

Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C. 20543

OFFICE OF
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**STATEMENTS FROM THE SUPREME COURT
REGARDING JUSTICE STEPHEN G. BREYER'S RETIREMENT**

Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr.:

Justice Stephen G. Breyer is an energetic jurist and dear friend. He has rendered nearly half a century of distinguished public service to our country, including 42 years as a federal judge—27 as a Member of this Court. His pragmatism, encyclopedic knowledge, and varied government experience have enriched the Court's deliberations. And his fanciful hypotheticals during oral argument have befuddled counsel and colleagues alike.

Justice Breyer's optimism and profound love of country, expressed through word and deed, have inspired countless others. He is a tireless and powerful advocate for the rule of law—in the United States and abroad.

He is also a reliable antidote to dead airtime at our lunches, moving seamlessly from modern architecture to French cinema, to old radio shows, to a surprisingly comprehensive collection of riddles and knock-knock jokes. He and his wife Joanna enliven every gathering of the Court family. I look forward to being with Justice Breyer on the bench through the end of the sitting, and Jane and I look forward to seeing him and Joanna often in the years ahead.

Associate Justice Clarence Thomas:

When Justice Breyer arrived at the Court almost thirty years ago, we gained a wonderful colleague. As he retires from active duty on the Court, he and Joanna will always be two dear friends. It has been an absolute joy to have spent these years with them, from sitting next to each other on the bench for over twenty-five years to visiting with them in New England. Virginia and I will continue to hold fast to the countless memories we have already accumulated over these many years and look forward to creating even more with them. Though Justice Breyer's tenure on the Court draws to a close, our friendship and deep affection redoubles and endures. We extend our fondest wishes to them in the next phase of their lives, and we thank them from the bottom of our hearts for being such delightful and dear friends whom we love.

Associate Justice Samuel A. Alito, Jr.:

I will greatly miss Steve when he leaves the Court. He has been a delightful colleague—brilliant, erudite, friendly, good-natured, and funny. I will miss his unique questions at argument, his valuable contributions at conference, his insightful opinions, his amusing observations at lunch, and our many fascinating conversations on a wide range of subjects. He and Joanna have worked hard and effectively to promote a congenial atmosphere at the Court. His retirement is a great loss for us, and I wish Steve and Joanna much happiness and satisfaction in the next chapter of their lives.

Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor:

My dear friend, Steve Breyer, is leaving the Court after 42 distinguished years of service to the judiciary and to the country. I will miss him. He is brilliant, passionate about the law, and dedicated to the Court. He is funny, optimistic, and giving. We all will miss his commitment to seeking consensus and ensuring collegiality in all we do. He has served the country with honor. I wish him and his beloved wife, Dr. Joanna Breyer, much joy in the years ahead. I know that both of them will continue to make significant contributions to the country's wellbeing.

Associate Justice Elena Kagan:

I'll miss Steve Breyer every day after he has left the Court. He is a brilliant and wise judge whose vision of law will remain of great importance. He is the best possible colleague. He believes in making institutions work; to strengthen this one, he listens to other views with care and generosity, and does everything he can to find common ground. And he is the best possible friend. He is kind and warm and funny. He has boundless optimism and a great heart. I can hardly imagine the Court without him.

Associate Justice Neil M. Gorsuch:

For more than 40 years, Justice Breyer has served the Judiciary with integrity and grace. His deep knowledge of our law, its history, and our government is profound. His good humor is legendary. I will very much miss his wisdom—and his wit—at our conference table. He and Joanna have been fast friends to Louise and me and we hope to see them often as friends for many years to come. We wish them and their wonderful family every happiness.

Associate Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh:

I will deeply and daily miss Justice Breyer. He has made the Court and America better. He has been an inspiring presence in the courtroom and conference room, at the lunch table and in chambers. Steve Breyer is a scholar and gentleman, an independent judge and fierce patriot, a man of great wisdom and humor, a collegial consensus-builder and unfailing optimist. He understands how government works for the people, and he has always strived to make it work better, in a good-faith and nonpartisan way. He has sought to stand in the shoes of others and to understand their perspective. Ashley and I are very grateful to Joanna and Steve for warmly welcoming us to the Court family four years ago. We look forward to continuing our friendship with both of them, and we wish them all the best as they start a new chapter in their remarkable journey together.

Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett:

I admire Steve Breyer for many reasons, not least of which is his judicial temperament. Steve feels passionately about the law, as his many writings reflect. Yet his passion never manifests itself in anger. Both in print and in person, Steve aims to persuade through exuberance rather than bite. He is a model of civility. And in my time on the Court, he has also become my valued colleague and friend. I am grateful for his warm welcome, sage counsel, and sense of humor. Joanna, too, has been incredibly gracious to both me and my family. While I will greatly miss my day-to-day interactions with Steve, I look forward to many more years of friendship with the Breyers.

Associate Justice Anthony M. Kennedy (retired):

Though our classes were separated by one year, it was my pleasure to know Stephen Breyer both as a Stanford undergraduate and a Harvard Law School student. Even in those school years, Stephen was known and respected for his intellect and friendly outreach. It was no surprise that on his coming to our Court, his scholarship and dignity at once impressed us all and drew us close as friends. For years our Chambers were next to each other. When we talked about the law, as we often did, his insights were fascinating because they so often were in new dimensions. He was a splendid colleague. During conferences and in his opinions, he remained dedicated to demonstrating utmost civility, even if we disagreed. His scholarship, his demeanor, and his dedication to freedom are in the finest traditions of the Court and the law it must uphold.

Associate Justice David H. Souter (retired):

Steve Breyer has been a superlative justice, whose work has shown his high intelligence and sound common sense. His friendship has enhanced my life.