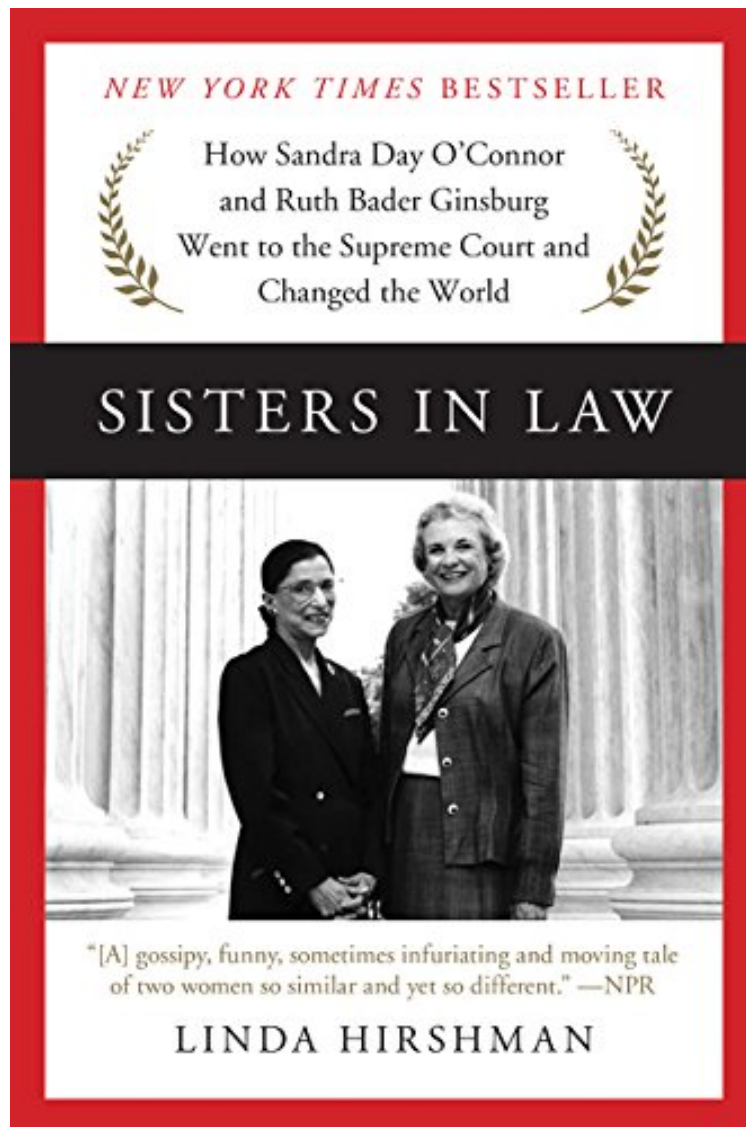


[Ebook free] Sisters in Law: How Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg Went to the Supreme Court and Changed the World

# Sisters in Law: How Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg Went to the Supreme Court and Changed the World

Linda Hirshman

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**Linda Hirshman : Sisters in Law: How Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg Went to the Supreme Court and Changed the World** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sisters in Law: How Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg Went to the Supreme Court and

## Changed the World:

62 of 62 people found the following review helpful. Justices O'Connor and Ginsburg and the history and law they made  
By Ronald H. Clark  
This book turned out to offer much greater rewards than I had anticipated. I had thought it was largely a dual biography of Justices O'Connor and Ginsburg. And to be sure, there is a good solid amount of biographical analysis present here. But there is so much more as well. Primarily, the book is also a comprehensive history of the legal fights to achieve women's equality. The author, a law school grad with a Ph.D. as well, is quite well versed in this material. So be advised to expect a good deal of detailed legal analysis that goes along with the biographical material. Much of the early portion of this nearly 400 page book is devoted to Ruth Bader Ginsburg and her pioneering and lonely fight to attack legal discrimination against women beginning around 1970. Ginsburg, who directed the ACLU's Women's Rights Project (initially while teaching at Rutgers Law School; later a Columbia) chose to follow a "careful incremental strategy." Cases were carefully selected in order to develop a doctrinal bridge to the final goal. This is just one of the ways in which Ginsburg resembled Thurgood Marshall's strategy in the civil rights cases. Her ultimate goal was to get the Supreme Court to equate sex discrimination with race discrimination and apply the corresponding strict legal tests when evaluating claims of sexual discrimination. The author discusses the early major cases, including *Reed v. Reed*, *Frontiero v. Richardson*, and *Kahn v. Shevlin*. Interestingly enough, Ginsburg was not happy with the *Roe v. Wade* decision's reasoning, since she much preferred that it be based on a strict equality argument rather than the new right to privacy. While perhaps an overstatement, to me Ginsburg seems to be the heroine of the book while O'Connor stands somewhat in her shadow. Her background is carefully developed and it contrasts mightily with that of Ginsburg: conservative in upbringing and orientation, happy to spend much time in cooking and supporting her husband's career, her key experience being in the Arizona legislature, and not a militant supporter of women's equality to the extent of Ginsburg. The author does a fine job in recounting how she became the first woman on the Supreme Court thanks to Ronald Reagan. While O'Connor rises to the Supremes, Ginsburg eventually in 1980 is named to the D.C. Circuit, after many exertions by her famous tax lawyer husband, Martin Ginsburg. O'Connor's early years as the first and only woman on the Court are well recounted. She maneuvers around Burger, Blackmun and Rehnquist, and developed her technique of limiting major holdings to the specific facts of the cases, often imposing unclear standards such as "exceedingly persuasive justification" on confused lower court judges. Caution and compromise were her hallmarks. Meanwhile, Ginsburg continues fighting the battle for women's equality from the D.C. Circuit. Eventually, due to departures, O'Connor becomes the critical fifth vote and exploits her virtual control in many cases. When Bill Clinton puts Ginsburg on the Court in 1996, the narrative becomes especially interesting as the author traces the two female justices' early interactions, respective approaches to cases, agreements and disagreements. The discussions of the abortion cases during this period, and the *VMI* case, are particularly informative. When O'Connor leaves the Court in 2006--the situation clarified by the author--Ginsburg continues on alone until the arrival of Justices Sotomayor and Kagan, with a more conservative court due to substitution of Justice Alito for O'Connor. There are many strong points supporting the author's analysis. Her research is exhaustive, including interviews and correspondence, speeches and other published sources. She has made good use of Justice's papers, particularly Blackmun and Powell, to get an insider view of events. In that connection, she highlights the important role of female law clerks in persuading more conservative judges to adopt some of Ginsburg and O'Connor's arguments. This book represents part of a recent trend to focus attention on the life, work and contributions of Justice Ginsburg. See, e.g., Scott Dodson (ed.), "The Legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg." At age 82, we don't know how long this amazing career will continue because the Justice has rejected calls that she step down so a younger liberal judge can replace her. When I have seen her at the Court, she seemed quite frail--I guess I'm not the first to underestimate the drive and raw intellectual power she brings to bear. More books on her are coming so we can learn even more about this remarkable lawyer and judge. This fine book will be a helpful introduction to both Justices who were so influential and pioneering.  
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Nice start  
By Roger Carlsen  
Nice start but after a bit became droning and repetitive. Yes, this is important but could become a slog. I listened to this while driving across country. But, for what ever reason I do not know, my wife and I decided independently and then together to change to a different Audible selection. The book needn't have been this long and tedious.  
38 of 43 people found the following review helpful. A must read for everyone who believes in equal rights!  
By Arlee Reach  
I reside in Phoenix, AZ, just received my Kindle edition of this epic publication - AND, listened to the Nina Totenberg interview with Linda Hirshman on NPR this morning! I had chills and tears in my eyes simultaneously...and I'm not one to well up easily...and, did I mention I live in Phoenix!? This is a monumental historical piece. One mandatory read for every home in America!!

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER WASHINGTON POST BESTSELLER  
The author of the celebrated *Victory* tells the fascinating story of the intertwined lives of Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the first and second women to serve as Supreme Court justices. The relationship between Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg  
Republican and Democrat, Christian and Jew, western ranchers daughter and Brooklyn girl transcends party,

religion, region, and culture. Strengthened by each others presence, these groundbreaking judges, the first and second to serve on the highest court in the land, have transformed the Constitution and America itself, making it a more equal place for all women. Linda Hirshmans dual biography includes revealing stories of how these trailblazers fought for their own recognition in a male-dominated profession battles that would ultimately benefit every American woman. She also makes clear how these two justices have shaped the legal framework of modern feminism, including employment discrimination, abortion, affirmative action, sexual harassment, and many other issues crucial to womens lives. *Sisters-in-Law* combines legal detail with warm personal anecdotes that bring these very different women into focus as never before. Meticulously researched and compellingly told, it is an authoritative account of our changing law and culture, and a moving story of a remarkable friendship.

Linda Hirshmans joint biography of the first and second woman to serve on the nations highest court is a gossipy, funny, sometimes infuriating and moving tale of two women so similar and yet so different. (NPR) Vital... Part of what makes Hirshman such a likable writer in addition to her wit and ability to explain the law succinctly without dumbing it down is her optimism. (Washington Post) Fast-paced and sure-footed... persuasive... Hirshmans ability to write clearly about the law without oversimplifying enables her to explain how OConnor played defense and Ginsburg offense. (Huffington Post) A lovely, thoughtful, and fascinating chronicle of [OConnor and Ginsburgs] careers and lives that doubles as a concise history of the fight for equality for women. (SCOTUS blog) Carefully researched and enjoyably written (Wall Street Journal) For anyone interested in the court, womens history or both, the story of Sandra Day OConnor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, their separate routes to the Supreme Court and what they accomplished during the more than 12 years they spent together is irresistible. (Linda Greenhouse, New York Times Book ) Linda Hirshmans joint biography of Sandra Day OConnor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg is fascinating and informative but is also joyful -- a stirring reminder of how these two pioneers for womens rights have advanced the cause in their singular but complementary ways. (Jeffrey Toobin, author of *The Oath and The Nine*) A tale of two unfaltering women with steel-trap minds, their unlikely rapport, and the legal landscape they battle to reshape. Smart, startling, and profoundly moving. (Stacy Schiff, author of *Cleopatra: A Life*) Linda Hirshman has written a thorough, accurate, and most readable account of the careers of the two first women to serve as Justices of the Supreme Court. Laymen as well as lawyers will learn a great deal, not only about these two special people, but about todays Court as well. (Justice John Paul Stevens) A riveting page-turner that will make you laugh, cry, and seethe with frustration at how long and hard the road to womens equality has been. Above all, it will inspire and delight. A prodigious achievement and an important contribution to the history of our times. (Leslie Bennetts, author of *The Feminine Mistake*) This sharply-drawn double portrait of the first and second women on the U.S. Supreme Court and the way their lives and legal philosophies complement and contrast with each other is riveting. Linda Hirshman has the unique ability to think like a law professor and write like a journalist. (Lynn Hecht Schafran, National Judicial Education Program, Legal Momentum) From the Back Cover The relationship between Sandra Day OConnor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg Republican and Democrat, Christian and Jew, western ranchers daughter and Brooklyn girl transcends party, religion, region, and culture. Strengthened by each others presence, these groundbreaking judges, the first and second women to serve on the highest court in the land, have transformed the Constitution and America itself, making it a more equal place for all women. Linda Hirshmans dual biography includes revealing stories of how these trailblazers fought for recognition in a male-dominated profession battles that would ultimately benefit every American woman. Hirshman also makes clear how these two justices have shaped the legal framework of modern feminism, setting precedent in cases dealing with employment discrimination, abortion, affirmative action, sexual harassment, and many other issues crucial to womens lives. *Sisters in Law* combines legal detail with warm personal anecdotes, bringing these very different women into focus as never before. Meticulously researched and compellingly told, it is an authoritative account of our changing law and culture, and a moving story of a remarkable friendship. About the Author Linda Hirshman is a lawyer, a cultural historian, and the author of *Victory: The Triumphant Gay Revolution* and many other books. She received her JD from the University of Chicago Law School and her PhD in philosophy from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and has taught philosophy and womens studies at Brandeis University. Her writing has appeared in the New York Times, the Washington Post, Slate, Newsweek, the Daily Beast, and POLITICO. She lives in Arizona and New York City.