



Guest Editor's Introduction to Lessons from Ruth Bader Ginsburg

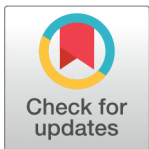
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Lauren M. Colley is an educator, self-taught baker, and solo mother to three equally amazing, demanding, and unique children. She is an advocate for social justice, national paid parental and family leave, and happier and healthier earth and world. Since 2019, she has been an Assistant Professor of Secondary Social Studies Education at the University of Cincinnati where her research focuses primarily on how students and teachers use and think about gender and feminism in the social studies curriculum and classroom. From 2015-2019, she worked as an Assistant Professor of Secondary Social Science Education at the University of Alabama. She earned her PhD in 2015 from the University of Kentucky (UK) where she worked as a Graduate Assistant to the C3 Framework and the New York Social Studies Toolkit Project. Prior to pursuing her doctorate, she earned a Master of Arts in History (2007, UK), a Master of Arts in Education (2008, UK), and taught high school social studies in Central Kentucky.



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It has been one year since the passing of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG) on September 18, 2020. Although she is remembered for her legacy of a jurisprudence committed to equity and her popular dissents, Justice Ginsburg became a symbol of feminism through her strength as a hard-working legal scholar, judge, wife, and mother. In this issue of the *Annals of Social Studies Education Research for Teachers*, the authors explore the complexity of the life of RBG and offer teachers insights into how to integrate the narrative of one of our nation's most-well known women into our social studies curriculum and teaching.

In her piece on the life of Justice Ginsburg, Justice Beverly McLachlin draws from her personal experience as a Supreme Court Justice in Canada and the interactions, both personal and professional, that she had with RBG. Justice McLachlin offers teachers a variety of

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lessons that can be learned through Justice Ginsburg's life that go beyond her legal dissents. These lessons are at the heart of social studies and what it means to be an informed citizen. By using these lessons, teachers would be able to connect RBG to other notable figures in our history and allow students to consider the various ways that citizenship can look.

Examining various picture book biographies of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Dr. Andrea Libresco details how teachers can use literature circles, and biographies of RBG, to allow even our youngest students opportunities to discuss ideas of multiple perspectives, citizen role models, feminism, activism, and social change. Libresco provides not only practical tips for teachers wanting to use literature circles in their classrooms, but also suggested books, such as *No truth without Ruth*, which allows students to focus more directly on Ginsburg's dissent in the *Lilly Ledbetter* case. By using these books and teaching strategies, Libresco explains that students work to corroborate evidence, explore ideas of being an agent of change, as well as ideas of bias and source accuracy.

In her article on the setting the record straight, Dr. Tiffany Mitchell Patterson explores the women that came before Ruth Bader Ginsburg, most notably, Pauli Murray, "queer, Black, intersectional feminist, civil rights activist, poet/writer, professor, legal scholar and first Black woman episcopal priest." Ginsburg, who named both Pauli Murray and Dorothy Kenyan in her famous brief for *Reed v. Reed*, noted the importance of the work by Murray, and as Dr. Mitchell Patterson argues, our curriculum should too. To teach the life of RBG means that teachers should also be centering the narratives of Black feminist activists such as Pauli Murray. Mitchell Patterson offers teachers insights into the legacy of Murray, the necessity of including a lens of intersectional feminism into social studies teaching, and the power of focusing beyond the individual and towards the collective.

Lastly, Dr. Mark Sulzer provides an in-depth analysis of the original and young adult adaptation of the book, *The Notorious RBG: The life and times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg*. In his comparative book review, Sulzer details the differences across the books and discusses how complex histories are often sanitized for our younger audiences. Sulzer suggests having students engage in this comparative work themselves, allowing for critical inquiry around a text's audience, perspective, and purpose.

Taken together, the articles in this issue represent not only the complexity of the life and legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, but the ways in which teachers and teacher educators must continue to fight to center narratives that allow students opportunities to question the power and agency of our historical actors. By using the life and jurisprudence of RBG as a lens, teachers can create powerful instruction that allows our students of all ages to investigate some of our largest enduring issues in social studies. Feminism, intersectionality, equality, discrimination, representation, activism, sexism, and civil rights can all be explored through an inquiry on the life of RBG, and I can't help but think, that's exactly what she would have wanted.