

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Former Texas Chief Justice Hecht to Address Judicial Independence at 2026 Sondock Lecture at UH Law Center**

**HOUSTON, April 13, 2026** –Nathan L. Hecht, 27<sup>th</sup> chief justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, will deliver the 2026 Justice Ruby Kless Sondock Jurist-in-Residence Lectureship in Legal Ethics at the University of Houston Law Center.

Hecht, who retired in 2024, is a partner at Jackson Walker and a distinguished judicial fellow at the New York University School of Law. His lecture, [“Whose Side Are You on Judge, Ours or Theirs? Judicial Independence in a Riven Civitas,”](#) is set for 4:30 p.m. April 15.

Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes said the Sondock Jurist-in-Residence program brings outstanding jurists to campus for the lecture and to meet with UHLC faculty, alumni and students. “These interactions will bring the Law Center community closer to the bench so we can learn from each other,” he said. “It also will help inspire our students to be the next generation of outstanding jurists.”

Hecht oversaw revisions to the rules of administration, practice and procedure in Texas courts and was appointed by the chief justice of the United States to the federal Advisory Committee on Civil Rules. He also led in the court’s efforts to assure that low-income Texans have access to basic civil legal services.

The Jurist-In-Residence program honors Sondock, who graduated as valedictorian and one of just five women in the UH law school class of 1962. She became the first female state district court judge in Harris County when she was appointed to the bench in 1977. She was appointed to the Texas Supreme Court in 1982, making her the first woman to serve in a regular session of the court.

The Law Center will also celebrate Sondock’s 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, later this month, at the event.

### **Event Details**

**What:** Nathan L. Hecht, 27<sup>th</sup> chief justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, will deliver the 2026 Justice Ruby Kless Sondock Jurist-in-Residence Lectureship in Legal Ethics.

**Where:** The John M. O’Quinn Law Building at the UH Law Center, 4170 Martin Luther King Blvd., Houston, TX 77204. The lecture will also be available online.

**When:** 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 15. A reception follows at 5:30 p.m.

For more information and to register, please visit <https://www.law.uh.edu/jurist/>

**Media contacts:**

Carrie Anna Criado, UH Law Center Assistant Dean of Communications and Marketing, 713-743-2184, [cacriado@central.uh.edu](mailto:cacriado@central.uh.edu)

Rashda Khan, UHLC Director of Communications, 713-743-2184, [rkhan20@uh.edu](mailto:rkhan20@uh.edu)

**About the University of Houston Law Center**

The University of Houston Law Center (UHLC) is a dynamic, top-tier law school located in the nation's 4th largest city. U.S. News & World Report ranked the Law Center No. 54 overall among law schools nationwide and ranked UHLC's Health Law, Intellectual Property and Information Law, and Part-time programs in the Top 10. The Law Center is ranked #9 among U.S. law schools for return on investment (ROI) by LawCrossing and in the ABA Journal. It awards Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) degrees, through its academic branch, the College of Law. The Law Center is more than just a law school. It is a powerful hub of intellectual activity with more than 12 centers and institutes that fuel its educational mission and national reputation. UHLC is fully accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools.

**About the University of Houston**

The University of Houston is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university recognized with a Phi Beta Kappa chapter for excellence in undergraduate education. UH serves the globally competitive Houston and Gulf Coast Region by providing world-class faculty, experiential learning and strategic industry partnerships. Located in the nation's fourth-largest city and one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse regions in the country, UH is a federally designated Hispanic- and Asian American-Serving institution with an enrollment of more than 47,000 students.