

## Female U.S. Supreme Court Justices

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Three women currently serve on the U.S. Supreme Court: Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sonia Sotomayor, and Elena Kagan.

The first woman ever appointed to the Court, Sandra Day O'Connor, retired in January 2006 after serving as an Associate Supreme Court Justice for more than 24 years.

### Influence of Women in Courts

On the confirmation of Justice Kagan:

- “For nearly two centuries, there wasn’t a single woman on our nation’s highest court. When Elena takes her seat on that bench, for the first time in our history, there will be three women.” --President Barack Obama, August 5, 2010, [The White House Blog](#)
- "NOW eagerly anticipates three brilliant women justices individually and collectively making their mark on a Supreme Court long dominated by men, while making decisions that greatly impact the lives of everyday people." --NOW President Terry O'Neill, August 5, 2010, [press release](#)

On Sandra Day O'Connor:

- “The first woman to serve on the Supreme Court brought to the Conference table experience others did not possess: the experience of growing up female in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, of raising a family, of doing all manner of legal work--government service, private practice, successive successful candidacies for legislative and judicial office, leadership of her state's Senate, state court judicial service, first on a trial court, then on an appellate bench.” --Ruth Bader Ginsburg, *A Tribute to Justice Sandra Day O'Connor*, 119 HARV. L. REV. 1239, 1239 (2006). [HeinOnline](#) [UW Restricted](#)

Recent statistics on women in the law:

- 48% of law school graduates are women
- 45% of law firm associates are women
- Only 22% of all federal judges are women
- Only 26% of all state judges are women

Source: Center for Women in Government & Civil Society at the State University of New York at Albany, [Women in Federal and State-level Judgeships](#), Spring 2010.

## Articles

*The Female Factor: Will Three Women Really Change the Court?*, Newsweek, Sept. 6, 2010, at 19.

[LexisNexis Academic](#) [UW Restricted](#)

*Women Now One-Third of High Court*, Ft. Wayne J. Gazette (Ind.), Aug. 8, 2010. [Access World News](#) [uw Restricted](#)

*Judge Gender and the Voting Behavior of Justices on Two North American Supreme Courts*, 30 JUST. SYS. J. 265 (2009). [HeinOnline](#) [UW Restricted](#)

## The Nomination Process

[Article II, Section 2](#) of the U.S. Constitution states, in part: "[The President] shall have power, . . . , by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, . . . [to] appoint . . . judges of the Supreme Court . . . ."

See the Gallagher Law Library guide to [Supreme Court Nominations: The Nomination & Confirmation Process](#) for more information.

## Sandra Day O'Connor

Nominated by: Reagan

Sworn in on September 24, 1981

Retired from the Court on January 30, 2006

## Books:

All of these books are available at the Gallagher Law Library

- *Lazy B: Growing Up on a Cattle Ranch in the American Southwest*. [KF8745.O25 A35 2002](#) at Good Reads
- *The Majesty of the Law: Reflections of a Supreme Court Justice*. [KF8742 .O274 2003](#) at Good Reads
- *Not a Particularly Different Voice: The Jurisprudence of Sandra Day O'Connor*. [KF8745.O25 V36 1998](#) at Classified Stacks

For additional titles on Sandra Day O'Connor, search the Law Library catalog by subject: [O'Connor, Sandra Day, 1930-](#)

## Web Resources

Sandra Day O'Connor biography on [Oyez](#).

[Sandra Day O'Connor Project on the State of the Judiciary](#)

## Annotated Bibliography

*Justice Sandra Day O'Connor: A Selected Annotated Bibliography*, 57 CATH. U. L. REV. 1099 (2007-2009).

[HeinOnline](#) [UW Restricted](#)

## Recent quotes by retired Justice Sandra Day O'Connor:

- “The reason why judicial independence is so important is because there has to be a place where being right is more important than being popular, and where fairness trumps strength. That place in our country has been the courtroom; however, it can survive only so long as we keep out the worst of the political influences.” *Symposium: State Judicial Independence--A National Concern*, 33 SEATTLE U. L. REV. 559, 565 (2010). [HeinOnline](#) [UW Restricted](#)
- “I do not think that I can make a stronger argument than history has already made on behalf of an independent judiciary.” *The Essentials and Expendables of the Missouri Plan*, 74 MO. L. REV. 479, 483 (2009). [HeinOnline](#) [UW Restricted](#)

## Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Nominated by: Clinton

Sworn in on August 9, 1993

### Book

*Raising the Bar: Ruth Bader Ginsburg and the ACLU Women's Rights Project*. KF373.G565 C36 2003 at Classified Stacks, Gallagher Law Library

### Web Resources

*Nomination of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, to Be Associate Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States: Hearings before the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, One Hundred Third Congress, First Session ... July 20, 21, 22, and 23, 1993*. Available at [GPO Access](#).

Ruth Bader Ginsburg biography on [Oyez](#).

### Law Review Articles/Symposia

HeinOnline is a [UW Restricted](#) database.

*The Jurisprudence of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg: A Discussion of Fifteen Years on the U.S. Supreme Court*, 70 OHIO ST. L.J. 797(2009). [HeinOnline](#)

*Symposium: Celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Appointment to the Supreme Court of the United States*, 104 COLUM. L. REV. 1 (2004). [HeinOnline](#)

*The Supreme Court: A Place For Women*, 32 SW. U. L. REV. 189 (2003). [HeinOnline](#)

### Notable Quotes by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Upon the confirmation of another female Justice, Elena Kagan:

- “To me, it's one of the most exhilarating developments.” [LexisNexis Academic](#) [UW Restricted](#)
- “We are one-third of this court.” [Journal Gazette](#)

On the U.S. Constitution:

“Every constitution written since the end of World War II includes a provision that men and women are citizens of equal stature. Ours does not. I have three granddaughters. I’d like them to be able to take out their Constitution and say ‘here is a basic premise of our system, that men and women are persons of equal citizenship stature.’ But it’s not in there. We just have the equal protection clause, which everyone knows was not meant in the 1860s to change anything with regard to women’s status. Women didn’t get to vote until 1920.” -- Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Duke Law School’s “Great Lives in the Law” [interview](#), Jan. 31, 2005.

On becoming a Supreme Court Justice:

“I do think that being the second [female Supreme Court Justice] is wonderful, because it is a sign that being a woman in a place of importance is no longer extraordinary. It will become more and more natural.” 79 ABA J. 40, 43 (1993) [HeinOnline UW Restricted](#)

## **Sonia Sotomayor**

Nominated by: Obama

Sworn in on August 8, 2009

### **Books/Publications:**

*Sonia Sotomayor: The True American Dream.* [KF8745.S67 F45 2010](#) at Classified Stacks, Gallagher Law Library

*Judge Sonia Sotomayor: Analysis of Selected Opinions.* [KF8776 .H46 2009](#) at Classified Stacks, Gallagher Law Library, and [online](#)

*The Nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor: A Review of Second Circuit Decisions Relating to Reproductive Rights*, CRS Report No. [R40694](#), July 7, 2009.

### **Web Resources**

Library of Congress: Supreme Court Nominations, [Sonia Sotomayor](#) . Includes [Articles/Books By](#) | [Congressional Documents](#) | [Cases](#) | [Web Resources](#)

White House Blog: [The Investiture of Justice Sotomayor](#)

Justice Sonia Sotomayor biography on [Oyez](#)

Gallagher Law Library guide to [Supreme Court Nominations](#)

### **Notable Quotes by Justice Sonia Sotomayor:**

“I further accept that our experiences as women and people of color will in some way affect our decisions.” 13 BERKELEY LA RAZA L.J. 87, 91 (2002). [HeinOnline UW Restricted](#)

“And I don't think that anybody quarrels with the fact that diversity on the bench is good for America. It's good for America because we are the land of opportunity. And to the extent that we're pursuing and showing that all groups can be lawyers and judges, that's just reflecting the values of our society.” [New York Times](#), July 14, 2009.

## Elena Kagan

Nominated by: Obama

Sworn in on August 7, 2010

### Publications

Selected Congressional Research Service (CRS) Reports:

*From Solicitor General to Supreme Court Nominee: Responsibilities, History, and the Nomination of Elena Kagan*, Report No. [R41299](#), June 23, 2010.

*Supreme Court Nominee Elena Kagan: Selected Freedom of Speech Scholarship*, Report No. [R41290](#), June 18, 2010.

*Supreme Court Nominee Elena Kagan: Presidential Authority and the Separation of Powers*, Report No. [R41272](#), June 4, 2010.

### Web Resources

Library of Congress: Supreme Court Nominations, [Elena Kagan: Articles/Books By](#) | [Congressional Documents](#) | [Supreme Court Briefs](#) | [Supreme Court Oral Argument Transcripts](#) | [Web Resources](#) | [Video](#)

White House blog: [Meet Elena Kagan](#)

Gallagher Law Library guide to [Supreme Court Nominations](#)

Elena Kagan biography on [Oyez](#)