

Supreme Court of the United States
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OFFICE OF
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STATEMENTS FROM THE SUPREME COURT REGARDING THE DEATH OF
JUSTICE ANTONIN SCALIA

Statement of Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr.:

On behalf of the Court and retired Justices, I am saddened to report that our colleague Justice Antonin Scalia has passed away. He was an extraordinary individual and jurist, admired and treasured by his colleagues. His passing is a great loss to the Court and the country he so loyally served. We extend our deepest condolences to his wife Maureen and his family.

Statement of Justice Anthony Kennedy:

In years to come any history of the Supreme Court will, and must, recount the wisdom, scholarship, and technical brilliance that Justice Scalia brought to the Court. His insistence on demanding standards shaped the work of the Court in its private discussions, its oral arguments, and its written opinions.

Yet these historic achievements are all the more impressive and compelling because the foundations of Justice Scalia's jurisprudence, the driving force in all his work, and his powerful personality were shaped by an unyielding commitment to the Constitution of the United States and to the highest ethical and moral standards.

In the fullness of time Justice Scalia's beautiful family will be sustained by the force and dynamism of his intellect and personality, attributes that were so decent and so powerful; but now they mourn. We give them assurances of our deepest sympathy and our lasting friendship.

Statement of Justice Clarence Thomas:

Justice Scalia was a good man; a wonderful husband who loved his wife and his family; a man of strong faith; a towering intellect; a legal giant; and a dear, dear friend. In every

case, he gave it his all to get the broad principles and the small details right. Virginia and I are deeply saddened by his sudden and untimely death. Our prayers and love go out to Maureen and the Scalia family. It is hard to imagine the Court without my friend. I will miss him beyond all measure.

Statement of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg:

Toward the end of the opera *Scalia/Ginsburg*, tenor Scalia and soprano Ginsburg sing a duet: “We are different, we are one,” different in our interpretation of written texts, one in our reverence for the Constitution and the institution we serve. From our years together at the D.C. Circuit, we were best buddies. We disagreed now and then, but when I wrote for the Court and received a Scalia dissent, the opinion ultimately released was notably better than my initial circulation. Justice Scalia nailed all the weak spots—the “applesauce” and “argle bargle”—and gave me just what I needed to strengthen the majority opinion. He was a jurist of captivating brilliance and wit, with a rare talent to make even the most sober judge laugh. The press referred to his “energetic fervor,” “astringent intellect,” “peppery prose,” “acumen,” and “affability,” all apt descriptions. He was eminently quotable, his pungent opinions so clearly stated that his words never slipped from the reader’s grasp.

Justice Scalia once described as the peak of his days on the bench an evening at the Opera Ball when he joined two Washington National Opera tenors at the piano for a medley of songs. He called it the famous Three Tenors performance. He was, indeed, a magnificent performer. It was my great good fortune to have known him as working colleague and treasured friend.

Statement of Justice Stephen G. Breyer:

Nino Scalia was a legal titan. He used his great energy, fine mind, and stylistic genius to further the rule of law as he saw it. He was man of integrity and wit. His interests were wide ranging as was his knowledge about law, this Nation and its Constitution. He loved his family. He also loved ideas, music, and the out of doors. He shared with us, his colleagues, his enthusiasms, his humor, his mental agility, his seriousness of purpose. We benefitted greatly. His contribution to the law was a major one. Our hearts go out to Maureen and his family. We have lost a fine colleague and a very good friend. We shall miss him hugely.

Statement of Justice Samuel Alito:

Martha-Ann and I are deeply saddened by the terrible news. Nino was a remarkable person, and I feel very honored to have known him and to have had him as a colleague. He was a towering figure who will be remembered as one of the most important figures in the history of the Supreme Court and a scholar who deeply influenced our legal culture. His intellect, learning, wit, and memorable writing will be sorely missed, and

Martha-Ann and I will deeply miss him as a friend. We will keep Nino, Maureen, and their family in our prayers.

Statement of Justice Sonia Sotomayor:

My colleague Nino Scalia was devoted to his family, friends, our Court, and our country. He left an indelible mark on our history. I will miss him and the dimming of his special light is a great loss for me. My thoughts are with Maureen, his children, and his grandchildren.

Statement of Justice Elena Kagan:

Nino Scalia will go down in history as one of the most transformational Supreme Court Justices of our nation. His views on interpreting texts have changed the way all of us think and talk about the law. I admired Nino for his brilliance and erudition, his dedication and energy, and his peerless writing. And I treasured Nino's friendship: I will always remember, and greatly miss, his warmth, charm, and generosity. Maureen and the whole Scalia family are in my thoughts and prayers.

Statement of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (Retired):

I am deeply saddened to learn of the passing of my dear friend and colleague, Justice Antonin Scalia. Nino was a tireless public servant who left an indelible mark on the Court and on our jurisprudence. His gifts of wisdom, wit, and wordsmithing were unparalleled, and he will be sorely missed.

Statement of Justice John Paul Stevens (Retired):

Nino Scalia was a good friend, a brilliant man with an incomparable sense of humor, and as articulate as any Justice who ever served on the Court. He has had a major impact on the development of the law, and earned the respect of all his colleagues. We will all miss him.