



National Women's History Month 2024

Keynote Speaker Rebekah Taussig

Disability Advocate, Educator, and Best-Selling Author of *Sitting Pretty*

Thursday, March 28
6 p.m., Student Union Ballroom

Cosponsored by The Distinguished Lecture Fund and the Disability and Access Center



Rebekah Taussig will challenge everything you think you know about disability as she invites us into her experience of living in a body that looks and moves differently than most. "What would it mean for disabled folks if society saw us as acceptable, equal, valuable parts of the whole?" she writes in her memoir, *Sitting Pretty: The View From My Ordinary Resilient Disabled Body* (HarperOne).

Taussig, who has been paralyzed since age 3, is a mom, wife, author, disability advocate, and educator with a Ph.D. in creative nonfiction and disability studies. Before pivoting to writing, speaking, and consulting, Taussig taught passionately for almost a decade from freshmen in high school to upper-level college classes and continues to offer writing workshops.

She is also one hell of a fighter on a mission to show that disabled people have incredible value; as she argues, a more inclusive world is a sturdier, kinder, more imaginative world for all of us.

A storyteller at heart with a great sense of humor, Taussig invites us to think bigger and more critically about who has a seat at the table and the barriers that bar others from inclusion. She has held talks and workshops at the University of Michigan, Davidson College, and Yale University on disability representation, identity, and community, and her writing appears in publications from *Time* to *Refinery29*. She's been a guest on many podcasts and also runs the Instagram platform @sitting_pretty, where she crafts "mini-memoirs" for her more than 50,000 followers to contribute nuance to the collective narratives being told about disability in our culture. Taussig is the recipient of the Hefner Heitz Kansas Book Award in Literary Nonfiction for *Sitting Pretty*.

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Ruth Bader Ginsburg 1933–2020

Ruth Bader Ginsburg has inspired generations of women to break gender barriers. Even after facing gender discrimination as she pursued her academic goals, Ginsburg forged ahead and became the second woman—and first Jewish woman—to serve on the Supreme Court.

She was born March 15, 1933, in Brooklyn, New York, and earned her bachelor's degree from Cornell University in 1954, the year she married Martin D. Ginsburg. She had her first child before starting Harvard Law School, where she was one of only nine women in a class of 500. Ginsburg often faced discrimination—she was asked how she felt about taking a man's spot in the program—and she and her female colleagues were even excluded from using certain sections of the library.

Ginsburg transferred to Columbia Law School in 1958 and graduated a year later at the top of her class, but it was hard to find employment. She explained: "In the fifties, the traditional law firms were just beginning to turn around on hiring Jews. . . . But to be a woman, a Jew, and a mother to boot, that combination was a bit much."

Ginsburg became a law clerk in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, then worked for the Columbia Law School Project on International Procedure before becoming a professor at Rutgers University School of Law. She also became involved with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and was central to the founding of its Women's Rights Project in 1971. Ginsburg returned to Columbia in 1972, where she was the first woman to receive tenure. While teaching law at Columbia, she also served as the general counsel for the ACLU and on its National Board of Directors.

In 1980, Ginsburg was appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, where she served until President Bill Clinton nominated her to the Supreme Court in 1993. There, Ginsburg fiercely advocated for gender equality and women's rights. She died September 18, 2020, from complications of metastatic pancreatic cancer.



