

# For the Record

The Official Newsletter of the  
John W. Peck Cincinnati-Northern  
Kentucky Chapter of the Federal  
Bar Association



Pictured Above: Attorneys participated in the Federal Practice Seminar and Swearing in Ceremony on January 9, 2024. The next seminar will be held on July 9, 2024 from 8:15 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

## Honoring Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sandra Day O'Connor a tribute from our President

I knew from a young age that I wanted to be a lawyer. I was in the first grade when Justice Sandra Day O'Connor was appointed by President Reagan, and I remember learning about that historic moment – the first woman to be confirmed to the United States Supreme Court. It was not until I graduated high school that the second woman, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, would join the Court. As I went off to college, I was excited by what possible doors could be opened with two women on the Supreme Court.

Though I never had the opportunity to meet either Justice, their successes and sacrifices normalized women on the bench and inspired countless women, including me, to study the law.

When Justice Ginsburg passed away in 2020, federal judges were invited to pay their respects while Justice Ginsburg lay in repose at the Supreme Court. It was a beautiful September day as her flagged-draped casket was placed under the portico on the front steps of the Court. After President Trump paid his respects, I was able to go through the judges' entrance and do the same. Afterwards, I was not ready to leave. I walked around to take it all in. It was a somber but celebratory experience. The public viewing line was blocks long, and the sidewalk around the Supreme Court was adorned with flowers, pictures, candles and other tributes to the late justice. The long line of people patiently waiting hours to pay their respects was a tribute to her greatness, and the positive impact she made in this country.

### In this newsletter you can explore:

FBA President's Tribute (p. 1, 4-6)

FBA Civics Initiative (p. 2)

D&I Lunch & Learn (p. 3)

Calendar of Events (p. 3)

PLEDGE Spotlight (p. 7-8)

Reflections on Judge Matthews (p. 9)



## FBA Civics Initiative

This year, the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Chapter of the FBA, with the assistance of Emily Hiltz, Case Administrator with the Southern District of Ohio, once again hosted a group of high school students from Withrow High School to tour the Potter Stewart U.S. Courthouse. The students had the opportunity to see several courtrooms and hear from the Hon. Susan J. Dlott about her career and her role as a judge. The students also got to hear from one of the Deputy U.S. Marshals about what Marshals do, and the path to a career in federal law enforcement. The students also had the opportunity to hear from Sixth Circuit staff, including Anthony Overton, who spoke to the students about jobs in the court system that do not require a law degree. Thanks to FBA Civics Committee Co-Chairs Rich Moore and Ebun Taiwo for helping to organize and host the event. FBA members interested in joining the committee can contact [rlmoore@fbtlaw.com](mailto:rlmoore@fbtlaw.com) and [ebun.taiwo@usdoj.gov](mailto:ebun.taiwo@usdoj.gov).



# Calendar of Upcoming Events

<p><b>Lunch with a Judge</b> Tuesday, May 21, 2024 Thursday, May 23, 2024 Thursday, June 6, 2024</p> <p><i>Lunches are full! Look out for more lunches this year</i></p>	<p><b>PLEDGE Emerging Leader Celebration</b> Thursday May 9, 2024 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Location: Prime Cincinnati 580 Walnut Street</p> <p>All are invited! Registration is <b>FREE</b></p>
<p><b>Judge's Night Happy Hour</b> July 24, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. Location: Frost Brown Todd 301 E 4th Street, #3300</p> <p><i>Registration details forthcoming</i></p>	<p><b>Annual Meeting Luncheon</b> Sept. 24, 2024 at 11:30 a.m. Location: Taft/ 317 E 5th Street</p> <p><i>Registration details forthcoming</i></p>

Invitations are sent to FBA members via email. For questions, contact us at [cincy.nky.fba@gmail.com](mailto:cincy.nky.fba@gmail.com).

## Lunch and Learns with the Diversity & Inclusion Committee

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee of the local chapter has recently wrapped up an engaging series of lunch and learns, with speakers including Zamira Saidi, a graduate of Kabul University and the University of Cincinnati College of Law, speaking on her perspective as an advocate for gender equity and better opportunities for women in Afghanistan (pictured below), and Roula Allouch (Bricker Graydon) who discussed Navigating Ramadan and Your Legal Practice. More programming to come!



---

## Honoring Justices (continued)

Justice Ginsburg once famously posed the question: “What is the difference between a bookkeeper in New York City’s garment district and a Supreme Court Justice?” Her reply: “One generation... [t]he difference between the opportunities available to my mother and those afforded me.”<sup>[1]</sup> Thanks to Justice Ginsburg, a generation of women lawyers have many more opportunities available to them than she had available to her.

When Justice O’Connor died, it was important to me that I also pay my respects to her. Justice O’Connor had planned each detail of her own funeral years earlier, including the extension of an invitation to all federal judges. Like Justice Ginsburg, Justice O’Connor also lay in repose at the Supreme Court. I planned to first pay my respects at the Court on December 18th before attending the funeral the next morning. Unfortunately, the airport had other plans for me, and I sat at CVG as my flight was delayed, again and again. Though I was sad to miss paying my respects at the Supreme Court, the funeral was an experience I will always remember.

The funeral was held at the Washington National Cathedral – the sixth-largest Cathedral in the world. The judges in attendance were seated together in the north transept (the transept gives the church its cross shape). Justice O’Connor’s family and President Biden were seated in the first row of the nave, and the Supreme Court Justices were seated behind her family.

[1]  
<https://time.com/5480773/justice-ginsburg-hails-immigrants-vanguard/>

The service was approximately two hours long. Tributes were given by President Biden, Chief Justice Roberts, Evan W. Thomas, III, a historian and author, and the justice’s youngest son, Jay H. O’Connor. Hearing from her son and listening to him talk about how Justice O’Connor was a normal mom who “ran absolutely everything in her home,” including cooking, grocery shopping, driving her kids to activities, planning their social calendars and even—later in life—trying to play matchmaker for Jay, made me admire her even more.

Jay also talked about the nonprofit she started after she retired from the Court. Justice O’Connor, concerned that people were increasingly disengaged from their democracy, founded iCivics, a free online program designed to teach young people how our government and democracy work. iCivics is used in over half the middle and high schools in the country. I was not aware she was involved in this work. I did not think I could admire her more, and I was wrong. You can learn more about her work at [iCivics.org](http://iCivics.org).

In what turned out to be a lighter moment in the funeral, President Biden said:

“One need not agree with all her decisions in order to recognize that her principles were deeply held and of the highest order — and that her desire for civility was genuine.”

“And her trust in the capacity of human institutions to make life better...was abiding. And how she embodied such attributes under such pressure and scrutiny helped empower generations of women in every part of American life, including the Court itself - helping to open doors, secure freedoms, and prove that a woman can not only do anything a man can do but, many times, do it a hell of a lot - a heck of a lot better.” (Laughter.) “Excuse my language, Father.”

Chief Justice Roberts spoke to the barriers that she faced and kicked down. He said:

“In nearly a quarter century on the court, she was a strong, influential and iconic jurist. Her leadership shaped the legal profession, making it obvious that judges are both women and men. The time when women were not on the bench seem so far away because Justice O’Connor was so good when she was on the bench. She was so successful that the barriers she broke down are almost unthinkable today. But not so in her lifetime. Sandra Day O’Connor had to study and launch a career in the law when most men in the established profession did not want women lawyers, let alone judges.”

One of the many reasons I so admired Justice O’Connor was her ability to bring people together. Mr. Thomas, who wrote a book about the Justice, “First: Sandra Day O’Connor,” spoke to this during his tribute:

---

## Honoring Justices (continued)

"At the court's weekly lunches, only about half of justices showed up, so she made it her business to make the justices come to lunch — not to talk about cases or argue over the law, but to get to know each other. If they didn't go to lunch, she would go to their chambers and just sit there until they did. When Justice Clarence Thomas came on the Court, he later told me, he didn't much feel like going to lunch. But after conference, Justice O'Connor would walk with him down the hallway saying, Clarence, you need to come to lunch. So finally, as he told me, 'I started going to lunch.' He felt he belonged. He said, 'she was the glue. The reason this place was civil was Sandra Day O'Connor.'"

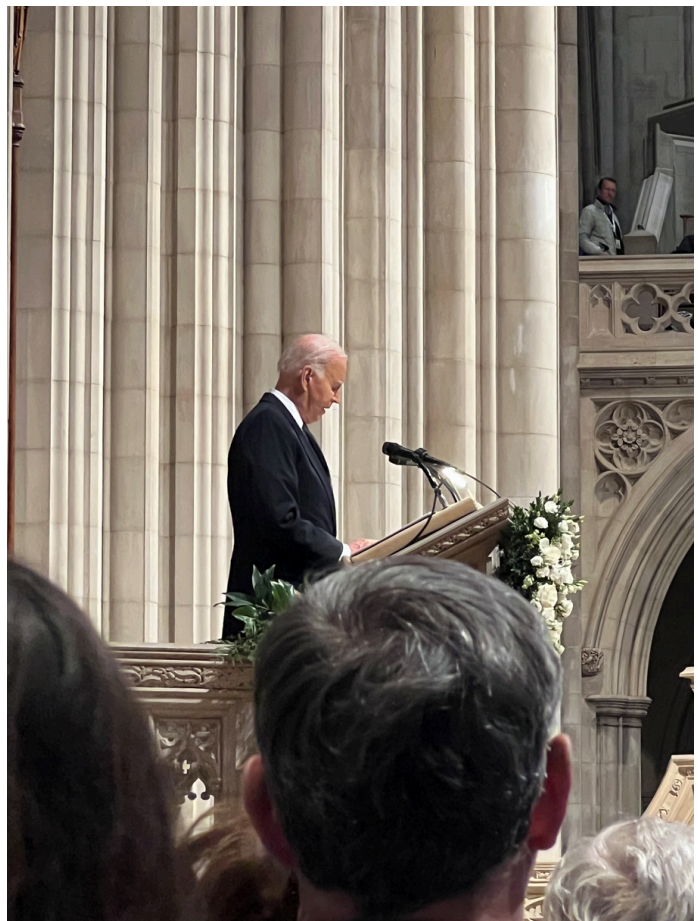
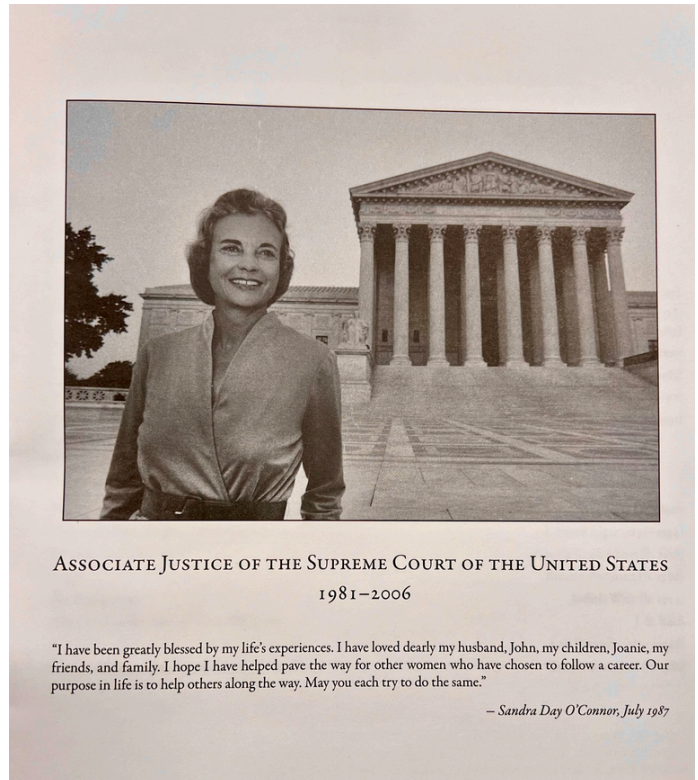
Inside the funeral program is a beautiful picture of the Justice and a personal quote dated July 1987: "I have been greatly blessed by my life's experiences. I have loved dearly my husband, John, my children, Joanie, my friends, and family. I hope I have helped pave the way for other women who have chosen to follow a career. Our purpose in life is to help others along the way. May you each try to do the same."

In Celebration of and in Thanksgiving for the Life of Sandra Day O'Connor, who lived March 26, 1930-December 1, 2023.

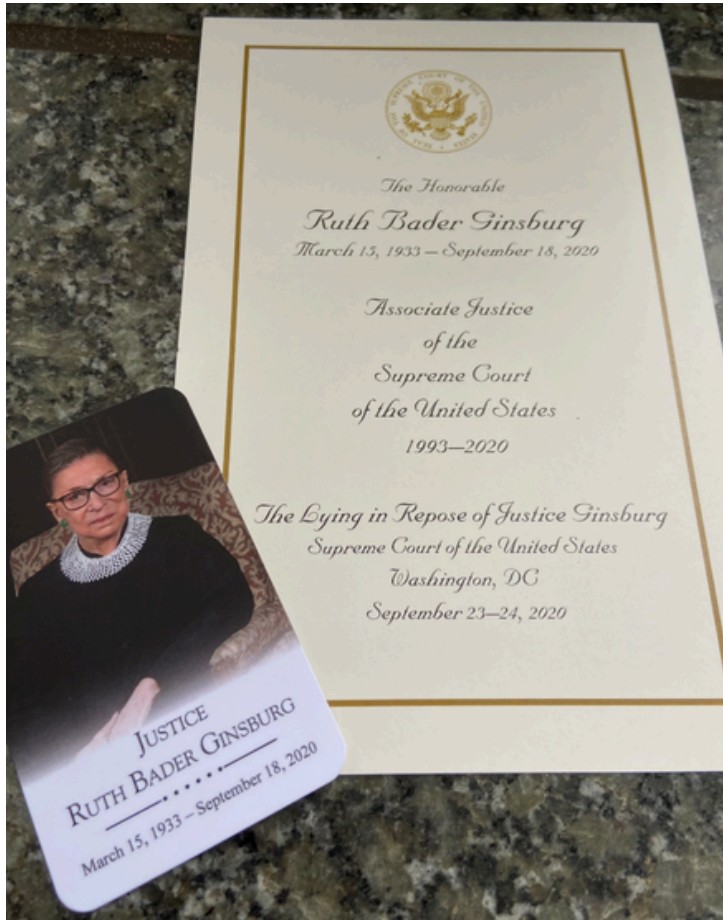
**Thank for you inspiring me and so many other women to follow their dreams.**

Author: The Honorable Stephanie K. Bowman, United States Magistrate Judge; President, John W. Peck Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Chapter of the Federal Bar Association

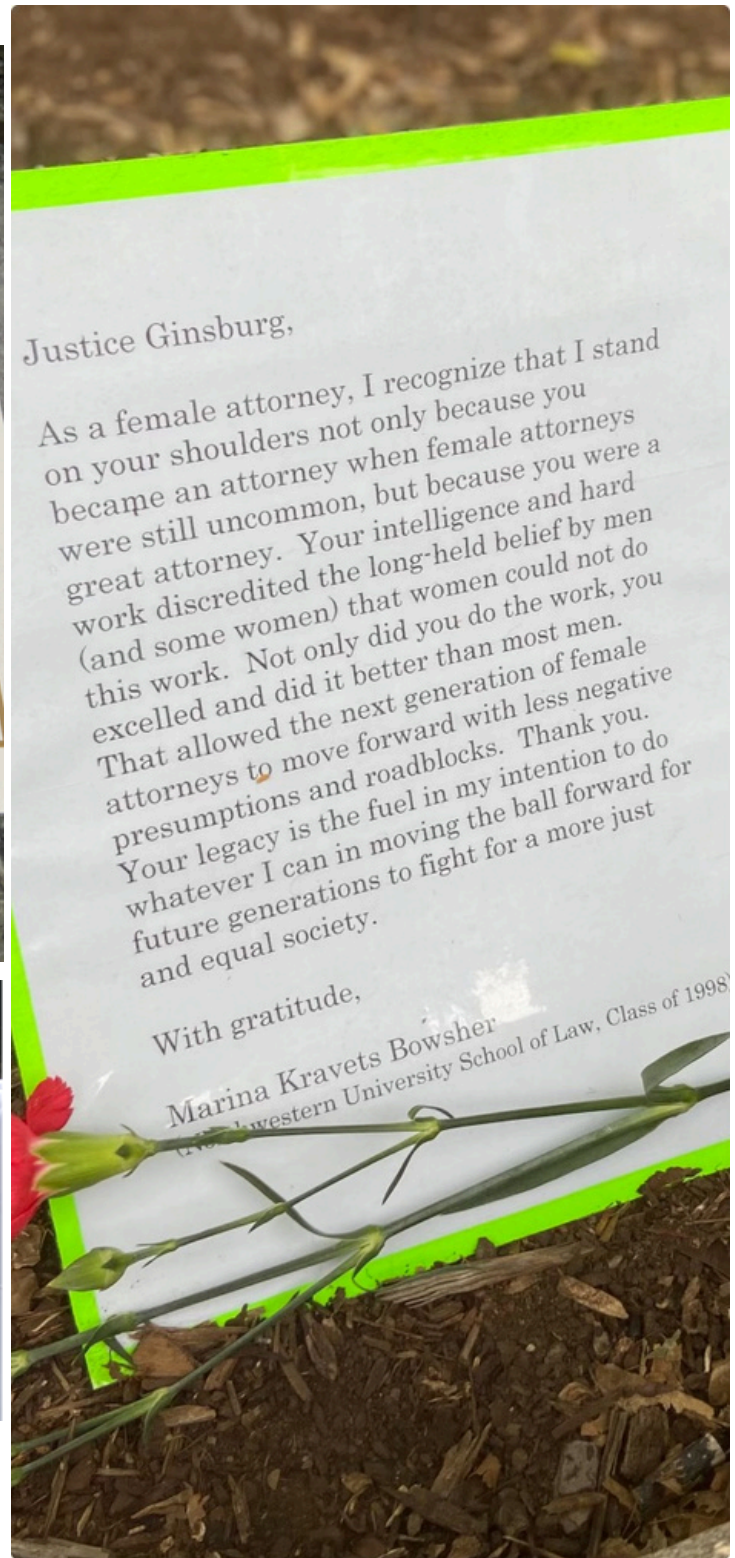
*Pictures of the celebration of Sandra Day O'Connor, to the right, courtesy of the Hon. Stephanie K. Bowman*



## Honoring Justices (continued)



Pictures from the celebration of Justice Ginsburg courtesy of the Hon. Stephanie K. Bowman



---

## Congratulations to our 2024 PLEDGE Honorees

The Diversity & Inclusion Committee of the John W. Peck Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Chapter of the Federal Bar Association aims to spotlight the professional successes of exceptional lawyers in the greater Cincinnati area at a critical point in their careers.



**Jada Colon**  
Taft Stettinius & Hollister



**Emma Morehart**  
Vorys, Sater, Seymour &  
Pease LLP



**Ellen Phillips**  
Squire Patton & Boggs (US)  
LLP



**Jabari Shaw**  
Vorys, Sater, Seymour &  
Pease LLP



**Jessica T.S. Sexton**  
Frost Brown Todd



**Adair Smith**  
Jackson Lewis P.C.



**Ashton Tucker**  
City of Cincinnati Solicitor's Office/Division of Prosecuting Attorneys

Thank you to our Sponsors...

## EVENT SPONSOR

# Taft /

AWARD SPONSOR

# VORYS

GOLD SPONSORS

 Frost  
Brown Todd LLC  
ATTORNEYS

 KMK | Law

 SQUIRE   
PATTON BOGGS

 Dinsmore

 **LSS**  
*Don't Go To Trial Without Us!*  
**(513) 241-5605**

PLEDGE (Promoting Lawyer Excellence Through Diversity & Gender Equity)

About PLEDGE:

The Diversity & Inclusion Committee of the John W. Peck Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Chapter of the Federal Bar Association aims to spotlight the professional successes of exceptional lawyers in the greater Cincinnati area at a critical point in their careers. The Diversity & Gender Equity Task Force believes in supporting and retaining today's talented lawyers so they can become tomorrow's leaders and advocates. The honorees who will be recognized at the May 9th PLEDGE event were selected from a number of talented nominees, based on the nominations themselves and the following criteria:

Lawyers with 4-8 years of legal experience in any field of legal practice;

Possess notable legal experience;

Demonstrate exceptional legal talent and skill; and

Exemplify the standards and professionalism one expects from an attorney.

---

# Reflections on Eminent Domain Litigator and First Female U.S. District Judge Burnita Shelton Matthews

During the 2017 Stanford Rathbun Lecture, the Hon. Ruth Bader Ginsburg was asked to identify her role models. [1] One of the role models Justice Ginsburg identified was Burnita Shelton Matthews, the first woman to serve as a U.S. District Court judge. In describing Judge Matthews, Justice Ginsburg noted that while Judge Matthews spoke with a “soft, southern accent[,]” she was “a woman of real steel.”

Remarking on some of Judge Matthews’ achievements, Justice Ginsburg noted that Judge Matthews had specialized in eminent domain while practicing law. When the government sought to appropriate the headquarters of the National Women’s Party for the location of the current Supreme Court building, Judge Matthews fought tooth and nail to obtain the largest jury condemnation award that the U.S. government had ever paid.

Looking back at Judge Matthews’ career, it is remarkable the odds she overcame, and the tremendous impact that she had. She put herself through law school while working nights, attending one of the limited law schools nationwide that accepted women at the time. After graduating from law school, she worked with the National Woman’s Party (NWP) to help pass legislation that advanced women’s rights, including legislation which helped allow women to serve as jurors in the District of Columbia.

Judge Matthews was appointed to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia in 1949 by President Harry Truman. During her time on the bench, she famously only hired female law clerks, and “bluntly counseled them against having children if they intended a career in law.”

[1] The transcript of Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s 2017 lecture is available at [www.rev.com](http://www.rev.com), and additional information regarding Judge Matthews in this article was collected from *Mississippi History Now* at [www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov](http://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov).

Reflecting on the courage and resilience of Judge Matthews, Justice Ginsburg remarked: “You think [it was difficult] for me? It was a piece of cake in comparison to what it was like for those women.”

Times have changed for women in the 75 years since Judge Matthews was appointed to the bench, and today many women have fulfilling legal careers as mothers. There are specific interest groups catering to lawyer moms, including MothersEsquire, a group boasting 9,000 members worldwide and counting (message me if you’d like more information!). There are also a great number of law firms that support, mentor, and train female attorneys and mothers.

We are in a new era for the practice of law, and the legal playing field is substantially more equitable than it was in the time when Judge Matthews began practicing law. I encourage people of all backgrounds who have a passion for justice and the law to keep learning and growing. As Judge Matthews demonstrated, diversity unlocks excellence. I hope to see my peers of all backgrounds continue to make history in the decades to come.

Author: Sophia R. Holley, Partner at KMK Law; Executive Editor, *For the Record*; Eminent Domain, Condemnation & Land Use Attorney

