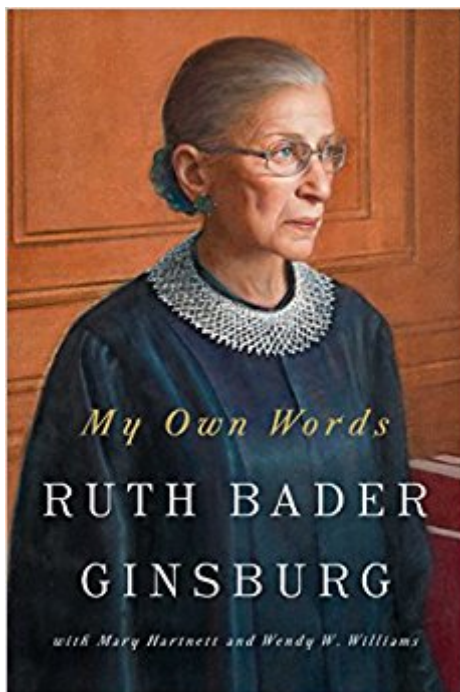


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My Own Words



Synopsis

The first book from Ruth Bader Ginsburg since becoming a Supreme Court Justice in 1993—•a witty, engaging, serious, and playful collection of writings and speeches from the woman who has had a powerful and enduring influence on law, women’s rights, and popular culture. *My Own Words* offers Justice Ginsburg on wide-ranging topics, including gender equality, the workways of the Supreme Court, being Jewish, law and lawyers in opera, and the value of looking beyond US shores when interpreting the US Constitution. Throughout her life Justice Ginsburg has been (and continues to be) a prolific writer and public speaker. This book’s sampling is selected by Justice Ginsburg and her authorized biographers Mary Hartnett and Wendy W. Williams. Justice Ginsburg has written an introduction to the book, and Hartnett and Williams introduce each chapter, giving biographical context and quotes gleaned from hundreds of interviews they have conducted. This is a fascinating glimpse into the life of one of America’s most influential women.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Ginsburg has used her words to promote equality and stem discrimination as well as to express gratitude and to celebrate others who did so before and with her. . . . exceedingly readable, thanks to Ginsburg’s characteristically precise and unembellished prose.”
(Newsweek) “At the heart of *My Own Words* is an abiding commitment to civility, to institutional norms, to the infinite possibilities of dialogue and cooperation, and to the now-dubious

notion that protecting outsiders and others is a core American value. . . . Above all, always in her own methodical way, what shines through these essays is Ruth Bader Ginsburg, feminist, who truly could not conceive of a world without meaningful gender parity in the 1970s . . . as a collection of thoughtful writing about perseverance and community and the law, it is a tonic to the current national discourse. (The Washington Post) "A comprehensive look inside her brilliantly analytical, entertainingly wry mind, revealing the fascinating life of one of our generation's most influential voices in both law and public opinion." (Harper's Bazaar) "A sort of greatest hits album....devotees will no doubt be delighted to have some 300 pages of Ginsburg all in one place. (Associated Press)" "The Notorious RBG makes it even harder to ponder her eventual absence with a look at gender inequality, the Supreme Court's inner workings, and the too-little-remarked-upon intersections of law and opera." (New York Magazine) "What emerges is not a portrait of a take-no-prisoners advocate but a strategic legal plotter who understands how to bring her audience around to her point of view." (USA Today) "The selection showcases her astonishing intellectual range, from law and lawyers in opera, to tributes to Louis Brandeis, William Rehnquist, and Gloria Steinem, to the significance and form of dissenting opinions. The book also includes a number of revealing speeches Ginsburg has given about her historical heroines . . . Hartnett and Williams's brief biographical introductions to each section show how much Ginsburg has heeded it." (The New Republic) "Readers will gain unprecedented insight into the inner workings of the Supreme Court and garner unparalleled appreciation for one of its finest minds. (Booklist) "A collection of her writings that will offer even more. . . . Justice Ginsburg's impact not only on the legal profession but also on young women contemplating such a career path is undeniable. (Library Journal) "Much recommended as a Christmas gift for smart, ambitious nieces. And nephews, too." (The Guardian) "[My Own Words] reveals a more personal side of the unlikely icon who has inspired operas, tattoos, T-shirts and millions of young women who never knew that the law was once reserved for male lawyers." (CNN.COM) "An excellent introduction to this Renaissance woman . . . cogent, well-reasoned, and accessible . . . Even those who have followed the octogenarian jurist over her long and distinguished tenure on the Supreme Court will find plenty of less expected items to relish . . . At a time of bitter political partisanship, her respect and affection for colleagues with different views, as displayed in posthumous tributes to fellow justices Rehnquist and Scalia, are very welcome. The variety of subjects is impressive, and Ginsburg's gift for concision enables her to discuss them in enough detail to engage interest while leaving the reader wanting more. (Publishers Weekly) "Not surprisingly, she serves as an exemplar,

and her work toward gender equality is well represented in this superb book. . . . required reading
 . . . invaluable. (Library Journal (starred review))
“No sitting Supreme Court justice has the adoring fan base Ruth Bader Ginsburg has. . . . the amicus briefs, and, later, bench announcements included here are recognizably impressive, even to civilians, in their lucidity, calm persuasiveness, and avoidance of jargon on one side and distracting captiousness on the other. The more informal writings in *My Own Words* share those qualities while adding charm.”
(Bookforum)

Born in 1933, Ruth Bader Ginsburg attended the Harvard and Columbia University Law Schools, and taught law at Rutgers and Columbia. During the 1970s, while teaching at Columbia, she was instrumental in launching the ACLU’s Women’s Rights Project, and became the leading advocate in the Supreme Court for gender equality. She was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit in 1980 and to the US Supreme Court by President Bill Clinton in 1993. In 2009 *Forbes* named Ginsburg among the 100 Most Powerful Women, *Glamour* named her one of their 1993 Women of the Year and in 2012 presented her with their Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2015 *Time* listed her as an Icon in the *Time* 100, and in 2016 *Fortune* named her one of the World’s Greatest Leaders. Mary Hartnett is an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown Law, focusing on international women’s human rights. Wendy W. Williams is Professor Emerita at Georgetown Law, best known for her work in the area of gender and law, especially concerning issues of work and family.

We have recently been treated to a host of books and articles on Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Forthcoming is an authorized biography by the two Georgetown Law professor editors of this collection of Ginsburg writing, as well as one by Teri Kanefield. In my opinion, no matter how many bios and articles you read about the Justice, your understanding of this remarkable lawyer and judge will be incomplete if you don’t also review this collection of material authored by the Justice, spanning her life since the eighth grade. I really felt I came closest to understanding both the professional and personal Ginsburg from this book. The book has many merits. It affords an insight into how the Supreme Court operates and decides cases; provides us with highly personal and quite moving profiles of Chief Justice Rehnquist and her great friend--and adversary--Justice Scalia; reminds us of her pioneering role as the champion of women’s rights as author, professor, and deadly litigator; and not least, helps us understand the private Ginsburg through several appearances by her late husband, tax lawyer Marty Ginsburg. Ginsburg speaks for herself in 36 or

so pieces, skillfully tied together and placed in context by the two editors. The book is divided into five sections. For example, "Early Years" surprised me with a Ginsburg essay written while an undergrad at Cornell on the evils of wiretapping, reflecting the influence of her mentor, the constitutional scholar Robert E. Cushman. In Part Two, "Tributes to Waypavers and Pathmarkers," Ginsburg reveals a remarkable talent for writing short profiles of prominent legal and judicial figures, including Belva Lockwood, Louis Brandeis, Judah P. Benjamin (a fascinating figure; look him up), Breyer, Cardozo, and especially Sandra Day O'Connor. Nobody can pack more info into a short piece than Ginsburg. The central focus of her professional career as advocate and judge, gender equality, is the focus of Part Three. Symposium introductions; defense of the ERA; her bench announcement in the VMI case; and several summer presentations to summer law students abroad make up this section. One should never forget the impact her unceasing determination had in moving the whole idea of gender equality into the spotlight. Ironically, as is well known, she remains unhappy with the Roe opinion, preferring not to rest it upon privacy but upon straight equality grounds. Part IV has some interesting material on her role as a judge and appointment to the Court. The final section provides an insight into her views of judging and justice. She explains the Court's workways and why she is so dedicated to judicial independence. She defends effectively the role foreign legal concepts can play for the Justices--a hot item with Scalia, while being promoted by Breyer. She articulates the idea of "measured motions," which basically means don't go too far in an opinion in pushing a point. Most interesting, she explains her view of dissents and dissent announcements, an unusual practice in which she has recently engaged. Finally, she shares her most recent second circuit report on Supreme Court highlights for the 2015-16 term; she gives such reports each year and it is quite interesting to read her candid comments. One of the major reactions I came away with is how well she can write in no matter what format--a point quite obvious from her incisive opinions. The book runs some 370 pages, including chronology, helpful photos, notes and index. My only problem with the book is that the editors have chosen to relegate most notes (which I read religiously) to a webpage (see "A Note on Sources"). No matter how hard I tried, I could not locate these notes, and I am inclined to think such a separation of notes from text is not a good idea for it diminishes the ability to ingest the notes as you read. But the book itself is magnificent, whether you are a Ginsburg fan or not. At 83, this veteran of cancer flirtations, wars with Scalia, and many hard battles, has said she will remain on the Court as long as she meets her own stringent standards. For that, we can all be thankful.

RBG is my heroine so I definitely have a bias. She could write about brushing her teeth and I would

be enthralled. RBG is such a brilliant, accomplished individual. Such a role model. I enjoyed her personal stories, her insight and professional preparation and learning of her interests. I will be sad to see her leave the court so I hope she lives (and stays) forever!!

This is a collection of her speeches and writings. Each is introduced by her coauthor. The intros are often longer and more interesting than Judge Ginsburg's writings. Several of the speeches were delivered to more than one group. I managed to push through,

I truly appreciate how Bader Ginsburg has served her country. Her wisdom and judgements have helped us grow. Unfortunately, the editing and intentions of this book relied so heavily on the legal verbiage that we lost some of Ginsburg's sparkle.

I have great respect for Justice Ginsburg, however, this book was not at all what I expected, and not in a good way. It is not a typical memoir, it's basically a collection of her speeches, opinions, and articles.

Well written, RBG explains how she began her career in what was at the time a man's world. With kind praise for her husband's love and support, Ruth had a family and eventually became renowned member of the Supreme Court. The first part of the book moved quickly and was interesting, however the last part of the book was not as engaging to me and I skipped a few pages toward the end, honestly.

A good insight into one of our justice leaders. Every young woman should read and take to heart what she says and has done.

Every mother ought to introduce any daughters to this amazing lady, this book is a good start!

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