



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER

UH LAW PIONEERS HERITAGE CELEBRATION



Tony Bonilla Sr. '60



Justice Ruby Kless Sondock '62



William Y. Sim '69



Jim M. Lemond '70



Judge Phyllis Randolph Frye '81

A Conversation with UH Law Center Pioneers

Rededication of the African-American and Hispanic
Heritage Walls

Unveiling and Dedication of the LGBTQ+ Heritage Wall

Friday, September 20, 2024

4:00 - 6:30PM Central

Reception to Follow

2.0 hours of Texas MCLE credit

John M. O'Quinn Law Building

Sheena Courtroom

Agenda

4:00 – 4:10 PM

Welcome Remarks

Leonard M. Baynes

Dean, Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen
Distinguished Chair
Professor of Law
University of Houston Law Center

4:10 – 5:25 PM

A Conversation with UH Law Center Pioneers Moderated by Dean Leonard M. Baynes

Tony Bonilla '60

Partner, Bonilla and Chapa, P.C.

Justice Ruby Kless Sondock '62

Retired Texas Supreme Court Justice

William Y. Sim '69

Founder, William Y. Sim, P.C.

Jim Lemond '70

Retired Partner at Winstead P.C.

Judge Phyllis Randolph Frye '81

Retired Associate Judge, City of Houston
Municipal Courts

5:25 – 5:45 PM

Q&A Session

5:45 – 6:00 PM*

Closing Remarks

W. Stephen Benesh

President of the State Bar of Texas, former
Chair of the Texas Bar Foundation, and Partner
at Bracewell

6:00 – 6:30 PM

Rededication of the Royce (J.D. '79) and Carol West African American Law Heritage Wall of Honor and Ezequiel Reyna Jr. (J.D. '80) and Livia Reyna (M.Ed. '79) Hispanic Law Heritage Wall of Honor

Unveiling and Dedication of the Judge Phyllis Randolph Frye (J.D. '81) LGBTQ+ Law Heritage Wall of Honor

6:30 PM

Reception

**Approved for 2.0 hours of Texas MCLE credit (4:00-6:00 PM.)*



LEONARD M. BAYNES

Dean

*Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished Chair
Professor of Law*

University of Houston Law Center

Serving as the ninth dean of the University of Houston Law Center, Dean Baynes is now the currently longest serving law dean in the State of Texas. He has a national reputation as a communications law scholar with specializations in business and FCC regulation. He manages almost 60 full-time faculty and oversees 11 centers and institutes, including the No. 7 ranked Health Law & Policy Institute and the No. 8 ranked Institute for Intellectual Property & Information Law as well as the No. 8 ranked Part-Time Program.

Baynes initiated an award-winning Pre-Law Pipeline Program designed to create more opportunities for first-generation, economically challenged, and under-resourced college students who are considering law school. He instituted a voluntary “Community Service Day” during which incoming first-year students, faculty, and staff fan out across the city to work on public service projects. He also has increased the number of scholarships and opportunities for students to serve in school-funded, public service internships at home and abroad.

Baynes was inducted into the Minority Media & Telecommunications Council Hall of Fame. Before becoming Dean at UH Law, Baynes previously served as the inaugural director of the Ronald H. Brown Center for Civil Rights and Economic Development at St. John’s University School of Law.

In 2010, Baynes received the Diversity Trailblazer Award from the New York State Bar Association, and in 2019 he accepted the American Bar Association Alexander Award on behalf of the UH Law Center Pre-Law Pipeline Program.

In 2020, Baynes was named to the Lawyers of Color Power List by the Lawyers of Color Foundation. In 2022, he was recognized by the Association of American Law School’s Clyde Ferguson Award and the Columbia University School of Law Paul Robeson Award. During his deanship, he was named one of the nation’s top 100 most influential lawyers of color.

Baynes has written more than 35 law review articles on corporate law, communications law, and diversity and in 2020 published a casebook entitled “Communication Law in the Public Interest” with Hammond and Sandoval published by Wolters Kluwer.



TONY BONILLA, SR.

Class of 1960

Tony Bonilla is a 1960 alumnus of the University of Houston Law Center, and the school's first graduate of Hispanic descent. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Education with a minor in Government from Baylor University. One of 22 family members who are attorneys, Bonilla is senior member of Bonilla &

Chapa, P.C., a personal injury firm with five offices across Texas.

Long a proponent of public education, Bonilla played a role in the creation of the LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) Education Service Centers and served as National Chairman of the Board. He is past National President of LULAC, past State Chair of LULAC, and has served LULAC and other Hispanic organizations in leadership roles. He previously served as a member of the Texas Coordinating Board of Higher Education, the Governor's Select Committee on Public Education, the Governor's Bilingual Education Task Force to improve the delivery of bilingual education services, and as a member of the Texas Constitutional Revision Commission. Bonilla has worked in presidential campaigns at the local, state, and national levels since 1960. Bonilla was the first Hispanic elected as State Representative from Nueces County.

Bonilla has been recognized by local, national, and international organizations for his expertise and service. His honors include a Lifetime Achievement Award by the National President of LULAC in 2008; a 2019 Hispanic Heritage Lifetime Achievement Award; a 2021 Dean's Distinguished Award from UH Law Center, and a 2022 Instituto de Cultura Hispanica Award for work with the Hispanic community.



JUSTICE RUBY KLESS SONDOCK

Class of 1962

In 1962, Justice Ruby Kless Sondock was one of five women in her graduating class at the University of Houston Law Center. She graduated as valedictorian. Within only one year of practice, she argued a case before the Texas Supreme Court. After practicing law for 12 years, she was appointed as a judge on the Harris County Domestic Relations Court in 1973, becoming the first woman district court judge in Harris County. After serving in this capacity for four years, she was then appointed to the 234th District Court again making her the first woman to have that honor.

In 1982, Justice Sondock was appointed to the regular session of the Texas Supreme Court, making her the first woman to serve on the Court in such a session. She chose not to remain on the court following that session, instead returning to the District Court. After serving as a judge, she has worked as a successful private mediator in Houston.

In 2015, Justice Sondock was inducted as a Texas Legal Legend by the Litigation Section of the State Bar of Texas. In 2019, the Houston Bar Association established the Justice Ruby Kless Sondock Award, which is presented to a woman lawyer or judge for exceptional achievement and leadership in the law. The Law Center's Justice Ruby Kless Sondock Lectureship in Legal Ethics Jurist in Residence program brings sitting jurists to campus for a day of interaction with students, faculty and the Houston legal community. Each jurist provides a lecture on a legal ethics issue important to the community.



WILLIAM Y. SIM

Class of 1969

William Y. Sim emigrated from Hong Kong in 1952 at the age of 17 as a student to attend the University of Kansas. He interrupted his education to serve in the U.S. Army, where he became a naturalized citizen in 1958. After reading an article in *Reader's Digest* that Houston was the next up and coming city, he relocated to Houston after his military service. He resumed his education and graduated from The University of Texas at Austin in 1962 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Pharmacy. He went on to work for the nation's largest pharmaceutical company where he rose to become director of sales and marketing for Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

Sim's journey eventually took him to the then-Bates College of Law at the University of Houston where he focused on corporate law and international law with the intent to return to the largest pharmaceutical company as an executive. He earned his J.D. in 1969 and with it the distinction of being the first Asian American to graduate from the school. But marriage and family life intervened with his corporate plans. Since being admitted to the Bar of the State of Texas in 1969, he has practiced exclusively in the area of immigration and nationality law and was certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in Immigration and Nationality Law in 1979.

Sim founded the law firm, William Y. Sim, P.C., which practices in all areas of immigration and nationality law. His daughter May Sim is a 1994 graduate of the University of Houston Law Center. In 2023, Sim passed the firm to his son Troy Sim, a 1999 graduate of the University of Houston Law Center. For the love of immigration practice, at 92, Sim still manages to work on a daily basis in order to assist his clients to achieve the American Dream.



JAMES M. "JIM" LEMOND

Class of 1970

James M. "Jim" Lemond, a 1970 alumnus of the UH Law Center, was the school's first African-American graduate. He also holds the distinction of being the first African-American commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Armed Forces from the University of Houston's ROTC program.

Jim has dedicated over five decades to the legal profession, profoundly impacting Houston and Texas. Following graduation from law school, he served in the United States Army for two years as a certified Assistant Staff Judge Advocate during the Vietnam conflict. He later specialized in eminent domain law at the Harris County Attorney's Office, where he played a pivotal role in acquiring land for the Hardy Toll Road, Harris County's first toll road. His legal expertise in land acquisitions and subsequent litigation set the foundation for his future success. In 1999, he founded the law firm of Lemond, Jones, and Loston, which quickly became a key player in Houston's legal community. As co-General Counsel to the Harris County-Houston Sports Authority, his firm was instrumental in all aspects of the development and construction of the city's major sports venues, including Minute Maid Park, Toyota Center, and NRG Stadium. The firm's significant involvement in these iconic city venues led to a merger with the Winstead law firm in 2001. Jim was also appointed by the Mayor of the City of Houston and City Council as the first Assistant General Manager for Administration of the then newly-created Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, now known as METRO.

His lifelong commitment to public service and his legal expertise have left an indelible mark on the City of Houston and Harris County, culminating in his being named a "Living Legend" by the Houston Lawyers Association and a "Legal Pioneer in the State of Texas" by the State Bar of Texas. Jim retired in 2009 from the Winstead law firm and from the active practice of law, yet still devotes time to community and public service activities.



JUDGE PHYLLIS RANDOLPH FRYE

Class of 1981

A pioneer in the transgender movement, Phyllis Randolph Frye graduated from the UH Law Center in 1981, and became the nation's first openly transgender judge when she was appointed to the Houston Municipal Court bench in 2010. She has been honored numerous times for her legal and political activism on issues involving the transgender community. The American Bar Association Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity honored Judge Frye in 2018 with its 6th annual Stonewall Award for her long-time efforts on behalf of LGBT causes.

Judge Frye is an Eagle Scout, a former member of the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets, a United States Army veteran (1LT-RA 1970-72), a licensed engineer, a licensed attorney, a father, a grandmother, and a lesbian widow. She was a senior partner in the firm of Frye, Benavidez & O'Neil PLLC, where she devoted her practice exclusively to taking transgender clients – both adults and minors – through the Texas courts to change the clients' names and genders on their legal documents. Judge Frye retired from practice in 2021 and from the bench in 2022.

Known as being the “grandmother” of the national transgender legal and political rights movement, Judge Frye was featured – “Once a Pariah, Now a Judge” – on the front page, above the fold of a Sunday edition of *The New York Times* in 2016. Her biography was published in 2022. Phyllis Frye and the Fight for Transgender Rights won the 2023 Liz Carpenter Award for Best Book on the History of Women by the Texas State Historical Association.



W. STEPHEN BENESH

Partner, Bracewell LLP

President, State Bar of Texas

Steve Benesh currently serves as the 2024-25 President of the State Bar of Texas. He is a seasoned business litigator in his 36th year of practice at Bracewell LLP, where he represents clients in diverse commercial litigation matters.

Steve is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin (BBA, '84) and UT Law School (JD, '87). He was a summer clerk at Bracewell while in law school and joined the law firm's Houston office after graduation, becoming a partner in 1995. In 2000, Steve moved to Bracewell's Austin office, serving as that office's managing partner for a number of years. He has served the community in several roles, including Chair of Leadership Austin and President of his local school board.

Steve began his service to the profession over 20 years ago as a member of the Austin Bar Association, culminating in his service as President of the Austin Bar in 2006-2007 and Chair of the Austin Bar Foundation in 2007-08. Thereafter, he served on the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors from 2008 to 2011 and chaired the State Bar's Annual Meeting in 2014, for which he received a Presidential Citation. From 2017 to 2023, Steve served on the Texas Bar Foundation Board of Trustees, culminating in his service as its Chair. He is also a past President of the Robert W. Calvert Inn of Court in Austin.

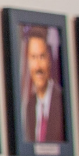
Steve is ranked in *Chambers USA* in Texas Litigation: Securities and General Commercial. He is also recognized by BL Rankings, *Best Lawyers* in the areas of Bet-the-Company Litigation, Commercial Litigation, Banking and Finance Litigation and Construction Litigation. Steve has been honored by the same publication four times as Austin Lawyer of the Year in Banking and Finance litigation (2014, 2016, 2024) and Construction Litigation (2022).

Royce (J.D. '79) and Carol West African American Law Heritage Wall of Honor



State Senator Royce West (J.D. '79) and Carol West are generous supporters of UHLC. They have dedicated this wall to recognize the exceptional achievements and contributions of University of Houston Law Center African American alumni and faculty. This wall was dedicated at a ceremony in 2023.

Royce and Carol West American Law Heritage Wall of Honor



In 2024, the Law Center recognized the contributions of **Professor Anthony (Tony) Chase** and **Professor Ronald Turner** as their names were added to this esteemed list.



Dean Leonard M. Baynes

Leonard M. Baynes is the first UH Law Center Dean of African American descent and he is also the longest serving African American dean of any college at the University of Houston. Baynes raised more than \$93 million for the John M. O'Quinn Law Building; established the award-winning Pre-Law Pipeline Program and increased the entry credentials and diversity of the Law Center student body and faculty.



Clarence O. Bradford (J.D. '92)

Clarence Bradford is a former chief of police of Houston, former Houston City Council member, and former Houston Vice Mayor Pro Tem. In 2019, Bradford took the oath of office at the Harris County District Attorney's Office as a Special Prosecutor and Law Enforcement Liaison.



Anthony "Tony" Chase

Tony Chase is Professor of Law, Emeritus at the UH Law Center and Chairman and CEO at Chasesource LP. He is also former Chairman & CEO of ChaseCom, L.P., and has served as Chairman of the Houston Zoo Development Board, Director of Anadarko (NYSE), Director, Texas Medical Center, Director, Sarepta Therapeutics, Director of the Houston Endowment, member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and is an Eagle Scout. He also is a member of the Greater Houston Partnership Board.



Cheryl D. Creuzot ('81, J.D. '92, LL.M. '99, M.B.A. '12)

Cheryl Creuzot is the first African American woman to serve as Commissioner of the Port of Houston Authority. She also served as Chair of the UH Board of Visitors. She is an inductee of the Greater Women of Houston Chamber of Commerce's Hall of Fame. Creuzot is the President Emeritus of Wealth Development Strategies, LLC.



Jasmine F. Crockett (J.D. '06)

Jasmine Crockett is a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Texas 30th District. Crockett is the first African American UH Law Center graduate to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. She is also the first African American woman elected as Freshman Leadership Representative. Crockett serves on the House Committees for Oversight and Accountability and Agriculture.



Wilma J. Cupp Stroughter (J.D. '72)

Wilma J. Cupp Stroughter was the first African American woman graduate of the UH Law Center. She served as Director of U.S. Amnesty Project, San Francisco, CA; Executive Director of Economic and Social Opportunities Inc., San Jose, CA; and as an African American studies professor at San Jose State University, San Jose, CA.



Prof. Meredith J. Duncan (J.D. '93)

Meredith Duncan graduated *magna cum laude* and is the first tenured African American UH Law Center woman professor and the first African American UH Law Center woman with full professorship and a named professorship. She is the Alumnae College Professor of Law and Assistant Dean of Opportunities and Community. Duncan was honored with UH's Distinguished Leadership in Teaching Excellence Award, the University's highest teaching recognition.



Hon. Vanessa D. Gilmore (J.D. '81)

Vanessa Gilmore is the first UH Law Center graduate appointed to the federal court and, at the time, the youngest federal judge appointed in the U.S. After 27 years of service as a judge, Gilmore became an arbitrator, mediator and referee/special master at JAMS: Mediation, Arbitration and ADR Services, the world's largest private alternative dispute resolution provider.



Hon. Tamecia Glover ('09, M.B.A. '12, J.D. '12)

Tamecia Glover is the first African American UH Law Center Student Regent, UH System Board of Regents. In 2018, Glover was named Top 4 under 40 Alumni by the University of Houston Alumni Association. Glover is an associate judge for the 400th District Court in Fort Bend County, Texas.



Jarvis V. Hollingsworth (J.D. '93)

Jarvis Hollingsworth is the first African American graduate to serve as UH System Board of Regents Chair. Hollingsworth serves as Vice Chairman at Irradiant Partners, LP, Chair of the Board, Teacher Retirement System of Texas, and Chairman of the Milken Institute for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Asset Management Executive Council.



Rep. Jolanda F. Jones ('89, J.D. '95)

Jolanda Jones is the first openly LGBTQ+ African American member elected to the Texas House of Representatives (District 147). She is a former Houston City Council Member and HISD board trustee. Jones is a CNN Hero, a 4-time national track and field champion, a basketball All-American and a Rhodes Scholar nominee. She is the Senior Attorney at Jones & Jones Law Group where she practices in the area of personal injury, criminal, and family law.



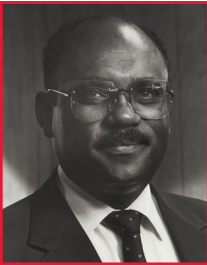
Elwyn C. Lee

Elwyn Lee is the first African American UH Law Center tenured professor. Lee is the UH Vice President of Neighborhood and Strategic Initiatives. He previously served in several leadership roles at UH including Vice President for Community Relations and Institutional Access and Interim Director for African American Studies Program.



Jim Lemond ('68, J.D. '70)

Jim Lemond is the first African American UH Law Center graduate and the first African American equity partner at Winstead, P.C. Lemond had a lengthy legal career rooted in public law and policy and opened the door for many others at the law school, including four family members.



Xavier C. Lemond ('67, J.D. '73)

Xavier Lemond is the first African American UH Law Center graduate to serve on the UH System Board of Regents and the first African American member of the Order of the Barons. He served as an oil and gas attorney at Conoco for over 20 years.



Browne C. Lewis (LL.M. '97)

Browne C. Lewis was a former North Carolina Central University School of Law Dean and the Founding Director of the Center for Health Law and Policy at Cleveland - Marshall College of Law. A two-time Fulbright recipient, Lewis' research and thought leadership covered the areas of artificial intelligence, assisted reproductive technology, environmental racism and inheritance law.



CAPT. Reginald E. McKamie, USN (Ret.)(J.D. '86)

Reginald McKamie serves as chair of the Board of Pilot Commissioners for Harris County Ports. He is a former U.S. Navy Captain and served as Captain of the S/S Exxon North Slope, S/S Exxon Philadelphia and the S/S Exxon Benicia. As a Maritime Law Association member, McKamie achieved Proctor status, the highest for practicing lawyers.



Charisma Ricksy Nguepdo (J.D. '22)

Charisma Nguepdo graduated *magna cum laude* and is the first African American Editor-in-Chief, *Houston Law Review*, Board 59. While in law school, Nguepdo won the national Susman Godfrey Prize for academic excellence. Nguepdo is a Law Clerk with the U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas.



Ricky Raven ('83, J.D. '86)

Ricky Raven is Senior Vice President and Deputy General Counsel for Allstate Insurance Company and a Member of the UH System Board of Regents. Before joining Allstate, Raven was a partner at the law firm Reed Smith where he was a member of the Global Commercial Disputes Group and a leader of the firm's Mass and Toxic Torts team.



Lynden B. Rose ('83, J.D. '89)

Lynden Rose is an Honorary Consul for the Bahamas in Texas. He is Founder and Chairman of National Education and Sports Solutions and is a former member of the UH System Board of Regents. Rose is a retired professional basketball player and former co-captain of the first UH Phi Slama Jama team.



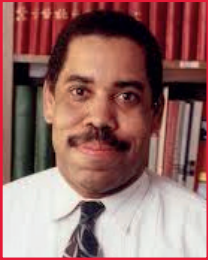
Hon. Eleanor L. Ross (J.D. '94)

Eleanor Ross is the first African American woman to hold a seat on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia. Ross began her legal career in Texas with the district attorney's office, then worked in Georgia as an assistant solicitor general, district attorney, and assistant U.S. attorney before becoming a judge.



Rep. Senfronia Thompson (LL.M. '96)

Senfronia Thompson is a Texas state representative for District 141. She is the longest-serving woman and African American state representative in Texas history. Thompson is in the midst of her 25th term and is the Dean of the Texas House of Representatives. Thompson is the author of Texas' first alimony law, and many reforms benefitting women, children, and the elderly.



Ronald Turner

Ronald Turner was the A.A. White Professor of Law and the first African-American full professor in the Law Center's history. He was a noted scholar and the author of several casebooks. Ronald specialized in labor law, employment law, constitutional law, and taught employment discrimination, labor law, torts, constitutional law, and a course on HIV/AIDS and the law.



Sen. Royce West (J.D. '79)

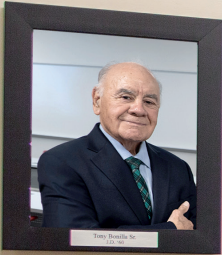
Royce West is a Texas State Senator, serving as Vice Chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee and is a member of Senate committees on Education Finance, and Transportation. *Texas Monthly* named West one of the 25 most powerful people in Texas politics and selected him its biennial "Ten Best Legislators in Texas" list.



Victor Voltaire Wright (J.D. '98)

Victor Wright graduated *magna cum laude* and is the first African American President of the UH Law Center Alumni Association. He also served as the first African American Chair of the Houston Law Review Board of Directors. Wright is Vice President, Labor & Employment Law at Baker Hughes and before that served as Director of Global Labor and Employment Law at KBR.

Ezequiel Reyna Jr. (J.D. '80) and Livia Reyna (M.Ed. '79) Hispanic Law Heritage Wall of Honor



Ezequiel Reyna Jr. (J.D. '80) and Livia Reyna (M.Ed. '79) are avid supporters of UHLC. They have designated this wall to recognize the outstanding achievements and contributions of Hispanic alumni and faculty at the University of Houston Law Center. This wall was dedicated at a ceremony in 2023.

Ezequiel Reyna Jr. and Livia Reyna Hispanic Law Heritage Wall of Honor



In 2024, the Law Center recognized the contributions of **Judge Josefina Rendón** ('76) and **Sofia Winograd** ('25) as their names were added to this esteemed list.



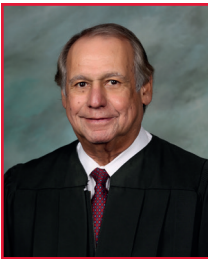
Sofia Adrogué (J.D. '91)

Sofía Adrogué is a judge in the Eleventh Business Court Division and was previously a litigation lawyer and partner with Diamond McCarthy LLP. She created and is editor of the American Lawyer Media's Texas Business Litigation treatise and is co-host and co-producer of Latina Voices: Smart Talk. She graduated *magna cum laude* from UH Law Center, served as Chief Articles Editor of the *Houston Law Review*, and President of the Houston Law Review Alumni Association Board.



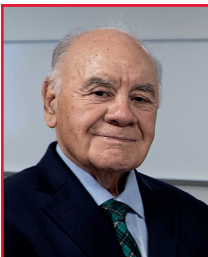
Hon. Gina Martinez Benavides (J.D. '88)

Judge Gina Benavides is a justice on the Texas Thirteenth Court of Appeals. She was the first Hispanic woman elected Chair of the Texas Center for the Judiciary Board of Directors and is former President of the Mexican-American Bar Association of Texas.



Hon. Fortunato P. Benavides ('68, J.D. '72)

Judge Fortunato "Pete" Benavides was the first UH Law Center alumnus to serve on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. He also served on the Thirteenth Court of Appeals of Texas and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.



Tony Bonilla Sr. (J.D. '60)

Tony Bonilla is the first Hispanic graduate of UH Law Center. Bonilla is currently President of Bonilla & Chapa, P.C. He was past national and state President of LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens), a former member of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and was the first Hispanic elected as State Representative from Nueces County.



Victor Gonzales Carrillo (J.D. '94)

Victor Carrillo is former Chairman & Commissioner, Texas Railroad Commission and former CEO and President of Zion Oil. Carillo is currently Executive Director of Professional Responsibility and Government Affairs for International Leadership Texas - a public charter school with 21 campuses across Texas.



Andrew J. Cobos (J.D. '11, M.B.A. '11)

Andrew Cobos was the first Hispanic UH Law Center student to serve as Student Regent UH System Board of Regents. A West Point graduate who was awarded a Bronze Star Medal after serving as a Lieutenant in the United States Army, Cobos is founder of the Cobos Law Firm.



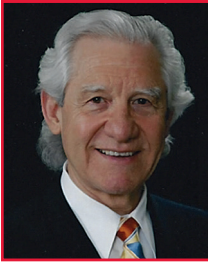
Hon. Dori Contreras (J.D. '90)

Chief Justice Dori Contreras was elected as a Justice to the 13th Court of Appeals in 2002, and was re-elected in 2008 and 2014. She was elected Chief Justice in 2018 and is the first woman Chief Justice of the 13th Court of Appeals and, at the time of her election, only the second Hispanic female Chief Justice statewide.



Rochelle M. Garza (J.D. '13)

Rochelle Garza is Commission Chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. She is also President of the Texas Civil Rights Project. In 2022, Garza became the democratic nominee for Texas Attorney General, the first Hispanic woman to be nominated by any major party for this position in Texas.



Raul A. Gonzalez (J.D. '66)

Justice Raul Gonzalez was the first Hispanic Texas Supreme Court justice, the first Hispanic graduate of UH Law Center to serve as a Texas Supreme Court justice, and the first Hispanic elected to a statewide office. He is also a former member of the UH System Board of Regents.



Hon. Amparo Monique Guerra (J.D. '02)

Justice Amparo Guerra currently serves on the Texas First Court of Appeals. In 2019, Guerra became a partner at Shackelford, Boweb, McKinley & Norton, LLP. She was also the youngest serving judge on the Houston Municipal Court from 2005-2010.



Vilma Luna (J.D. '85)

Vilma Luna was the first UH Law Center Hispanic female graduate to serve in the Texas House of Representatives. Luna was a House member for seven terms representing District 33 in Corpus Christi, Texas. She served on numerous committees including Appropriations, Ways and Means, and Economic Development.



Vidal G. Martinez (J.D. '77)

Vidal Martinez is a former member of the UH System Board of Regents; former Assistant U.S. Attorney in Houston with the Civil Division of the Department of Justice; and former chairman of the Board of Directors of the State Bar of Texas. He is managing partner of Martinez Partners LLP.



Jacob Montilijo Monty (J.D. '93)

Jacob Monty is a former member of the UH System Board of Regents and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. He is managing partner of Monty and Ramirez LLP.



Michael A. Olivas

Michael A. Olivas was the William B. Bates Distinguished Chair in Law (Emeritus) at the UH Law Center and was Director of the Institute for Higher Education Law and Governance. He also served as Acting President of UH Downtown Campus. In 2018, the Association of American Law Schools awarded Olivas with its Triennial Award for Lifetime Service to Legal Education and the Law. In 2001, he was chosen for the Esther Farfel Award, UH's highest faculty honor.



Hon. Dora Garcia Flores Olivo (M.E. '75, J.D. '81)

Dora Olivo is a former member of the Texas House of Representatives who served from 1997 to 2011. She was also the founder and host of Lo Nuestro Radio Show on KFRD.



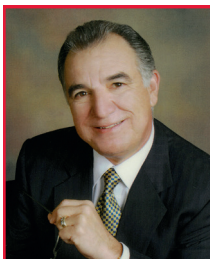
Hon. Jorge C. Rangel

Judge Jorge Rangel was UH Law Center's first Hispanic law professor. In 1983, Rangel was appointed to a state judgeship in Nueces County. He is also a former judicial nominee to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Rangel returned to private practice in 1985, and is currently based in Corpus Christi, Texas.



Hon. Josefina Rendón '76

Judge Josefina Rendón was one of Harris County's first Hispanic women attorneys and Houston's first woman Civil Service Commissioner. In 1983, she became one of Houston's first Hispanic women judges and has since served as Municipal Judge, Justice Court Judge and State District Judge. She is also a mediator, arbitrator, and Harris County Special Commissioner.



Ezequiel C. Reyna Jr. (J.D. '80)

Ezequiel Reyna is Managing Partner of Ezequiel Reyna Law Office; a UH Law Center Cornerstone Club Member; and prominent personal injury attorney who practices in Weslaco, Texas.



Hon. Veronica Rivas-Molloy (J.D. '01)

Justice Veronica Rivas-Molloy serves the Court of Appeals, First District of Texas. She was the first immigrant and only the third Latina to serve on the First Court of Appeals. She has also worked for Baker Botts, LLP and Jones Walker, LLP. She graduated *magna cum laude* from UH Law Center.



Doris Rodríguez ('71, J.D. '80)

When Doris Rodriguez became partner at then Andrews Kurth (now known as Hunton Andrews Kurth), she made history as the first Hispanic woman elected partner at a major law firm in Texas. She graduated *cum laude* from UH Law Center, was Editor of the *Houston Law Review*, and was a member of the Order of Barons.



Hon. Armando V. Rodriguez ('64, J.D. '67)

Judge Armando Rodriguez was the first full-time Hispanic judge in Houston and Harris County and he served for four decades. He is also founder of the Houston Fiestas Patrias Parade.



Graciela Guzman Saenz (J.D. '86)

Graciela Guzman Saenz was the first Hispanic female elected at-large to Houston City Council; the first Hispanic female Mayor Pro-Tem; and she currently serves as Special Prosecutor & Community Engagement in the Harris County District Attorney's Office.



Hon. Rosemary Saucillo (J.D. '65)

Judge Rosemary Saucillo was the first Hispanic female graduate of UH Law Center. She was also the first Hispanic female judge in Houston, and the first Hispanic female municipal court judge for the City of Houston.



Hon. Michelle M. Slaughter ('98, J.D. '04)

Justice Michelle Slaughter is a member of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. After law school, she clerked with Haynes and Boone. Before taking the bench, she was a managing member at Slaughter & Hammock and from 2005–2010 practiced at Locke Lord. Slaughter first became a Judge for the 405th District Court of Galveston County in 2013.



J. Michael Solar ('78, J.D. '80)

Michael Solar is a civil litigation attorney, the first President of the Houston Hispanic Bar Association, and a lifetime member of the Multimillion Dollar Advocates Forum. He is founder and Managing Partner of The Solar Law Firm.



Sandra Guerra Thompson

Sandra Guerra Thompson is the first tenured Hispanic female law professor in Texas; the first UH Law Center tenured Hispanic female professor; and first Hispanic female law professor with a named Chair in Texas. She is the Newell H. Blakely Professor of Law and former Director of the Criminal Justice Institute. Professor Thompson is the recipient of the 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Hispanic Bar Association of Houston and the University of Houston Distinguished Teaching Award.



Hon. Juan F. Vasquez Sr. (J.D. '77)

Judge Juan F. Vasquez, Sr. is the first Hispanic tax court judge. He has served on the United States Tax Court since 1995. He has also worked as a trial attorney for the Internal Revenue Service and was partner with Leighton, Hood, and Vasquez law firm. Judge Vasquez's life story was chronicled in an ABA publication entitled "From the Texas Cotton Fields to the United States Tax Court: The Life Journey of Juan F Vasquez."



Armando Walle ('04, J.D. '14)

Armando Walle is a member of the Texas House of Representatives. He was first elected in 2008 and serves on several important committees in the House of Representatives, including the House Committee on Appropriations, serving as Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Articles VI, VII, VII (natural resources, business & industry, and regulatory entities). Walle is also Vice Chair of the Licensing & Administrative Procedures Committee.



Stephen Zamora

Stephen Zamora was UH Law Center's first Hispanic tenured professor; UH Law Center's first Hispanic dean; and founder of the Center for U.S. & Mexican Law. Zamora was a member of the American Law Institute. In 2006, he received the highest distinction awarded by the Mexican government to a foreign national, the Order of the Aztec Eagle, in recognition of his work in promoting U.S. - Mexican understanding.



Sofia Winograd '25

Sofia Winograd was elected the *Houston Law Review's* first Latina Editor-in-Chief in the publication's 60-year history. Sofia's experiences include summer internships at Vinson & Elkins LLP and Beck Redden LLP, as well as a judicial externship with the Honorable Lee H. Rosenthal in the Southern District of Texas. Additionally, Sofia served as a tutor for courses including Contracts, Constitutional Law, and Statutory Regulation & Interpretation. After graduation, she will clerk for the Honorable Jeffrey V. Brown in the Southern District of Texas in Galveston.

Judge Phyllis Randolph Frye (J.D. '81) OUTLaw LGBTQ+ Law Heritage Wall of Honor

Judge Phyllis OUTLaw LGBTQ+ La



Judge Phyllis Randolph Frye, a trailblazing advocate for equality, has generously donated on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community to honor the remarkable achievements and contributions of LGBTQ+ alumni and faculty at the University of Houston Law Center.

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Mary Anne Bobinski

Mary Anne Bobinski is the first tenured openly LGBTQ+ UH Law professor with subsequent roles serving as former Dean at the University of British Columbia and Emory University.



Hon. Jason Cox '02

Judge Jason Cox was elected as Judge of Harris County Probate Court #3, a probate and mental health court, in 2018. He is one of the first openly gay elected probate judges in Texas. Since taking the bench, Judge Cox has worked to expand mental health services in Harris County, increase transparency, and educate the community about the expansive services offered by the Harris County Probate Courts.



Victor Flatt

Victor Flatt was the first openly LGBTQ+ faculty recruited to the UH Law Center. He was a faculty advisor to OUTLaw, the LGBTQ+ student organization.



Hon. Phyllis Randolph Frye (M.B.A. '81, J.D. '81)

Phyllis Frye is a retired Houston Associate Municipal Court Judge and the first openly transgender UH Law Center graduate and first transgender judge appointed in the United States. She is a pioneer in transgender law and has blazed a trail for law students and graduates to follow.



Rep. Julie Johnson '91

Julie Johnson is a member of the Texas House of Representatives for District 115. She is treasurer of the Texas House LGBTQ Caucus and a candidate for U.S. Congress.



Rep. Jolanda F. Jones ('89, J.D. '95)

Jolanda Jones is the first openly LGBTQ+ African American member elected to the Texas House of Representatives (District 147). She is a former Houston City Council Member and HISD board trustee. Jones is a CNN Hero, a 4-time national track and field champion, a basketball All-American and a Rhodes Scholar nominee. She is the Senior Attorney at Jones & Jones Law Group where she practices in the area of personal injury, criminal, and family law.



Hon. Steven Kirkland '90

Steven Kirkland is a retired city attorney in Nacogdoches, Texas, and former judge of the 334th and 215th Harris County Civil District Courts and in the Houston Municipal Courts. He is the first elected LGBTQ+ district judge in Texas. He is also a lecturer at the UH Jack J. Valenti School of Communication.



Hon. Jim F. Kovach '91

Jim Kovach is the judge of the Harris County Civil Court at Law #2 in Texas. He was elected to the bench in 2018. Judge Kovach was the first openly gay judge elected to a Harris County Court at Law.



Amanda Watson

Amanda Watson was Director of the O'Quinn Law Library and Assistant Professor of Law at the UH Law Center. She is a faculty advisor to OUTLaw, the LGBTQ+ student organization.



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