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Rethinking Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Legacy, a Year After Her Death

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Having just passed the one-year anniversary of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's [death from cancer at the age of 87](#), the legacy of this trailblazing advocate, scholar, and jurist remains to be determined. One theme that has emerged among the [wave of feminist memes](#) is that of the late justice as an incrementalist. But careful examination of her as a litigator and judge shows that she was anything but incremental — Justice Ginsburg was a bold change-maker who always pushed the envelope.

An incrementalist is someone who adopts a gradual approach to social change. The classic example of incrementalism was the [NAACP's strategy to overturn segregation](#). Rather than attack the institution directly from the start, advocates challenged particular aspects of Jim Crow over several decades, steadily chipping away at discriminatory policies and developing precedent before pursuing the big win in *Brown v. Board of Education*.