburg in large part created the intellectual foundations of the present law of sex discrimination.”

Justice Ginsberg's mark on American law will be indelible because the potential for American women to make great contributions to society is vast and runs deep.

For me, this is personal. My daughter is the primary breadwinner in her family and my granddaughter could one day follow in the footsteps of a human rights pioneer like Ruth Bader Ginsberg.

Free to be Ruth Bader Ginsberg, by Teri Kanefield in my opinion is a must read.

Pat says

This book was so much more than the story of RBG's amazing life, and what a life she has led so far! It is the history of 20/21st America, emphasizing the struggles to identify and address injustices. You owe it to yourself to read this!

Gmaharriet says

What a delightful book! One would expect a biography of a Supreme Court Judge to be dry, especially when discussing legal cases. This is anything but dry. Written with humor, not only about her legal career, but also with a sub-text about her love of family, especially her wonderful marriage to her late husband, Marty. Highly recommended!

Kelly Stuart says

I thoroughly enjoyed "Free to Be Ruth..." and learned a lot about her and her path to the Supreme Court. The coverage of the ACLU cases was especially enlightening to me, revealing how Justice Ginsburg often takes unexpected positions defending men in order to protect the rights of women. Brilliant! The tidbits about

Ginsburg's private life (her insomniac habits, her active exercise routines, and her cooking habits) also drew me into this book. All-in-all this was a quick, enjoyable peek into the professional mind and home life of a most remarkable woman.

Kathy says

I enjoy biographies but I didn't really expect a biography of a Supreme Court Justice to be so interesting and entertaining. It's not only that, it is enlightening, inspiring, educational and a darn good read. This book intersperses tidbits about Ruth's early years along with Justice Ginsburg's service as well as other women trailblazers. Hat's off to Ms. Kanefield for a wonderful book and Kudos to Justice Ginsburg for a wonderful life!

Therese says

This is an accessible biography about the life of Justice Ginsburg and her role in the development of gender discrimination law. It is an inspirational read especially during the current political climate and the #MeToo movement.

Tammy Durm says

I have the greatest respect for RBG. What a life she has had.

Kudos to her late husband Marty for his unwavering (and at the time especially unconventional) support throughout her life. She couldn't have done it without him.

Thank you RBG for your unselfish dedication, your courageous voice, and for the way you can cut through the crap and communicate your thoughts with laser focus and logic. You changed the world - with courtesy, restraint, collegiality, and without raising your voice. Well done.

Marilyn says

Wow what a strong woman who made such a difference for the lives of women in America. I loved the early years of her life, how she handled it all, breaking the glass ceilings one at a time.

This strength carried her and still does today, who needs to retire at age 65 or 70 or 80 or even 90. However, will this latest health scare change things again in the Supreme Court, only time will tell. Not a 5 star for me, just too much talk about different SC cases that did not pertain to Ginsberg. Otherwise a wonderful insightful biography.
