

Circling the Courthouse: A Ritual for RBG

There is a custom in many Jewish communities that at the end of shiva — the seven-day period of initial mourning following burial — mourners take a walk around the block to symbolically mark the end of an intensely inward time and begin a return to the world.

When someone is buried shortly before a holy day, shiva is cut short, so that the day is not observed with formal mourning. Given that Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's burial is just before the beginning of Sukkot, Friday, October 2 marks the day for this symbolic ritual shift in our mourning for the first Jewish woman to serve on the US Supreme Court.

Justice Ginsburg's dying wish was to keep her Supreme Court seat vacant until the inauguration of the next president. As we honor her wishes and her legacy, we mark the end of her shiva by walking back into the world--a world that demands that we fight for a fair and impartial judiciary. We walk to honor her legacy as a justice who worked tirelessly until her last days for women's rights, for reproductive rights, for LGBTQ+ rights, for voting rights and for justice and freedom.

Justice Ginsburg had a sign in her office bearing the famous injunction in the Torah (Deuteronomy 16:20): *Tzedek, tzedek, tirdof*, or "Justice, justice, you shall pursue." This commandment is situated in the context of verses imploring us to create a fair and impartial judicial system; our pursuit of a non-partisan judiciary is, in its essence, the pursuit of justice, and our holding fast to this standard honors the memory of a great judge and justice

Mourner's Kaddish

*Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba b'alma
di-v'ra chirutei, v'yamlich malchutei
b'chayeichon uvyomeichon uvchayeit d'chol beit
yisrael, ba'agala uvizman kariv, v'im'ru: Amen.*

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach l'alam ul'almei almaya.

*Yitbarach v'yishtabach, v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam
v'yitnaseh, v'yithadar v'yit'aleh v'yit'halal sh'mei
d'kud'sha, b'rich hu, l'eila min-kol-birchata v'shirata,
tushb'chata v'nechemata da'amiran b'alma, v'im'ru:
Amen.*

*Y'hei shlama raba min-sh'maya v'chayim aleinu v'al-
kol-yisrael, v'im'ru: Amen.*

*Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu
v'al kol-yisrael, v'al kol-yoshvei teivel v'imru: Amen.*

יהי זכרה מהפכה

May her memory be a revolution



Kaddish

Marge Piercy

This is an interpretive translation of the Kaddish.

*Look around us, search above us, below, behind.
We stand in a great web of being joined together.
Let us praise, let us love the life we are lent
passing through us in the body of [the people] Israel
and our own bodies, let's say amein.*

*Time flows through us like water.
The past and the dead speak through us.
We breathe our children's children, blessing.*

*Blessed is the earth from which we grow,
blessed the life we are lent,
blessed the ones who teach us,
blessed the ones we teach,
blessed is the word that cannot say the glory
that shines through us and remains to shine
flowing past distant suns on the way to forever.
Let's say amein.*

*Blessed is the light, blessed is the darkness
but blessed above all else is peace
which bears the fruits of knowledge
on strong branches, let's say amen.*

*Peace that bears joy into the world,
peace that enables love, peace over [the people]
Israel [and over the whole world]
everywhere, blessed and holy is peace, let's say
amein.*

Ruth's Revolution

Although we mourn the loss of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, her memory inspires us to action. Here are some suggestions for ways to honor RBG's legacy.

JOIN Ruth's Revolution to continue Justice Ginsburg's legacy by advocating for a fair, independent, and qualified judiciary. The website includes an opportunity to send condolences to RBG's family, information about why the federal courts matter, ways to take action, and more. Visit <https://courtsmatter.org>.

SIGN A Petition: NCJW is determined to respect RBG's dying wish that her seat on the court should not be filled until after Inauguration Day. Add your support by signing this petition urging the Senate to fulfill Justice Ginsburg's dying wish to hold the seat for the next president to fill. Visit <http://bit.ly/RBGRevolution> to sign the petition.

CALL Your Senators: Call Senators Durbin (202-224-2152) and Duckworth (202-224-2854):

Hello, my name is [x] and I'm calling from [city, state]. Given Judge Amy Coney Barrett's opposition to the Affordable Care Act, her nomination to a lifetime seat on the US Supreme Court threatens Americans' access to health care in the middle of the current global pandemic. I urge the Senate to instead focus on providing relief for millions of Americans who are still suffering, including the families and loved ones of the more than 200,000 people who have died, as well as the more than 20 million people who have lost their jobs. The Senate must follow Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's powerful example by putting the health and security of our nation and its people first and oppose the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett to a lifetime seat on the Supreme Court.

TEXT Your Senators: Just text RBG to 50409.

LEARN: Attend [Courts Matter to Reproductive Rights](#) on Tuesday, October 13 at noon to learn how Federal Courts affect our lives. Register at bit.ly/CMILweb6.

VOTE: Make your plan to vote now and encourage your family and friends to do the same. Text @NCJWvotes to 81010 for election updates and reminders.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1933–2020)

Nominated to the Supreme Court by President Bill Clinton in 1993, Ginsburg was noted for her liberal dissents and her longevity on the court. One of the primary aims of Ginsburg's career was advancing women's rights. One of only nine women in a law school class of about 500, Ginsburg had to fight for respect and status as a young woman lawyer. Ginsburg became a towering figure of the political left in later years, elevated to pop culture stardom and referred to as "The Notorious R.B.G.," a moniker lifted from rapper The Notorious B.I.G.

"[W]hen I'm sometimes asked when there will be enough [women on the Supreme Court] and I say 'When there are nine,' people are shocked. But there'd been nine men, and nobody's ever raised a question about that."

NCJW Chicago North Shore

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers & advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, & families & by safeguarding individual rights & freedoms. NCJW stands at the forefront of social change and our members are outspoken champions for progressive policies at the federal, state, & local levels. Over the years, NCJW's collective voice has changed the world for the better – improving the lives of women, children, & families in the US & Israel.

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Friday, October 2, 2020, Noon
Harms Woods, Skokie

Speakers:

- Debbie Vietinghoff,
NCJW Chicago North Shore President
- Jill Lexier,
NCJW Illinois State Policy Advocate
- Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg,
NCJW Scholar in Residence