

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 451

WHEREAS, The observance of Texas Women Judges' Day at the State Capitol on April 24, 2023, provides a welcome opportunity to recognize women judges for their invaluable work to advance the administration of justice and the rule of law in our state; and

WHEREAS, Women judges in Texas have a storied history dating back to 1925, when Hortense Sparks Ward, the first woman to pass the Texas bar exam, along with Hattie Leah Henenberg and Ruth Virginia Brazzil formed the first all-women high court in the United States; the three women were appointed by Governor Pat Neff to serve as special justices on a Texas Supreme Court case from which all of the existing judges on the court had recused themselves; and

WHEREAS, In 1935, Sarah Tilghman Hughes became the first woman to hold a permanent position on a Texas bench; she went on to make history again in 1961 as the first woman appointed to a federal district judgeship in Texas, and she remains the only woman ever to administer the oath of office to an American president, having sworn in Lyndon Baines Johnson aboard Air Force One on November 22, 1963; and

WHEREAS, Among other notable trailblazers who have contributed to the diversity of the Texas judiciary are Harriet Mitchell Murphy, the first African American woman appointed to a regular judgeship in Texas, Elma Salinas Ender, the first Latina state district judge in Texas, and Wendy Duong, the first Vietnamese American woman to serve as a judge in the state; in 2005, the Texas Fourth District Court of Appeals in San Antonio became the first appellate court in the U.S. composed entirely of women, and in 2021, the court again had the distinction of being the only all-women and now majority-Latina appellate court in the country; and

WHEREAS, Today, the Texas Supreme Court includes three female justices, Jane Bland, Rebecca Aizpuru Huddle, and Debra Lehrmann, while the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals includes four women, Presiding Judge Sharon Keller and Judges Barbara Hervey, Mary Lou Keel, and Michelle Slaughter; women currently represent 34 percent of judges in all courts throughout Texas, as well as 43 percent of all state and district judges; and

WHEREAS, Women judges have brought inspiring dedication, wisdom, and integrity to the bench, helping to make our judicial system fairer and more just for all Texans, and it is indeed fitting that a special day be set aside to honor their immeasurable contributions; now, therefore, be it

S.R. No. 451

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 88th Legislature, hereby recognize April 24, 2023, as Texas Women Judges' Day at the State Capitol and commend the women judges of the State of Texas for their service and commitment to equal justice under the law.

Zaffirini

Alvarado
Birdwell
Campbell
Creighton
Eckhardt
Gutierrez

Hinojosa
Huffman
Hughes
Johnson
Kolkhorst
LaMantia

Menéndez
Middleton
Parker
Paxton
West
Whitmire

Patrick, President of the Senate

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on April 24, 2023.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate