Remembrance of Judge Edward M. Ginsburg

Over the past 45 years, Ed Ginsburg and I have had daily discussions that, to the outside world, may appear as bickering. It started in 1977 when Attorney Ginsburg tried a civil case before this newly minted Newton District Court judge. Ed won the case and for decades claimed it was a “slam dunk” and not the close call reflected in my decision. Our homes are two blocks apart and we walked our dogs together almost every evening. Neither our spouses nor our children would accompany us complaining that we talked about the same thing every day. When my son tired of playing catch with me, I knocked on the Ginsburg kitchen door and invited him to play catch. It was suppertime and I was told to wait outside. While they were dining I threw the ball repeatedly against the brick wall. Wife Julie supposed that I was not going to stop, Ed agreed, and she said something like “just go” and he did. When Julie was studying for the bar examination, she yelled out the window that we should take our ball playing elsewhere and we did. Judge Ginsburg went to Opening Day at Fenway Park for fifty years. We attended many games together and thought that we knew baseball. However, one evening we were seated in front of two younger men who were real experts. In the sixth inning, the Red Sox pitcher got shelled and they brought in Jim Corsi, a middle reliever. Judge Ginsburg greeted him by yelling “Corsi is a fat bum” and one of the two men said “Jim Corsi is my brother.” I was sure that he would take a swing at Ginsburg and hit me. Instead, he said “He’s not having a good year, is he?” I knew then that Ed Ginsburg had a “Teflon” coating.

On our walks we discussed our judicial decision making and he was always right. He had a way of knowing who should prevail even if it was out of his area of judicial expertise. His assessments of the reputation and competence of members of the bar were also nearly flawless and his judgment was impeccable. After my judicial retirement, I have practiced in the world of mediation and arbitration and it never ceased to amaze me on how quickly Ed assessed the parties and the issues in my cases and called it correctly.

We co-taught trial practice in the Spring Term at BC Law School for some 40 years as well chaired programs for MCLE, the MBA, and the Flaschner Judicial Institute. Judge Ginsburg was a master at managing his cases in the Probate and Family Court. Moreover, when he needed assistance on some professional matter, he had a knack for recruiting the best and the brightest people who helped make all of his endeavors a success. That included his sterling work on the Big Dig and more recently on his Senior Partners program.

His passing will leave a hole in the lives of many people and so too for my wife Lynn, son Steven, and me.

Judge Paul A. Chernoff (ret.)
June 26, 2023