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U.S. SUPREME COURT CASES:

RUTH BADER GINSBURG

Ruth Bader Ginsburg briefed or argued virtually every major sex discrimination case before the Supreme Court in the 1970s. It is for this reason that she is often called the "Thurgood Marshall of the women's movement."

In six of these landmark cases, Ginsburg actually presented the oral argument to the Supreme Court; five times she prevailed. These victories are:

- Frontiero v. Richardson, 411 U.S. 677 (1973)

In this case, Ginsburg won for women serving in our armed forces equal benefits for their dependents. Prior law had been more generous about giving housing allowances and health care benefits to male servicemen and their dependents.

- Weinberger v. Wiesenfeld, 420 U.S. 636 (1975)

This case involved a provision of the Social Security Act that granted survivor benefits to a widow with minor children but not to a widower with minor children. The Court struck this down as discriminatory, rejecting the law's use of a gender-based generalization as insufficient to justify the denigration of the work performed by women.

- Edwards v. Healy, 421 U.S. 772 (1975)

This case involved a challenge to a Louisiana law that exempted women from jury service unless they wrote in declaring they wished to serve. The Supreme Court, after hearing oral argument in the case, sent it back to the district court without opinion. The Court vindicated Ginsburg's position in a companion case, Taylor v. Louisiana.

- Califano v. Goldfarb, 430 U.S. 199 (1977)

Like Weinberger, this case involved a sex-based difference in treatment of survivors under the Social Security Act: a widow automatically received survivors' benefits; a widower received such benefits only if he was getting more than half his support from his deceased wife. The Court struck this gender discrimination down.

- Duren v. Missouri, 439 U.S. 357 (1979)

This case involved a Missouri law that exempted women from jury service upon request. The Court struck this down as violating the Sixth Amendment entitlement of criminal defendants to a jury drawn from a fair cross section of the community.

FACT SHEET:

RUTH BADER GINSBURG

Judicial Record

- Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit. Appointed by President Jimmy Carter in 1980.
- Received American Bar Association's highest rating ("exceptionally well qualified") at the time of her appointment.
- In 1991, rated by American Lawyer magazine as a "First-Rate Centrist" candidate for the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Authored numerous books and articles on sex discrimination, constitutional law, and legal procedure.
- Wrote key opinions in areas of civil rights, freedoms of speech and religion, sex discrimination, and criminal law. (A full analysis is attached.) Known as consensus-builder on the D.C. Circuit.

Lawyer and Law Professor

- As head of the Women's Rights Project, briefed or argued virtually every major sex discrimination case before the Supreme Court in the 1970s.
- She personally presented oral argument in six of these Supreme Court cases -- and won five. (A list of these cases is attached.)
- Professor of Law at Columbia University School of Law, and Rutgers University Law School. Society of American Law Teachers, Outstanding Teacher Award (1979).

Personal History

- Born, 1933; Brooklyn, New York. Married to Martin Ginsburg in 1954. Two Children: Jane and James. Two grandchildren. Religion: Jewish.
- Graduated from Cornell University; attended Harvard Law School (where she was the first woman Editor of the Harvard Law Review) and Columbia University School of Law.