

NCSC President Mary C. McQueen reflects on the life and impact of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Speaking as the first woman to serve as the President of the National Center for State Courts, I've always found a personal connection with one quote in particular of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg: *"We are at last beginning to relegate to the history books the idea of the token woman."*

Growing up in the deep South, my female role models were Eleanor Roosevelt and my mother. Both believed that women and men possessed equal responsibilities, talents, and rights. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's life became a roadmap for my generation to follow and pass along to our daughters and granddaughters. Many of my female colleagues were the "first something": first woman State Supreme Court Chief Justice, first woman State Court Administrator, first woman Governor, first State Attorney General, first woman member of a local Rotary Club, first woman member of Congress. News coverage of the appointments and elections of these amazing women usually started with that line: "the first woman." As Justice Ginsburg carefully crafted a blueprint for a more equal union, those of us who were "first somethings" used those cracks in the glass ceiling to validate her faith in us and in our country's promise of a more perfect union – validate our equality through hard work, tireless commitment and selfless leadership.

Today twenty State Supreme Court Chief Justices and twenty-six State Court Administrators are women – no longer "tokens" or symbols of gender equality but defenders of justice, guardians of the Rule of Law and advocates for access to justice. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg left us with instructions for future generations, "one lives not just for oneself but for one's community"

From the women you have influenced, we salute you!