**Formation and Destruction of the Ring around Supernova 1987A**

This sequence shows one possible scenario for the creation of the gaseous ring around supernova 1987A. The ring was formed late in the progenitor star's life through a merger with a binary companion. A brilliant flash of light from the star's explosion in 1987 first made the ring visible. The supernova's shockwave will collide with the ring and brighten it again. Eventually, the shockwave will destroy the ring.

1. **20,000 years ago**
   - The larger star in a binary system swells up to become a red giant.

2. **1991-1996**
   - The red star passes matter to the blue star; some overflows to create a disk.

3. **1997**
   - Stars merge into one blue star surrounded by a broad disk of gas.

4. **2007**
   - Wind from blue star carves a hole in the disk.

5. **February 1987: Supernova explodes**
   - Boost of light illuminates inner edge of ring.

   - Rapidly moving debris and shockwave move out from explosion.

7. **1997**
   - Shockwave hits piece on inner edge of ring.

8. **2007**
   - Ring lights up from full impact.