



# Living My tRuth

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE  
IMPACT OF THE RBG LEGACY

A Compilation By Cathy L. Davis



# Living My tRuth

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE  
IMPACT OF THE RBG LEGACY

A Compilation By Cathy L. Davis

## **Living My tRuth**

Personal Reflections on the Impact of the RBG Legacy

UpsiDaisy Press

Published by **UpsiDaisy Press**, St. Louis, MO

Copyright ©2021 Cathy L. Davis

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to [Office@daviscreative.com](mailto:Office@daviscreative.com), please put **Living My tRuth** in the subject line.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Neither the publisher nor author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

All contributing authors to this anthology have submitted their chapters to an editing process, and have accepted the recommendations of the editors at their own discretion. All authors have approved their chapters prior to publication.

Cover and Interior Design: Davis Creative Publishing Partners, [DavisCreative.com](http://DavisCreative.com)

Writing Coach and Editor: Kay Uhles, [KayClarkUhles.com](http://KayClarkUhles.com)

Compilation by Cathy L. Davis

Living My tRuth: Personal Reflections on the Impact of the RBG Legacy

ISBN: 978-1-7347971-4-5 (paperback)

978-1-7347971-5-2 (ebook)

2021

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Cathy Davis</b>	
Introduction: The RBG Impact .....	1
<b>Patt Pickett</b>	
Why Can't I? .....	5
<b>Isabella Brown</b>	
Growing Up After Ginsburg .....	15
<b>Kari McGinness</b>	
Zedek, zedek, tirdof .....	21
<b>Heidi L. Martin</b>	
RBG, NLB, and HLM .....	27
<b>Alice Prince</b>	
Always Last in Line .....	33
<b>Carin Fahr Shulusky</b>	
Swimming Up Stream .....	39
<b>Diane Finnestead</b>	
The Little Engine That Could .....	47
<b>Rebecca Now</b>	
Remember the Gentlemen .....	55
<b>JL Gray</b>	
Fairy-Tales and Backpacks .....	61
<b>Krystal Weigl</b>	
The Dissenter's Hope .....	67
<b>Rev. Pat Powers</b>	
Agent of Change .....	75
<b>Celeste Hartwell</b>	
Living in Divine Truth .....	81

<b>Kelly Nagle</b>	
Breaking Through Gender Barriers .....	87
<b>Jenny Grace Morris</b>	
Adopting New Viewpoints.....	93
<b>Barbara Joyce</b>	
Allow and Trust the Process.....	99
<b>Christine Blonn</b>	
When There Are Nine.....	105
<b>Patt Pickett</b>	
Why Can't I? .....	113



CATHY L. DAVIS

## Introduction

# The RBG Impact

**I**t was the 1950s. Ruth Bader Ginsburg graduated from Cornell University in 1954, finishing first in her class. After attending Harvard Law School as a new mom, she transferred and graduated from Columbia Law School in New York in 1959 (also first in her class). I was three years old with a thirteen-year-old brother and a fifteen-year-old sister. Our mother struggled with the stigma of being a newly-single, working mom.

In the mid-1960s I attended grade school in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Never one to be a math wiz, I remember asking my teacher for help on a math problem. After a few minutes of trying to help me, I heard the older male teacher say, “Never mind, honey—you won’t need math when you grow up. Just be sure to marry someone who can do it for you.”

In the early 1970s, we had Kent State. Watergate. Roe v. Wade. Vietnam. The male/female roles in our society had started to change, in spite of what my old math teacher believed. We were living in a changing world, and it was a very confusing time to be a female—especially for a female teen in America.

At age fifteen, I was the first female student “allowed” to take a drafting/architectural drawing class in my high school.

At age sixteen after “acing” the Red Cross lifeguard course and test, I was turned down over the phone (as in, sight-unseen) for a summer job because “We only hire male lifeguards.”

At age seventeen, I was invited to attend Yale University, as one of the FIRST female incoming freshman.

I went to on to college (not Yale) in the mid-1970s. Little did I know that behind the scenes was a petite female firecracker, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, attorney at law, well on her way to making an impact on the societal landscape—busily creating the stepping stones used by many of us to get to where we are today.

RBG took the “sting” out of “interesting” and embedded a societal INTEREST in creating a level playing field in the workplace, in finance, and in daily living. Mutual respect between males and females had become a cultural undercurrent and women had gained the confidence to begin standing up for themselves.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg was more than a Supreme Court justice...she was a leading lady who left her mark on law, feminism, and everyday life. From gender equality and employment rights to the separation of church and state, RBG left her stamp of approval—or dissent—on our culture. After twenty-seven years serving as a justice on the Supreme Court, Ruth Bader Ginsburg died on September 18, 2020. Her legacy continues through the lives that countless Americans are able to live today.

The women authors in this book represent all walks of life and each shares her own unique perspective on how their lives were impacted by RBG. Honor yourself, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and women across America as you read these inspiring stories of Living My tRuth.

## CATHY L. DAVIS

Books are in Cathy's DNA and have always played a big role in her life. Cathy Davis believes we all have a story to tell and it is through our stories that we are able to find our voice, share our wisdom, and make a difference in the lives of others. Wisdom not shared is wisdom lost forever.

Cathy spent the bulk of her career as a Designer and Creative Director of Corporate Communications for a global financial institution, managing a team of 18 designers and print specialists.

Cathy founded Davis Creative, LLC in January of 2004 after corporate downsizing. What originally began as a boutique creative services agency, is now known as a sought-after publishing industry leader, providing concierge publishing services for authors throughout the US and several foreign countries.

[cathy@daviscreative.com](mailto:cathy@daviscreative.com)

[www.linkedin.com/in/cathyldavis/](http://www.linkedin.com/in/cathyldavis/)

[www.youtube.com/channel/UC5L1yOYzT0gPP-tXY02ltVA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5L1yOYzT0gPP-tXY02ltVA)

[www.facebook.com/DavisCreativeLLC](http://www.facebook.com/DavisCreativeLLC)





DIANE FINNESTEAD

# The Little Engine That Could

*...But though it seemed that she could hardly pull herself along / She  
hitched on to the train and as she pulled she sang this song / I think I  
can, I think I can, I think I have a plan / And I can do 'most anything if  
I only think I can...<sup>2</sup>*

You may be thinking, what in the world does “The Little Engine That Could” have to do with Justice Ginsburg? I was hoping you would ask.

In the late 1990s, eastern European immigrants, mainly from war-torn Bosnia, started to immigrate to the United States. The city of St. Louis, my hometown since age three, welcomed these immigrants with open arms. My mother was the assistant director of relocation for the St. Louis real estate firm, Coldwell Banker-Gundaker, in the late 1990s. Through interpreters, she worked with clients relocating from across the globe in their home-buying experience. During those years, tax abatements made relocating to the city of St. Louis appealing and affordable. Ethnic enclaves, often located within a particular St. Louis municipality, developed strong neighborhoods to support mutual success in business while celebrating common heritage through shared cultural and religious traditions. St. Louis Italians discovered this when they founded “The Hill”; then the Irish discovered the same when they settled in “Dog Town”; then the Polish when they entered north city; and the Germans and Dutch when they originally immigrated to south city/south county. Today, south city/south county includes the largest

---

2 Watty Piper, *The Little Engine That Could*, GP Putnam's Sons, (2001).

Bosnian population outside of Europe. Currently, there are 300,000 Bosnians in America and 70,000 in the St. Louis area<sup>3</sup>, making this area centered around Bevo Mill known as “Little Bosnia.”

The school year was 2003-2004. Recently divorced, I decided to leave the insurance industry, dust off my teaching credentials, and re-enter the field of education as an elementary music teacher for St. Louis Public Schools. My post was at a south city school where the student population was over eighty-seven percent Bosnian. All students were eager to become English-speaking naturalized Americans. This community actively embraced me—ultimately naming me “Ms. Musica.” They also embraced our Fourteenth Amendment and the promise of life, liberty, and property. I expected my teachings would benefit their pursuits. What I didn’t expect was the life-changing gift I would receive at the end of the year.

To meet the goal of teaching English through music curriculum, I had the flexibility and freedom to be creative, fun, interactive, and engaging. Thank goodness! With props, pictures, handheld manipulatives, puppets, costumes, instruments, drums, recorders, technology, and just about anything you can imagine, I brought lyrics to life and met the needs of every learner.

*I think I can, I think I can, I think I have a plan / And I can do ‘most anything if I only think I can...*

One enthusiastic kindergartner loved everything I did. He mastered all my lessons, animations, mannerisms, and musical interpretations. He knew the core of the kindergarten music curriculum, demonstrating faster/slower tempo, louder/softer dynamics, higher/lower tone and timbre. Moving to the front of the class and speaking of himself in the third person, he’d announce, “The Magical, Fabulous Feriz would like to teach.” And when the Magical, Fabulous Feriz would “teach,” he would nail it every time; then look me in the eye, smile, and say, “How I do, Ms. Musica?”

“Ask me again,” I’d say, “and this time ask, ‘How did I do?’”

“That’s what I ask.” Then the whole class of twenty-five five-year-olds would laugh, clap, smile, and cheer “Brava! Let Magical, Fabulous Feriz do it again!”

“Take it away Feriz!” I’d say. And he’d do it again.

---

3 Amelia Flood, “Healing Words: SLUCare Staffers Bridge Communications Gap Between Patients, Physicians,” Saint Louis University, (Mar 21, 2018), accessed on June 6, 2021, <https://www.slu.edu/news/2018/march/bosnian-interpreter-bonds.php>.

I had become accustomed to hearing his echoing feet in the corridor as he bounded down three stories of steps into my basement music room of our turn-of-the-nineteenth-century school. However, on the last day of the year, I was busy packing up for the summer when Feriz announced himself three times at the top of his voice.

“Here comes the Mighty, Magical, Fabulous Feriz to take you, Ms. Musica, to the yard!” With that, he ran into my room and grabbed me by the hand. “Come, come see. They speak da English!” Excitement bursting, Feriz took me toward the schoolyard. Just before we got to the doors, he demanded I close my eyes. The doors opened. I felt the sun on my face.

He whispered—but not to me—“Are you ready?” Then he said, “Open your eyes now, Ms. Musica, and hear the English.” Feriz—fashioned after me—began directing—“One, two, three, four.” Eleven female Bosnian senior citizens stood before us, all wearing their hijabs, and in a sing-songy chorus, sang:

*There was a little railroad train with loads and loads of toys / All starting out to find a home with little girls and boys / And as that little railroad train began to chug along / The little engine up in front was heard to sing this song...*

They sang twenty-three other songs that Feriz had taught them from my classes. When the concert ended, amid applause, hugs, and praises for Feriz, tears of joy streamed down my face. The ladies’ faces too.

“They all take their American citizenship test next month,” Feriz said.

“How did you teach these ladies that song?”

“Because it’s like the little engine,” he said. “I think I can, I think I can...I knew I could, I knew I could.” Maybe it is that simple to reach the mountaintop of outstanding achievement. To believe, *I think I can. I think I can.*

In 1963 the US had passed the first legislation guaranteeing equal pay for equal work, yet the career categories this applied to were not made clear until 1972 when salespeople, executives, and administrators were included. The definition and interpretation continue to evolve today. In October 1974, President Gerald Ford signed into law the Federal Consumer Credit Act, which stated that a woman could own her own home without a male cosigner. Prior to that year, all single, divorced, and widowed American women had to bring a man along to cosign. Even in 1996 when buying my first house as a single woman, on closing

day, two male title company representatives asked me, “Who else is to be included on the title?” When I replied, “Just me,” they both pressed, “No husband or father or brother you’d like to include?”

I was shocked but this had been a practice or inquiry from decades prior that had not been updated. Caught off guard, I felt as if the biggest purchase in my life wasn’t as important as being a wife, daughter, or sister to a man. The cat got my tongue. Well, thank goodness my Realtor mother was at my side and picked up on the fact that I was momentarily stupefied. Without missing a beat, my mom gave these two gentlemen an authoritative look, pointed professionally to my preliminary paperwork, and stated matter-of-factly, “Just her on the title, thank you. It’s her money. It’s her house and her mortgage payment.” I still wonder how many women had also gone through this antiquated, unnecessary type of Q&A when, as new homeowners, they should have felt over the moon—not judged! RBG has stated, “My mother told me to be a lady. And for her, that meant be your own person, be independent.”<sup>4</sup> These were the same pearls of wisdom my mother shared with me as I was handed the keys to my home that day. “Now you decorate and celebrate!” my mother said. Justice Ginsburg believed in the importance of celebration too; in fact, the iconic justice is quoted on a t-shirt sold by redbubble.com, “There’s a sense that time is precious and you should enjoy and thrive in what you’re doing to the hilt.”

So we celebrate. The Federal Consumer Credit Act made life better for millions of women who once could not be approved for credit without a man’s signature. And thanks to the accomplishments of Justice Ginsburg and the Women’s Business Ownership Act of 1988, women of all ethnicities can be approved for business loan without a male cosigner. Prior to this act, a seventeen-year-old son would have sufficed as cosigner for women business owners who had no husband, father, or brother. Additionally, Amnesty International expanded the definition of “rights” by saying, “Women’s rights are human rights... These include the right to live free from violence and discrimination; to enjoy the highest attainable

---

<sup>4</sup> Alexander Kacala, “20 inspiring and empowering quotes from the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg,” Today, (Sep 18, 2020), accessed on June 4, 2021, <https://www.today.com/news/ruth-bader-ginsburg-quotes-20-inspiring-ideas-rbg-t192057>.

standard of physical and mental health: to be educated; to own property; to vote; and to earn an equal wage.”<sup>5</sup>

By the time, the Bosnian community arrived in America in the late 1990s, gender equality in the US had already made giant steps forward. RBG, and women like her, had influenced change around the world so that the Bosnian women and others who immigrated to the US were free to seek an education, better jobs and careers, credit, and business ownership—free to pursue a better life in the US. No longer would they be subjected to discrimination based on their gender.

Before me on that last day of school, I sensed enjoyment and celebration, while, under the direction of five-year-old Feriz, the Bosnian senior ladies sang their self-fulfilling prophecy, *I think I can, I think I can*. After that schoolyard gift, Feriz’s title became “The Miraculous, Mighty, Magical, Fabulous Feriz,” and the following month, all eleven ladies became American citizens. Under the recent changes in US laws, some also went on to become homeowners and business owners—owning bakeries, restaurants, maid services, automotive and tailor shops, et cetera.

I marvel and celebrate all people who give of themselves to forward the lives of others, like Feriz and RBG. I reflect on the life of tiny, yet mighty, Notorious RBG. I imagine she could identify with the spirit of Feriz and that little engine too. She soared in her career despite challenges and setbacks as she passionately strove to help all of us become better Americans because *she knew she could, she knew she could*. And to pay tribute to RBG, let all of us continue to make positive, contributions to continue her work and to affirm: *I think I can. I think I can*.

There is still more work to do. But how will we know when we have made a difference in equal rights for women? How will we know when we have climbed to the pinnacle of RBG’s goals? RBG’s response to Gwen Ifill in February 2015 on the *PBS NewsHour* may explain: “People ask me sometimes... When will there be enough women on the court? And my answer is when there are nine.”

The phenomenal leadership of RBG continues even after her death. And we must carry on. Sometimes it takes a long time for the little engine to climb the mountain but, in the words of RBG, “Fight for the thing that you care about but

---

<sup>5</sup> “Women’s rights are human rights!” Amnesty International, (n/d), accessed June 4, 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/discrimination/womens-rights/>.

do it in a way that will lead others to join you,”<sup>6</sup> we can make it up that mountain. Let’s hope Justice Ginsburg’s tenacity, *I think we can*, becomes our *I knew we could*.

---

6 Alanna Vagianos, “Ruth Bader Ginsburg Tells Young Women: ‘Fight for the Things You care About,’” Harvard Radcliffe Institute, (June 2, 2015), accessed June 4, 2021, <https://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/news-and-ideas/ruth-bader-ginsburg-tells-young-women-fight-for-the-things-you-care-about>.



Diane is thrilled to be a contributor to this anthology in tribute to Justice Ginsburg. From insurance to music teacher to elementary principal, Diane Ruth Finnestead returned to insurance in 2014. Recognized as a leading producer in life and health insurance nationwide for those under age sixty-five and those who are Medicare-eligible, Diane advocates health reform through National Association of Health Underwriters and serves on the St. Louis board, recruiting industry professionals who share the same passion for providing intelligent insurance options to their clients.

Diane credits her ability to help thousands of Americans over the past twenty years to find the right insurance due to her background and career in education. She holds a bachelor's degree in music from the University of North Texas, a master's degree in teaching, and a second master's degree as an education specialist from Webster University. She also completed post-graduate work at the University of Memphis and Northwestern University.

314-302-5743

Diane Finnestead You Tube

[www.dianeinsurancestl.com](http://www.dianeinsurancestl.com)

[www.Linkedin.com/in/diane-finnestead-mat-Ed-s-4187912a/](http://www.Linkedin.com/in/diane-finnestead-mat-Ed-s-4187912a/)

[www.Facebook.com/dianeinsurancestl](http://www.Facebook.com/dianeinsurancestl)



# Afterword





PATT PICKETT

## Why Can't I?

By birth order I was second  
But actually, second to none  
Because I was chosen for 9 years  
To act as Dad's "stand-in-son."

*Help carry my hammer, honey.*  
My tom girl self tagged right along.  
I aspired to do what boys got to do.  
And I thought nothing at all was wrong.

Why can't I be a patrol boy—uh...patrol girl?  
I asked my teachers at school.

*Only boys are wise and strong enough.*  
*You know that is the rule.*

Well, then—why can't I be an altar boy,  
I mean—altar girl instead?

*That's not allowed either, child.*  
*Get those silly ideas out of your head.*

Okay. I really want to play soccer.

*No, that's a rough sport for boys.*  
*And don't ask again for trucks and tanks.*  
*Go play with pretty girl toys.*

I want to drop my typing class.

*OK... but it's important all girls can.*  
*'Cause if you don't find a husband,*  
*Secretary work is your back-up plan.*

Years later, I needed typing—  
For writing books and getting my Ph.D.

*Continued on next page*

*Why didn't they advise me in high school,  
How inconvenient not typing would be?*

In my twenties as a female token,  
A federal court employee,

*I was judged by standards higher  
Than male colleagues—constantly.  
They pulled porn magazines from desk drawers.  
And kicked holes through walls in a fit.  
They plucked my bra shouting, "Robin Hood!"  
Those overgrown "boys" never quit!  
Male co-workers were advanced ahead of me.  
You're less qualified, they'd say.*

But why can't I be promoted over the guys?  
More credentials line my resume.  
Married and yet child free—

And still treated like a tart.

*More sexual harassment edged in:  
Jump on the table—we'll give you a start.*

My initiatives and questions were relegated  
To the bottom of the circular file.

*You're abrasive and insubordinate!  
Now where's that girlie smile?*

It came down to the seven-year battle—  
In federal appeals court I'd finally win  
One victory against the system.  
On record was the court's own sin.

And if I knew then what I know now,  
Would I do it over? Endure all the stress?  
Would I still pay big bucks to my lawyer?  
Seeing my daughters, I can say—yes!

"I would like to be remembered as someone who used whatever talent she had to do her work to the very best of her ability."

— Ruth Bader Ginsburg

## **Ruth Bader Ginsburg was more than a Supreme Court Judge.**

In her 87 and-a-half years, Ruth Bader Ginsburg left a significant mark on law, on feminism, and late in her life, on pop culture. She broadened the definition of the American "family" and the types of jobs women AND men are able to take. Her legacy is, in a way, the lives that countless Americans are able to live today.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg was more than a Supreme Court Judge...she was a leading lady who left her mark on the law, feminism, and everyday life.

*You Can Thank Ruth If You Have . . .*

- Obtained a mortgage without a male cosigner
- Opened a checking account without a male co-signer
- Started a business without a male co-signer
- Gotten a credit card without a male co-signer
- Obtained a business loan without a male co-signer
- Been hired for a job without gender-based discrimination
- Obtained birth control without your husband's permission
- Not been forced to provide proof of sterilization in order to apply for or retain employment
- Received pension benefits equal to male co-workers
- Received equal consideration to be an executor of your child's estate

Ruth left an amazing legacy behind...empowering women along the way. The contributing authors in this collection of essays recognize the impact Ruth had—not only on our daily personal lives and our American culture, but on human rights around the world.

Join us as we celebrate her legacy through real-life stories!

ISBN 978-1-7347971-4-5



9 781734 797145