

By: Zaffirini, et al.

S.R. No. 451

R E S O L U T I O N

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

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

12           WHEREAS, In 1935, Sarah Tilghman Hughes became the first  
13 woman to hold a permanent position on a Texas bench; she went on to  
14 make history again in 1961 as the first woman appointed to a federal  
15 district judgeship in Texas, and she remains the only woman ever to  
16 administer the oath of office to an American president, having  
17 sworn in Lyndon Baines Johnson aboard Air Force One on November 22,  
18 1963; and

19           WHEREAS, Among other notable trailblazers who have  
20 contributed to the diversity of the Texas judiciary are Harriet  
21 Mitchell Murphy, the first African American woman appointed to a  
22 regular judgeship in Texas, Elma Salinas Ender, the first Latina  
23 state district judge in Texas, and Wendy Duong, the first  
24 Vietnamese American woman to serve as a judge in the state; in 2005,

1 the Texas Fourth District Court of Appeals in San Antonio became the  
2 first appellate court in the U.S. composed entirely of women, and in  
3 2021, the court again had the distinction of being the only  
4 all-women and now majority-Latina appellate court in the country;  
5 and

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

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

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