1803

"It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is."

– Chief Justice John Marshall in *Marbury v. Madison*, 5 U.S. 137 (1803).

New Secretary of State James Madison had refused to deliver a judicial commission to William Marbury, who was appointed to a position by outgoing President John Adams, because the new Jefferson administration believed the "midnight appointments" made by outgoing President Adams were a political attempt to keep Federalists in power after losing the election. **WL**

1928

"The makers of our Constitution … conferred … the right to be let alone — the most comprehensive of rights and the right most valued by civilized men."

– Justice Louis Brandeis, dissenting in *Olmstead v. United States*, 277 U.S. 438 (1928), overruled in 1967.

Federal agents secretly wiretapped Roy Olmstead's telephone conversations during a Prohibition-era bootlegging investigation without entering his home or office. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the wiretaps were legal. **WL**

1954

"Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

– Chief Justice Earl Warren in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Black families challenged laws that required racial segregation in public schools. The Supreme Court unanimously ruled that separating children by race in public education was inherently unequal and violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. **WL**

1992

"At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life."

– Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, one of three authors in *Planned Parenthood of Southeast Pennsylvania v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833 (1992), overruled by *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Org.*, 597 U.S. 215 (2022).

The case involved a Pennsylvania abortion control law. In a 5-4 ruling, the Court reaffirmed *Roe v. Wade* (1973) but imposed a new standard to determine the validity of abortion restrictions. **WL**

1996

"[G]eneralizations about 'the way women are,' estimates of what is appropriate for most women, no longer justify denying opportunity to women whose talent and capacity place them outside the average description."

– Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in *United States v. Virginia*, 518 U.S. 515, 517 (1996).

The petitioner challenged a state-funded military college that only admitted men. The Supreme Court ruled (7-1) that the state did not have an adequate justification for treating women differently. **WL**

2008

"[T]he enshrinement of constitutional rights necessarily takes certain policy choices off the table."

– Justice Antonin Scalia in *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U.S. 570 (2008).

The case interpreted the Second Amendment's right to bear arms against a Washington, D.C. law that essentially banned handguns and required guns in the home to be disassembled or trigger locked. The majority (5-4) struck down key parts of the D.C. handgun ban as conflicting with the Second Amendment. **WL**

2010

"[T]he Government may not suppress political speech on the basis of the speaker's corporate identity."

– Justice Anthony Kennedy in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Comm'n*, 558 U.S. 310 (2010).

The majority ruled (5-4) that the government cannot limit independent political spending by corporations, unions, and other groups because political spending is protected by the First Amendment. **WL**

2023

"Eliminating racial discrimination means eliminating all of it."

– Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. in *Students for Fair Admissions Inc. v. President & Fellows of Harvard College*, 600 U.S. 181 (2023).

The majority (6-2) ruled that colleges and universities generally cannot consider a student's race as a factor in admissions because doing so violates the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. **WL**