

# REMARKS

## RUTH BADER GINSBURG LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD REMARKS

RONA KAUFMAN\*

Welcome to the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lifetime Achievement Award Luncheon. I am Rona Kaufman, and I am Chair of the Women in Legal Education Section, and it is my great pleasure to be with you here today to honor the 2020 RBG Award recipient Professor Robin West.

I'd like to take a moment to thank and recognize the many women whose hard work and dedication brought us here today and who are responsible for this year's WILE Section programming. Our Section Officers and Executive Committee Members have worked so hard behind the scenes, and I am eternally grateful. Please hold applause until I've named everyone. When I call your name, please rise:

Chair Elect: Tamar Lawson

Secretary: Susan Bisom Rapp

Treasurer: Lisa Mazzie

Past Chair: Cynthia Fountaine

Executive Committee Members: Naomi Cahn, Jill Engle, Victoria Haneman, Catherine Hardee, Suzanne Kim, Ashley London, Linda McClaine, Fernanda Nicola, Hari Osofsky, Kaelyn Romey, Susan Rozelle, Milena Sterio, Keri Stone, and Ettie Ward.

The purpose of the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lifetime Achievement Award is to honor an individual who has had a distinguished career of teaching, service, and scholarship for at least 20 years. The recipient is someone who has impacted women, the legal community, the academy, and the issues that affect women through mentoring, writing, speaking, activism, and by providing opportunities to others. Professor West was nominated by colleagues in the academy and selected by the Women in Legal Education Ruth Bader Ginsburg Award Committee because she exemplifies the characteristics and traits of an awardee.

This year, we present this prestigious award to Robin West, and before presenting it to her, I want to say a few words of personal thanks.

I feel so lucky to be the Chair of the WILE Section the year we happen to honor Robin West because, like so many others, Professor West changed, not only the

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trajectory of my scholarship, but my understanding of my place in the world. Unlike many others in the room, I did not read Robin West's *Jurisprudence and Gender* in law school, because when it was published in 1988, I was only in eighth grade. Instead, I read it for the first time when I was a new mom in 2003. It was then, during mostly sleepless nights while I was breastfeeding my first child, that I came across and read Professor West's groundbreaking article. It was then that I knew I wanted to transition from legal practice to academia. And it was then that I started to truly understand the relationship I was having with my daughter and the relationship I would go on to have with the sons to whom I had not yet given birth.

Robin explained pregnancy and the mother-child relationship in ways that I had not yet begun to contemplate. My own article, *Holistic Pregnancy: Rejecting the Theory of the Adversarial Mother*, is a direct consequence of how *Jurisprudence and Gender* affected my understanding of ideas of personhood as they apply to mothering. I cannot overstate the impact Robin's work had on my personal and professional life, and I feel so incredibly privileged to be here to bestow this award on Robin today. Robin, on behalf of a world of women who you've impacted with your teaching, scholarship, and mentorship, thank you.

In 2013, this Award was bestowed upon Ruth Bader Ginsburg. In 2014, Catharine MacKinnon. In 2015, Herma Hill Kay. In 2016, Marina Angel. In 2017, Martha Albertson Fineman. In 2018, Tamar Frankel.

It is my honor and pleasure to present the 2020 Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lifetime Achievement Award to Professor Robin West.