

MODEL OF RESPECT: *Ginsburg & Scalia*

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www.ArizonaRepublicansWhoBelieve.org
contact@ArizonaRepublicansWhoBelieve.org



United States Supreme Court Justices Antonin Scalia and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. In this Opinion piece “it is Ginsburg’s friendship, not her court opinions, that the nation ought to remember right now.”

(These excerpts are from an Opinion piece by Boyd Matheson, *The Deseret News*, Opinion Editor, September 18, 2020)

For Ruth Bader Ginsburg, oneness never was meant to be sameness

She was a pioneering woman for our time, but in our time — these trying times for the United States — we must not miss her greatest guiding principle: Friendship is more important than transactional partisanship.

Yes, it’s her relationships, not her court opinions, that the nation ought to remember the most. Right now, contempt and hate for dissenters is the piston that drives far too many conversations online and in the public square. But Justice Ginsburg proved that friendship is part of the fabric that has, for more than 233 years, bound up and healed the nation.

The cult-like following of Ginsburg has been filled with fan clubs, cartoon characterizations, podcasts, websites, whitepapers and a mountain of social media memes and self-help mantras. Yet, there was only one thing the supporters of the Notorious RBG could hardly understand — that she was a self-proclaimed, “Buddy of Justice Antonin Scalia,” her ideological opposite.

“How could she even stand to be in the same courtroom?” they would ask. “Shopping buddies? You can’t be serious!” they would incredulously state. Ginsburg believed, and showed by how she lived, that contempt is not compatible with the Supreme Court and shouldn’t be for the citizens of America.

Ginsburg and Scalia were indeed an interesting friendship. They agreed on little philosophically but were united in their belief of the right way to treat people, how to learn from others and what could happen when others listen across their differences.

...

[F]or Ginsburg their public friendship also made a statement about the court as an institution: that it was strengthened by respectful debate, that it could work no matter how polarized its members were.”

Ginsburg showed in her relationship and friendship with Scalia that unity and harmony in the United States had little to do with disagreeing less; it was really about learning to disagree better. America is at its best when it is a country of big ideas, competing philosophies and respectful debate.

What would happen if every American modeled such a friendship? It would turn the arc of American history toward a brighter, more prosperous and more harmonious future.

... we the people should honor this trailblazer of the highest court in the land by taking time in the next several days to reach out to someone with whom we have disagreed in the past.

Begin by listening to the other person, seek to understand them and then engage in an elevated conversation. Then we can begin to bridge and build a true relationship of trust. And who knows, maybe you’ll make a friend who might blossom into a lifelong buddy.

If every American did that — disagree better with just one person — the country would never be the same. Friendship and meaningful relationships are Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s greatest closing argument on a most extraordinary life.

www.deseret.com/opinion/2020/9/18/21446272/ruth-bader-ginsburg-rbg-died-pancreatic-cancer-scalia-friends-disagree-better

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