

Women of the Supreme Court

Three current and one retired female justices are/were on the United States Supreme. In order of appointment, they are: 1) Justice O'Connor, 2) Justice Ginsburg, 3) Justice Sotomayor, and 4) Justice Kegan.



Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor was born March 26, 1930 in El Paso, Texas. She was appointed by President Ronald Reagan and took office September 25, 1981. In 2004 and 2006, she was listed as the 6th and 36th most powerful woman in the world. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States, by President Barak Obama, on August 12, 2009.

As a conservative (some have called her a Federalist), Justice O'Connor considered each case on its own merits. Each case was viewed and decided, avoiding generalizations that were not clear and concise.

Justice O'Connor retired on January 31, 2006, for personal and family health reasons. She had to deal with cancer. Her husband (John Jay O'Connor III) suffered from Alzheimer's disease and died in 2009. Their marriage lasted from 1952 to 2009.

Justice O'Connor is currently The Chancellor of The College of William and Mary, in Williamsburg, Virginia. She also serves on the board of trustees of the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg was born March 15, 1933. She was appointed by President Bill Clinton and took the office on August 10, 1993. She is the first Jewish female justice.

Justice Ginsburg is noted for her focus and advocacy for the equal citizenship status of women and as a constitutional principle. Justice Felix Frankfurter turned down (1960) Justice Ginsburg as a Supreme Court clerkship because she was a woman. 33 years later she was a Supreme Court Justice in her own right.



Justice Ginsburg's position on the Court is one of adjudication cautiousness – measured motions for law. "Doctrinal limbs too swiftly shaped, experience teaches, may prove unstable."

Justice Ginsberg was married to her husband (Martin D. Ginsburg). He died June 27, 2010. Despite her health and the death of her husband, Justice Ginsburg is in it for the long haul.



Associate Justice Sonia Maria Sotomayor was born June 25, 1954, in the Bronx, New York City, New York. She was appointed by President Barack Obama and took office, August 8, 2009.

Justice Sotomayor is considered a centrist, with liberal markings. She considers cases with close attention to the law, without general

philosophical viewpoints.

Justice Sotomayor brings much expertise as a Judge of the Court Appeals and a Judge of the District Court for the Southern District of New York, assistant DA for New York County, and private lawyer. Time will tell about the judgments in the United States Supreme Court.

Associate Justice Elena Kagan was born April 28, 1960 in New York City, New York. She was appointed by President Barack Obama, on May 10, 2010, and took office August 7, 2010.



She brings with her the experience of a clerkship with the federal Court of Appeals and a clerkship with the United States Supreme Court. She has served as Associate White House Counsel (and policy advisor) to President Bill Clinton. She has also served as the 11th Dean of Harvard Law School. She was the 45th Solicitor General of the United States. Although she has never held a judgeship she brings to the table a wide variety of experience.