



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
AMERICAN JEWISH
HISTORY
A Smithsonian Institution Affiliate

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 11, 2019

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**National Museum of American Jewish History to Present East Coast Premiere of
NOTORIOUS RBG
The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg
October 4, 2019 – January 12, 2020**

First museum retrospective of the Supreme Court Justice-turned-cultural icon,
based upon the Internet phenomenon and bestselling book

PHILADELPHIA, PA—The National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH) will be the premier East Coast venue for *Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg*, the first-ever exhibition about the trailblazing associate justice. Based on the *New York Times* bestselling book of the same name and created in partnership with its authors, Irin Carmon and Shana Knizhnik, the exhibition will take a deeply personal journey through historic change with an entertaining yet rigorous look at the life and work of Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG) and the Supreme Court. It will also examine her varied roles as a student, life partner, mother, change-making lawyer, judge, women's rights pioneer, and pop culture icon. *Notorious RBG* will be on view at NMAJH from October 4, 2019 through January 12, 2020. Presenting this special exhibit will kick off our celebration of the 100th anniversary of the passing of the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote.

Justice Ginsburg's life and nomination to the Court are not new to NMAJH. She has been featured in the Museum's core exhibition since our grand re-opening in 2010 as part of our exploration of contemporary Jewish life in America and has been a longstanding Museum member. In addition to exploring her work as a Supreme Court Justice, the special exhibition delves into her roles as student, wife, mother, lawyer, trailblazer—and pop culture icon. NMAJH's location on Independence Mall provides the unique and ideal backdrop for exploring Justice Ginsburg's story and the circumstances that brought her to the Court. It places the Justice's story at the very location where the United States was founded and the US Constitution established the Supreme Court.

“*Notorious RBG* continues NMAJH’s commitment to marginalized voices whose stories give us richer understanding of the American experience. In *Sara Berman’s Closet*, we placed a women’s closet on Independence Mall, putting it in conversation with its male-centered monuments and offering a new perspective on immigration and making a life in America. This fall, I am thrilled to celebrate Justice Ginsburg’s groundbreaking career as an activist, advocate, icon, and the first Jewish woman to serve on the Supreme Court,” says **Josh Perelman**, PhD, Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions and Interpretation. “Justice Ginsburg’s life and career are an essential reminder that the freedoms promised here in Philadelphia are the right of every person in the country.”

The exhibition *Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg* was organized by the Skirball Cultural Center, in Los Angeles. Through archival photographs and documents, historical artifacts, contemporary art, media stations, and gallery interactives, it explores the American legal system and civil rights movements through the lens of Justice Ginsburg’s personal experiences and public service. Like the book, it tells the parallel stories of her remarkable life and the efforts she joined to expand “We the People” to include those long left out of the Constitution’s promises.

Justice Ginsburg acquired the nickname “Notorious RBG” after a series of fiery, record-breaking dissents she gave from the Supreme Court bench in 2013. Most vividly, she protested the gutting of the Voting Rights Act, comparing the decision to “throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet.” Ginsburg’s brave and bracing voice inspired Americans dismayed by the court’s rulings, and moved then-NYU law student Shana Knizhnik to create the [Notorious RBG tumblr](#), referencing rap star Notorious B.I.G. In homage to Notorious B.I.G., the exhibition section titles are inspired by his lyrics.

No other Justice, however scrutinized or respected, has so captured the public’s imagination. Her every utterance is clickbait, and since 2013 there have been thousands of homemade RBG costumes, cocktails, ice cream flavors, and more. Comedian Kate McKinnon made her a recurring *Saturday Night Live* character, and Felicity Jones has played her in the 2018 biopic, *On the Basis of Sex*. The 2015 book *Notorious RBG* is a runaway success and three other Ginsburg-related books have gone on to become bestsellers. The adoring portrayal of a woman like RBG as both fierce and knowing “is a crucial expansion of the American imagination with regard to powerful women,” wrote feminist author Rebecca Traister.

The exhibition marries immersive 3-dimensional environments with historic artifacts to bring key moments in Justice Ginsburg’s personal and professional story to life. These environments will bring key moments to life, such as recreations of Justice Ginsburg’s childhood Brooklyn apartment and of the Supreme Court bench, where visitors can take a seat and imagine making their own opinions heard. Visitors will also gain insight into RBG’s marriage to Martin “Marty” Ginsburg, her partner of more than fifty years, through family snapshots and other materials from their life together, including some of Marty’s favorite recipes as the accomplished amateur chef of the Ginsburg household. Finally, reflecting RBG’s effect on pop culture, *Notorious RBG* will include contemporary art and expression that she has inspired, by such artists as Maira Kalman, the creator of NMAJH’s spring/summer 2019 exhibition, [Sara Berman’s Closet](#), and Ari Richter.

The exhibition is narrated through a combination of the Justice’s writings, opinions, and interviews. Along with objects linked to Justice Ginsburg and the Supreme Court, visitors to the exhibition will tour the whimsical yet powerful world of Notorious RBG memes, fan art, and parody – from a cartoon action figure named Wrath Hover Ginsbot to renderings of the Justice’s likeness on t-shirts, nail decals, and even as tattoos.

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The exhibition *Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg* is organized by the Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles. It is made possible by support from the following Lead Donor:

Lynda and Stewart Resnick – The Wonderful Company

Along with generous support from the following donors:

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For more information, visit nmajh.org/RBG.

For high-res images and credit lines, [click here](#).

Interviews with Irin Carmon, Shana Knizhnik, and Josh Perelman, PhD are available.

SAVE THE DATE: Press Preview on Thursday, October 3, 10am-12pm.

About the National Museum of American Jewish History

The National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH), located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the more than 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

Visiting NMAJH

NMAJH is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Museum hours are Wednesday to Friday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am - 5:30 pm. Museum admission is \$15.00 for adults, \$13.00 for senior citizens and youth, free for children 12 and under, Museum Members, and active military with ID; reduced prices available if purchased online. Connect with the Museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). For more information, visit NMAJH.org or call 215.923.3811.

About the Skirball

The Skirball Cultural Center is a place of meeting guided by the Jewish tradition of welcoming the stranger and inspired by the American democratic ideals of freedom and equality. We welcome people of all communities and generations to participate in cultural experiences that celebrate discovery and hope, foster human connections, and call upon us to help build a more just society. For general information, the public may call (310) 440-4500 or visit skirball.org.