

# Christine Blasey Ford

**Christine Margaret Blasey Ford** (/ˈblɑːzi/<sup>[3]</sup> born November 1966)<sup>[4]</sup> is an American professor of psychology at Palo Alto University and a research psychologist at the Stanford University School of Medicine.<sup>[5]</sup> She specializes in designing statistical models for research projects.<sup>[6]</sup> During her academic career, Ford has worked as a professor at the Stanford University School of Medicine Collaborative Clinical Psychology Program.<sup>[7]</sup>

In September 2018, Ford publicly alleged that then-U.S. Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh sexually assaulted her in Bethesda, Maryland, when they were teenagers in the summer of 1982.<sup>[8]</sup> She testified about her allegations during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing regarding Kavanaugh's Supreme Court nomination later that month.<sup>[9]</sup>

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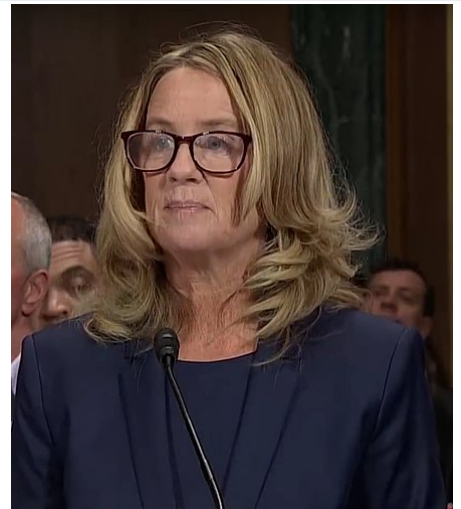
## Early life and education

Ford grew up in the suburbs of Washington, D.C.<sup>[9]</sup> Her parents are Paula K. and Ralph G. Blasey Jr., registered Republicans who were 80 and 83 years old, respectively, as of September 2018. Her brothers are Tom and Ralph III.<sup>[10]</sup>

From 1978 through 1984,<sup>[9]</sup> she attended the Holton-Arms School, a private, all-girls university-preparatory school in Bethesda, Maryland.<sup>[11]</sup> While on her regional sports team for diving, she accompanied diver Greg Louganis on a trip to the White House to discuss the 1980 Summer Olympics boycott.<sup>[12]</sup>

She earned an undergraduate degree in experimental psychology in 1988<sup>[11]</sup> from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.<sup>[9]</sup> She received a master's degree in clinical psychology from Pepperdine University in 1991.<sup>[11]</sup> In 1996, she

### Christine Blasey Ford



<b>Born</b>	Christine Margaret Blasey November 1966 (age 52)
<b>Other names</b>	Christine Blasey <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Occupation</b>	Professor of Psychology
<b>Spouse(s)</b>	Russell Ford (m. 2002)
<b>Children</b>	2
<b>Relatives</b>	Bridgit Mendler (niece)

#### Academic background

<b>Education</b>	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (BA) <p>Pepperdine University (PsyM)</p> <p>University of Southern California (PhD)</p>
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received a PhD in educational psychology from the University of Southern California.<sup>[11]</sup> Her 1995 dissertation was entitled *Measuring Young Children's Coping Responses to Interpersonal Conflict*.<sup>[13]</sup> In 2009, she earned a master's degree in epidemiology, with a focus on the subject of biostatistics,<sup>[14]</sup> from Stanford University School of Medicine.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Career

Ford began teaching at Stanford University in 1988.<sup>[15]</sup> As of September 2018, she teaches research design and education clinical psychology at Palo Alto University.<sup>[5]</sup> Additionally, she participates in educational programs with the Stanford University School of Medicine as a member of a consortium group with Palo Alto University.<sup>[5][15][16]</sup>

Through this consortium group, called the Pacific Graduate School of Psychology (PGSP), Ford teaches subjects including psychometrics, study methodologies, and statistics.<sup>[12][16]</sup> She has also performed consulting work for multiple pharmaceutical companies.<sup>[17]</sup> She worked as the director of biostatistics at Corcept Therapeutics, and collaborated with FDA statisticians.<sup>[13]</sup> She is widely published within her field.<sup>[8][16][18]</sup>

Ford "specializes in designing statistical models for research projects in order to make sure they come to accurate conclusions," as summarized by Helena Chmura Kraemer, a Stanford professor emeritus in biostatistics who co-authored a book and several articles with Ford.<sup>[6]</sup> Ford has written or co-written several books about psychological topics, including depression.<sup>[19]</sup> Her other research topics published in academic journal articles have included child abuse and the September 11 attacks.<sup>[15][19]</sup> In 2015, she co-authored a book entitled *How Many Subjects? Statistical Power Analysis in Research*.<sup>[19][20]</sup> Her research into the social impact of hiding one's sexual orientation was published in 2016 in the journal *Behavior Therapy*, and reviewed by psychologist William Gibson of the American Psychological Association, who found their research "demonstrates that issues of identity have relevance to mental health outcomes in ways that much of previous work misses."<sup>[21]</sup>

Since coming forward with allegations of sexual assault against Brett Kavanaugh, Ford has been unable to resume her teaching at Palo Alto University.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Personal life

Ford lives in Palo Alto, California, with her husband Russell Ford, whom she married in 2002, and their two sons.<sup>[5][16][6]</sup> She is the aunt of actress and singer Bridgit Mendler.<sup>[23]</sup>

Ford is a registered Democrat who has made small contributions to political organizations.<sup>[8]</sup> In 2017, she participated in a local Women's March protesting President Trump<sup>[12]</sup> and attended a March for Science in San Francisco to protest the Trump administration's cuts to research.<sup>[16]</sup>

## Recognition

	Stanford University (MS)
<b>Thesis</b>	<i>Measuring Young Children's Coping Responses to Interpersonal Conflict</i> ( <a href="http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15799coll17/id/511656">http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15799coll17/id/511656</a> ) (1995)
<b>Doctoral advisor</b>	Michael D. Newcomb <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Academic work</b>	
<b>Discipline</b>	Psychology
<b>Institutions</b>	Stanford University School of Medicine Palo Alto University

The Wing, a co-working network and club for women, named the conference room in its San Francisco headquarters after Ford.<sup>[24]</sup> In November 2018, a GoFundMe started by Georgetown Law professor Heidi Li Feldman raised \$30,000 towards endowing a professorship or scholarship in Ford's name.<sup>[25]</sup> That same year, *Time* magazine included Ford on its shortlist for Person of the Year.<sup>[26]</sup> On December 11, 2018, Ford presented the *Sports Illustrated* "Inspiration of the Year" award to Rachael Denhollander.<sup>[27]</sup>

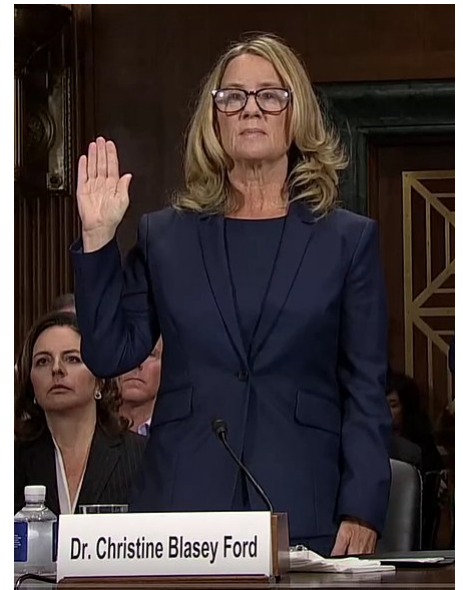
Additionally, Ford has been nominated for a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Distinguished Alumna Award for "speaking truth to power" when she went public with her sexual assault allegations against Brett Kavanaugh.<sup>[28]</sup>

## Sexual assault allegation against Brett Kavanaugh

In early July 2018, after Judge Brett Kavanaugh was reported to be on Donald Trump's shortlist to become an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, Ford contacted both *The Washington Post* and her congresswoman, Anna Eshoo.<sup>[8]</sup> On July 20,<sup>[9]</sup> eleven days after Trump nominated Kavanaugh, Eshoo met with Ford, becoming convinced of her credibility and noting that Ford seemed "terrified" that her identity as an accuser might become public. Eshoo and Ford decided to take the matter to Senator Dianne Feinstein, one of Ford's senators in California and the ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, which would deliberate Kavanaugh's nomination.<sup>[29]</sup> In a July 30, 2018 letter to Feinstein, Ford alleged that Kavanaugh had sexually assaulted her when both were in high schools in Bethesda, Maryland, and stated that she expected her story to be kept confidential.<sup>[8]</sup><sup>[30]</sup> In August, Ford took a polygraph test with a former FBI agent, who concluded Ford was being truthful when attesting to the accuracy of her allegations.<sup>[8]</sup>

Owing to her confidentiality commitment to Ford,<sup>[31]</sup> Feinstein did not raise the issue in the initial Kavanaugh confirmation proceedings.<sup>[32]</sup> On September 12, *The Intercept* reported (without naming Ford) that Feinstein was withholding a Kavanaugh-related document from fellow Judiciary Committee Democrats.<sup>[33]</sup> On September 13,<sup>[34]</sup> Feinstein referred Ford's letter to the FBI, which redacted Ford's name and forwarded the letter to the White House<sup>[8]</sup> as an update to Kavanaugh's background check.<sup>[35]</sup> The White House in turn sent the letter to the full Senate Judiciary Committee.<sup>[8]</sup>

On September 16, after media reported anonymous allegations and reporters started to track down her identity, Ford went public.<sup>[36]</sup> Ford had wrestled with the choice to make her identity known, weighing the potential negative impact it could have on her,<sup>[37]</sup><sup>[38]</sup> but ultimately spoke to *The Washington Post*, alleging that Kavanaugh had sexually assaulted her in the summer of 1982 when she was 15 and he was 17.<sup>[39]</sup><sup>[40]</sup><sup>[41]</sup> She said that, while his friend Mark Judge watched, Kavanaugh, intoxicated, held her down on a bed with his body, grinding against and groping her, covering her mouth when she tried to scream and trying to pull her clothes off.<sup>[42]</sup><sup>[43]</sup> Finding it hard to breathe, she thought Kavanaugh was *accidentally* (her emphasis) going to kill her.<sup>[11]</sup> She recounted escaping when Judge jumped on the bed and toppled them.<sup>[8]</sup> As corroboration of her account, Ford provided the *Post* with the polygraph results as well as session notes from her couples therapist written in 2012.<sup>[8]</sup>



Ford being sworn in

Written Testimony of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford  
United States Senate Judiciary Committee  
September 26, 2018

Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Feinstein, Members of the Committee: My name is Christine Blasey Ford. I am a Professor of Psychology at Palo Alto University and a Research Psychologist at the Stanford University School of Medicine.

I was an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina and earned my degree in Experimental Psychology in 1988. I received a Master's degree in 1991 in Clinical Psychology from Pepperdine University. In 1996, I received a PhD in Educational Psychology from the University of Southern California. I earned a Master's degree in Epidemiology from the Stanford University School of Medicine in 2009.

I have been married to Russell Ford since 2002 and we have two children.

I am here today not because I want to be. I am terrified. I am here because I believe it is my civic duty to tell you what happened to me while Brett Kavanaugh and I were in high school. I have described the events publicly before. I summarized them in my letter to Ranking Member Feinstein, and again in my letter to Chairman Grassley. I understand and appreciate the importance of your hearing from me directly about what happened to me and the impact it has had on my life and on my family.

I grew up in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. I attended the Hobson-Arms School in Bethesda, Maryland, from 1980 to 1984. Hobson-Arms is an all-girls school that opened in 1901. During my time at the school, girls at Hobson-Arms frequently met and became friendly with boys from all boys schools in the area, including Landon School, Georgetown Prep, Gonzaga High

Ford's written testimony

The therapist's notes do not name Kavanaugh but record Ford's claim of being attacked by students "from an elitist boys' school" who went on to become "highly respected and high-ranking members of society in Washington". The therapist's notes also say four boys were involved, which Ford attributed to an error by the therapist; Ford said in 2018 that four boys were at the party but only two were involved in the incident.<sup>[8]</sup> Ford's husband recalled that she had used Kavanaugh's last name in her 2012 description of the incident.<sup>[8]</sup> In an individual therapy session in 2013, Ford described a "rape attempt" that occurred in her late teens.<sup>[8]</sup> Kavanaugh denied Ford's allegations.<sup>[44]</sup> Attorneys Debra Katz, Lisa Blanks and Michael Bromwich represented Ford *pro bono*<sup>[9]</sup> in the process of going public with her statements about Kavanaugh.<sup>[36][12][45]</sup> Democratic adviser Ricki Seidman, who helped prepare Anita Hill for her testimony against Clarence Thomas during his 1991 Supreme Court nomination hearings, was brought in to personally advise Ford in navigating a potential hearing.<sup>[46]</sup>



Senator Dick Durbin asks Ford about her certainty of Brett Kavanaugh's identity in the alleged 1982 attack.

On September 18, Ford's attorneys sent a letter to Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley requesting that the FBI investigate the incident before the Senate holds a hearing on Ford's allegations to "ensure that the crucial facts and witnesses in this matter are assessed in a non-partisan manner, and that the Committee is fully informed before conducting any hearing or making any decisions." The letter additionally noted the significant public support Ford had received, but also severe harassment including death threats, forcing her to leave her home.<sup>[47]</sup> The same day, a crowdfunding campaign was created to defray Ford's security costs, surpassing its \$100,000 goal in less than 24 hours.<sup>[48]</sup>

On September 21, President Trump tweeted about Ford, saying that if Ford's allegations were true, either she or her parents would have reported them at the time of the event.<sup>[23]</sup> Fortune called the tweet an attempt "to undermine her allegation"<sup>[49]</sup> and Republican Senator Susan Collins—considered a key swing vote on Kavanaugh's nomination—said she is "appalled" by Trump's tweet, calling it "inappropriate and wrong".<sup>[50]</sup> Trump's statements about Ford prompted sexual assault victims to start Tweeting using the hashtag #WhyIDidntReport to share reasons for silence.<sup>[51]</sup> Trump issued several more statements, including a tweet alleging that Kavanaugh was "under assault by radical left wing politicians".<sup>[52]</sup>

On September 27, the Senate Judiciary Committee held an additional day of public hearings to discuss her allegations. Ford and Kavanaugh were the only witnesses scheduled.<sup>[53]</sup> Ford testified that Kavanaugh "groped me and tried to take off my clothes," and that "I believed he was going to rape me."<sup>[54]</sup> Kavanaugh had previously denied all allegations of sexual assault as "totally false and outrageous" and testified separately later in the day.<sup>[55]</sup> Republican members of the committee did not question Ford directly; that was done by Rachel Mitchell, a career prosecutor from Arizona retained by the committee's Republican majority to question Ford on their behalf.<sup>[56]</sup> Alternating with Mitchell's questions, Democratic committee members questioned Ford themselves.<sup>[57]</sup>

After the hearing Mitchell produced a report stating "there is no clear standard of proof during the Senate confirmation process" and said she did "not think that a reasonable prosecutor would bring this case based on the evidence before the Committee" and that she did not "believe that this evidence is sufficient to satisfy the preponderance-of-evidence standard." Mitchell said there were multiple inconsistencies in Ford's testimony.<sup>[58]</sup> Some used these inconsistencies to argue Ford had incorrectly remembered the event. However, psychologists who study memory came forward to explain how traumatic memories are often unclear and incomplete. Ford listed several persons who were present during the party including "Mark Judge, Patrick "PJ" Smyth, and her lifelong friend Leland Keyser". The three named individuals have submitted statements to the Committee "denying any memory of the party whatsoever". Again, psychologists who study memory noted that it is not unexpected that this party would not stand out for others who had attended but did not experience an event "particularly worth remembering."<sup>[59]</sup> Mitchell said that Ford's case was "even weaker than" the standard "he said, she said" case, because other witnesses identified by Ford "either refuted her allegations, or failed to corroborate them".<sup>[58][60]</sup>

On September 28, after a request from U.S. Senator Jeff Flake, followed by a request from the Senate Judiciary Committee, President Trump ordered an FBI supplemental background investigation concerning the sexual assault allegations against Kavanaugh.<sup>[61]</sup> On October 3, NBC News reported that Ford, Kavanaugh, and dozens of other witnesses were not interviewed by the FBI due to restrictions imposed by the White House.<sup>[62]</sup> The confidential FBI report was shown privately to members of Congress on October 4; Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) said there was nothing new in the report and no corroboration of the allegations.<sup>[63]</sup> On October 5, Ford's attorneys said she had no regrets about coming forward, and does not want Kavanaugh impeached if Democrats take control of Congress.<sup>[64]</sup>

By the time it was closed to further donations, the GoFundMe account set up on Ford's behalf had raised \$647,610. As of November 21, 2018, Ford had used some of the money to cover security costs to protect herself and her family, but pledged to donate the rest to organizations that support trauma survivors.<sup>[65]</sup>

Ford has received considerable backlash for coming forward with her allegations against Brett Kavanaugh, facing a number of threats that include death threats. During her testimony, Ford stated, "I have been called the most vile and hateful names imaginable. People have posted my personal information on the internet. This has resulted in additional emails, calls, and threats. My family and I were forced to move out of our home". Despite the confirmation of Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, these threats have not stopped.<sup>[66]</sup> As of November 2018, Ford stated that she is still being harassed and threatened and has had to move four times as well as hire private security.<sup>[67]</sup> Subsequently, she has not been able to resume her teaching at Palo Alto University.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Selected works

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### Books

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## External links

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