

Hon. Gina M. Benavides
Justice, Thirteenth Court of Appeals

Justice Gina M. Benavides was first elected to the Thirteenth Court of Appeals in 2006, and most recently elected to her third six-year term in 2018.

In 2021, Justice Benavides was bestowed with the Judge Merrill Hartman Pro Bono Judge Award in recognition of her exceptional work and dedication to the provision of legal services to the poor. She had previously been named "Latina Judge of the Year" by the National Hispanic Bar Association in 2007.

In the spring of 2021, Justice Benavides published two articles in the Supreme Court Historical Society Journal recognizing the Latinx community and specifically profiling Justice Eve Guzman and Judge Elsa Alcala, the first two Latinas on Texas's highest courts.

In October 2022, Justice Benavides was honored with two new positions. She was elected to be the Regional Director 11 of the National Association of Women Judges which covers Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. At the same time, she was welcome to Texas American Board of Trial Attorneys whose mission is the preservation of right of the trial by jury guaranteed by the 7th Amendment to U.S. Constitution; the independence of the judiciary; and civics education. As a matter of fact, on September 16th which is Constitution Day, Justice Benavides spoke to school kids about the 4th Amendment.

In May 2021, Justice Gina Benavides was one of the founding members of the Texas Latinx Judges was created to empower Latinx judges in the State of Texas and promote diversity, inclusion, integrity, and excellence in the judiciary. Justice Benavides is one of the founding members of Texas Latinx Judges.

In 2019, Justice Benavides was elected by her peers to Chair the Judicial Section of the State Bar of Texas. In her capacity as a chair of the Judicial Section, she serves as a liaison to the State Bar of Texas, Texas Bar Foundation, and the Texas Center for the Judiciary.

Justice Benavides is also involved in the Hispanic Issues Section of the State Bar of Texas and was named their "Judge of the Year" in 2014. In 2018, she served as Chair of the Hispanic Issues Section.

In 2018, she co-wrote an article in the St. Mary's Journal on Legal Malpractice & Ethics entitled "The Texas Standards for Appellate Conduct: An Annotated Guide and Commentary" with her former staff attorney, Joshua Caldwell.

In 2010, the Texas Supreme Court appointed Justice Benavides to the Texas Access for Justice Commission. In February 2012, Justice Benavides was appointed to the Solutions 2012 Task Force.

In 2008, Justice Benavides was appointed to serve on the Texas Center for the Judiciary Board of Directors (the "Texas Center") and in 2011, she was elected Chair of the Texas Center by her fellow judges—the first Hispanic female to hold this position. In 2013, Justice Benavides received the Chair's Award of Excellence from the Texas Center.

Justice Benavides currently serves on the Board of the Appellate Section of the State Bar of Texas and chaired the Appellate Diversity Subcommittee. She also serves on the Pattern Jury Charge on the Damages and recently joined the Texas Supreme Court Historical Society and is leading their website committee.

She also continues to ensure that all Texans have access to justice by sitting on the board of the Texas Legal Services Corporation and the legislative committee of the Texas Access for Justice Commission.

Justice Benavides serves an active role in the State Bar of Texas, the National Association of Women Judges, the Hidalgo County Bar Association, and Texas Women Lawyers. She is past President of the Mexican-American Bar Association of Texas, past President of the Cameron County Bar Association, and a former Vice-President of the Texas Association of Defense Counsel.

She frequently serves as a speaker and presenter for Continued Legal Associations for the Judges and Lawyers of the State of Texas.

Justice Benavides is originally from Corpus Christi and graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration in 1985 from the University of Texas in Austin. She then attended law school at the University of Houston Law Center and was admitted into the State Bar in 1988. Justice Benavides currently resides in Corpus Christi, Texas with her husband Sammy. She is the proud mother of three: Daniella, Ricardo, and Alyssa; and the grandmother of Willow, Trey, Celia Leona and Auggie