

## Newcastle Chapter

5:30pm Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019

The Newcastle Club, 40 Newcomen Street, Newcastle

Please note dress code and etiquette at the Club- <http://www.newcastleclub.com.au/122>)

### 'What the Cult of Ruth Bader Ginsburg Means for the Future of Feminism, Judicial Decision-Making and Legitimacy of the Courts'

Professor Renee Knake & Dr Kcasey McLoughlin



Ruth Bader Ginsburg's status as a global cultural icon is unparalleled. The subject of the acclaimed documentary RBG and the Hollywood film *On the Basis of Sex*, her image graces coffee mugs, t-shirts, tattoos, and even closet air fresheners. She is widely-known not as Justice Ginsberg, but as the Notorious RBG, a title drawn from the rapper Biggie Smalls' nickname Notorious B.I.G. Based on high-demand, the clothing store Banana Republic reissued a specially designed necklace styled after the collars she wears when delivering a dissent. The beer company Sam Adams crafted a beer in her honor, "When there are Nine." This paper examines why Ginsburg is the only justice in the world to ever achieve such cult-like fame, and what her status means for judicial decision-making, the legitimacy of courts, and the future of feminism. Drawing upon their award-winning scholarship examining the media's depiction of supreme court nominees and the self-fashioning of women judges in their speeches and portraits, Renee Knake and Kcasey McLoughlin explore RBG's place in history both as a justice and as a feminist in a world that increasingly resists the very rights for women she devoted her career to pursuing.



Professor Renee Knake earned her J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School. She holds the Joanne and Larry Doherty Chair in Legal Ethics and is a professor of law at the University of Houston Law Center. Professor Knake is an internationally recognized expert on professional responsibility and legal ethics. She has been invited to speak throughout the United States and in countries such as Australia, Canada, England, Guatemala, Mexico, and the United Arab Emirates. She is regularly contacted to assist in legal matters involving lawyer discipline and judicial ethics, and has twice testified successfully before the Texas Supreme Court Special Court of Review to support reversal of discipline charges against judges. She is an author of three casebooks—*Professional Responsibility: A Contemporary Approach* (West Publishing, 3rd Edition 2017); *Legal Ethics for the Real World: Building Skills Through Case Study* (Foundation Press 2018); *Gender, Power, Leadership and Law* (forthcoming West Publishing)—along with more than 20 scholarly articles including publications in the *Fordham Law Review*, *Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics*, *Illinois Law Review*, *Ohio State Law Journal*, *Washington & Lee Law Review*, and the *Washington Law Review*. Professor Knake's fourth book, *Shortlisted: Women, Diversity, and the Supreme Court*, is under contract with New York University Press. In 2019 Professor Knake has held the Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University.



Dr Kcasey McLoughlin is a Lecturer at Newcastle Law School. She conducts research in the areas of equal opportunity, law and politics with a particular focus on how law affects women and the extent to which law can be used as a tool for advancing equality. In 2017 she was awarded the Australian Political Studies Association Best PhD Prize for her thesis 'Situating Women Judges on the High Court of Australia: Not just men in skirts?' Dr McLoughlin has held prestigious visiting scholar positions in Australia and overseas at Melbourne Law School, Queen Mary, University of London (UK) and the University of Kent (UK). Most recently she delivered an invited paper to senior members of academy and members of the Judicial Appointments Commission at the "Current Issues in Judicial Diversity" event in Lincoln Inn Fields London, jointly hosted by the Centre for Research on Law, Equality and Diversity (University of London), Centre for Sexuality Race and Gender Justice (University of Kent) and the Judicial Diversity Initiative. Her first book *Women Judges and the Gender Order: Lessons from the High Court of Australia* (Routledge) is forthcoming in 2020.



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