

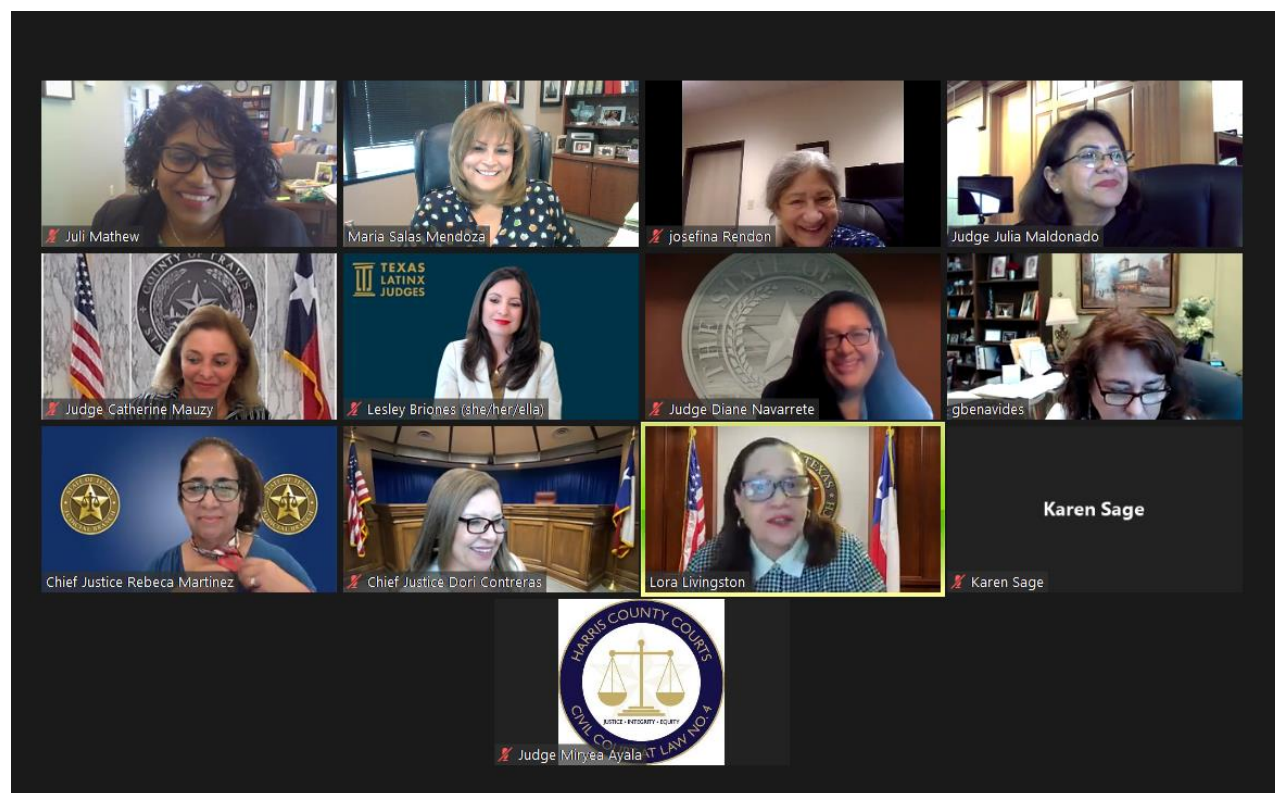


Annual Report from District 11
Honorable Maria Salas Mendoza

Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas

MEMBERSHIP NEWS:

District 11 holds monthly meetings for members the first Wednesday of every month at noon CST. Since March, District 11 has gained 11 new members: Judge Miryrea Ayala, appointed to Harris County Civil Court at Law No, 4, Judge Dawn Deshea Rogers, 334th District Court (Harris), Associate Judge Selina Mireles, Child Protection Court of South Texas Court #1, Judge Selena Alvarenga, 460th District Court (Travis), Judge Andrea D. Plumlee, 330th Family District Court (Dallas), Justice Erin A. Nowell, Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals (Dallas), Judge Martin Hoffman, 38th Civil District Court (Dallas), Judge Sandra Jackson, 302nd District Court (Dallas), Judge-Elect Maria F. Aceves, 192nd District Court (Dallas), Justice Dennise Garcia, Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals (Dallas), and Bill Pedersen, Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals (Dallas). District 11 currently has 102 members.



PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES:

During its March 2nd District Meeting, members joined the #Break the Bias campaign:



On March 7, 2022, Judge Toni Arteaga, 57th Civil District Court (Bexar County), moderated a virtual panel, *Don't Panic! Resolving Mistakes and New Ethics Opinions*. The program was hosted by Texas Latinx Judges and was very well received.



Celebrating International Women's Day, Judge Anna Perez coordinated a luncheon with her colleagues to #BreakTheBias on March 9, 2022, in El Paso County, Texas. District 11 Members in attendance: Judge Anna Perez, Judge Linda Chew, Judge Diane Navarrete, Judge Patricia Baca, Judge Maria Salas Mendoza and Judge Jessica Vazquez.



Members in Cameron County also celebrated International Women's Day in Brownsville, Texas on March 9, 2022.



A program of Texas Latinx Judges, *Thriving in Law School & Our Journeys to the Bench*, featured District 11 members: Justice Gina Benavides (Thirteenth Court of Appeals), Justice Amparo Guerra (First District Court of Appeals, Houston), and Judge Toni Arteaga (57th Civil District Court, Austin). District 11 members in attendance: Justice Julie Countiss, Justice Gina Benavides, Sr. Ret. Judge Orlanda Naranjo, Judge Toni Arteaga, Judge Maria Salas Mendoza, former judge Lesley Briones. The program hosted students from the University of Houston Law Center, Thurgood Marshall School of Law and South Texas School of Law on April 1, 2022, in Houston.



Another fantastic Color of Justice (Austin) was held on April 14, 2022, at the Eidman Courtroom at UT Law School; its 17th annual COJ! Sixty (60) middle and high school students participated, approximately 85% of them were minorities. Lezly Cardenas, 2L, received the \$1,000 Scholarship sponsored by District 11, NAWJ, and Texas Latinx Judges. A DACA recipient, Lezly is passionately committed to helping immigrants like herself. She shared her powerful story with the students. (See link below.)

<https://law.utexas.edu/publicinterest/news/national-association-of-women-judges-access-to-justice-scholarship-awarded-to-lezly-cardenas-23/>



The judges' panel was comprised of: 1 appellate judge, 1 civil district judge, 1 criminal district judge, and one Justice of the Peace; 2 female, 2 male; 2 Latinas, 1 Chinese, 1 African American. The attorney panel included 3 females, 1 male; 1 Latina, 2 African Americans, 1 Mexican American; areas of practice included: family, criminal, international transaction, general counsel work.

Moody Bank and Travis County Women Lawyers were lunch sponsors for approximately 10 judges, lawyers and students.

On April 20, 2022, Chief Justice Rebeca Martinez hosted a Color of Justice program in San Antonio at the Young Women's Leadership Academy.



On May 25, 2022, District 11 held a membership social in Dallas, Texas. Several new members joined NAWJ that night and several more after. It was a great event to talk about NAWJ, its programs, how to join and how to get involved with its programs.



On June 8th, 2022, Chamberlain Hrdlicka hosted a dinner in honor of Texas Latinx Judges and NAWJ District 11 to kick off the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting.



On June 24, 2022, NAWJ District 11 in collaboration with the El Paso Women’s Bar Association and Texas Latinx Judges held its first Faces of Justice Program in El Paso. Forty-five college students attended the program which featured members Judge Diane Navarrete and Judge Maria Salas Mendoza on the judges panel joined by U.S. Magistrate Judge Miguel Torres and Family District Judge Jesus M. Rodriguez. The attorney speakers were Jessica Mendez, Priscilla Mata, A’kiesha Soliman and Christina Ford, moderated by Professor Lisa Soto. Other members participated in breakout sessions and on the planning committee including Judge Anna Perez, Judge Linda Chew and Judge Selena Solis, joined by Cori Harbour-Valdez, Judge-Elect Melissa Baeza, Professor Lisa Soto, Judge Becky Bustamante, and Priscilla Mata.



District 11 sponsored the inaugural Lawtina Network Summit held at St. Mary’s School of Law on August 7, 2022. Chief Justice Dori Contreras, 13th Court of Appeals, Chief Justice Rebeca Martinez, 4th Court of Appeals, and Judge Toni Arteaga, 57th Civil District Court (Bexar) were among the program’s motivating speakers focused on provided Latina law students support and guidance on their professional journeys. Dynamic organizer/student Brianna Chapa left a great impression on all who participated, nearly 150 law students.



Co-sponsored by District 11 NAWJ, Texas Latinx Judges presented its first high school outreach program, Paving the Way to the Courthouse, for over 160 high school students in El Paso, Texas on September 23, 2022. Judge Victor Villarreal, TLJ President and NAWJ member, welcomed the students and participants. Students heard from judges regarding the importance of mentorship; they learned about resilience and skills and strategies for college success. Students also had an opportunity to visit with legal professionals— court reporters, law enforcement officers including bailiffs and forensic officers, court interpreters, lawyers and judges—in breakout sessions as well as during lunch networking. The program will be replicated in Laredo, Texas, in November, Dallas in March and Brownsville in May. Texas Latinx Judges will have NAWJ co-sponsorship of all of these programs.

On October 1st, Houston members will hold their second Color of Justice program. In coordination with all three local law schools, the program will include numerous members sharing their HerStory with students. Two \$1000 scholarships will be given to students from each school for a total of 6 scholarships.

SUPERLATIVES

Justice Leticia Hinojosa was honored at the Hispanic Women's Network of Texas program, *Hispanic Women Making History*, on March 8, 2022.

Judge Rosie Speedlin Gonzalez, County Court #13 (Bexar County) received the 2022 Judge John C. Creuzot Award from the Texas Association of Specialty Courts.

Chief Justice Dori Contreras was a speaker for The Chiral Project's first podcast on March 8, 2022: Episode 1: A Life in Service.

Judge Audrey Moorehead, Dallas County Criminal Court 3 (first woman to be elected to this court), was elected President of the Texas Association of County Court at Law Judges.

Bexar County LEAD Academy recognized Chief Justice Rebeca Martinez, Fourth Court of Appeals, in honor of Women's History Month.

On March 10, 2022, Members Justice Chari Kelly, Judge Maya Guerra Gamble and Judge Jan Soifer participated in the Center for Women in the Law "Coffee with the Court" program. They shared their judicial journeys, best part about being a judge and clerkship expectations with students.



On March 30, 2022, the Hispanic Women's Network of Texas presented its *Second Annual Lady in Red Scholarship Gala* and honored District 11 Members Chief Justice Dori Contreras and Justice Nora Longoria among its 46 Latina leaders.

Susan Criss was featured on ABC's 20/20 regarding her role as the Trial Court Judge in Galveston during the Robert Durst murder trial on March 19, 2021.

Judge Tina Torres, 407th Civil District Court (Bexar), and TCSYale Class of 2008, was celebrated by The Campaign School of Yale during its March Women's History Month Celebration.

Member and former judge Josefina Rendon was recognized by the Houston Bar Foundation for her longevity of service to the local Dispute Resolution Center. Judge Rendon has been a volunteer mediator and trainer since 1996.

District Director Maria Salas Mendoza moderated the *Judges' Panel: Views from the Bench*, at the 19th Annual Texas Minority Program hosted by the State Bar Office of Minority Affairs on April 22, 2022, in Houston, Texas. The panel included Judge Al Bennet, U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas, Judge

Beau Miller, 190th Civil District Court, Houston, Texas, and Judge Christine Weems, 281st District Court, Houston, Texas.

Judge Cynthia Wheless, 417th District Court (Collin County) is this year's Texas Women Lawyers Pathfinder Award Recipient. The presentation was made at the organization's annual meeting on April 29, 2022, in McKinney, Texas.

Judge Emily Miskel, 470th District Court (Collin County) presented on *COVID & the Courts*, at Loyola Law School for the National Center for State Courts on May 2nd, 2022.

Yolanda Huff, County Court 12 (Bexar), was the keynote speaker for the Kappa Alpha Psi Silhouettes' banquet on May 2nd, 2022 and presented on CCP 16.22 at the Texas Association of Pretrial Services Conference on May 5, 2022.

Judge Beckie Palomo, 341st District Court (Webb), received the 2022 Law Day Award from the Laredo Webb County Bar Association on May 11, 2022, honoring her selfless public service and significant contributions to the legal profession and Laredo community.

Justice Gina M. Benavides, 13th Court of Appeals, moderated the judges panel at the 17th Annual Soaking Up Some CLE: A South Texas Litigation Course, held on May 12-13, 2022, on South Padre Island. Judge Maria Salas Mendoza, 120th District Court, joined Judge David Sanchez, 444th District Court, and Judge Joanne Garcia, Hidalgo County Probate Court, on the panel.

Judge Beckie Palomo, 341st District Court (Webb County) received the Leadership Award from the Laredo Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on May 13, 2022.

On May 18, 2022, Judge Yolanda Huff, County Court No. 12 (San Antonio) was a panelist discussing *Mental Health in Underserved Communities: Eliminating the Stigma, Addressing Disparities and Building Stronger Relationships* at the St. Phillips College.

Webb County Court at Law #2, presided by Judge Victor Villarreal, was designated a Judicial Center of Excellence by the Texas Judicial Council on May 19, 2022.

Judge Audrey Moorehead, County Criminal Court #3 (Dallas) and Judge Maria Salas Mendoza, 120th District Court (El Paso) presented on *Criminal Trials in a Post-Pandemic Reality* for the Women in the Law Section, State Bar of Texas on May 25, 2022.



Judge Veronica Vasquez, Probate Court No. 2 (Bexar) was honored by the San Antonio Business Journal with its 2022 Women's Leadership Award in June 2022.

Audrey Moorehead, County Court at Law #3 (Dallas) presented on Client Management during the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting in Houston, Texas, on June 9, 2022.

Judge Maria Salas Mendoza, 120th District Court (El Paso) joined Judge Audrie Lawton-Evans, Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 1, and Judge Ravi K. Sandill, 127th District Court (Harris) for the Diversity Forum held at the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting in Houston, Texas, on June 9, 2022. The topic was *Unconscious Bias In Jury Selection*.

Judge Rosie Speedlin-Gonzalez, County Court at Law #13 (Bexar), was the keynote speaker for the Global Diversity Council's 2022 Mexico LGBTQ+ Cumbre de La Unidad (*Unity Summit*) in Mexico City on June 16, 2022.



On June 25, 2022, Chief Justice Dori Contreras, 13th Court of Appeals, was a speaker for Project Poderosa, in San Antonio.

Judge Aurora Martinez, 126th District Court (Austin) was profiled by The Inprint News, *One Texas Judge Wants Children and Families Better Served by a State Too Often Leaving Them Behind*, on July 6, 2022.

Former Supreme Court Justice Eva Guzman was appointed to the American Arbitration Association's Roster of Arbitrators and Mediators in July 2022.

Justice Amparo Yanez Guerra, 1st Court of Appeals (Houston) served as Course Director for the Texas Bar CLE Advanced Civil Trial Course in Houston, which was held on July 6-8, 2022.

Judge Audrey Moorehead, County Criminal Court #3 (Dallas) spoke at the UT Law CLE *There Is No Bias in Bankruptcy, Said Nobody Ever*, on July 9, 2022.

Judge Yolanda Huff, County Court No. 12 (San Antonio) and Judge Rosie Speedlin Gonzalez, County Court No. 13 (San Antonio) spoke about their Specialty Courts at the July 12, 2022, NAMI General Meeting.

The Collin County Bar Association Lawyer Moms Section held its Kids Law Day on July 13, 2022, and were hosted by Judge Cyndi McCrann Wheless, 417th District Court (Collin) and Judge Andrea Bouressa, 471st District Court (Collin) and their staff.

Judge Audrey Moorehead, County Criminal Court #3 (Dallas), spoke at the State Bar of Texas's Local Bar Leadership Conference on July 12th, 2022.

The third graduation ceremony for participants in the REFLEJO Court was held on July 13, 2022. The treatment court is the first of its kind offering 1st time offenders of family violence who also have substance use issues an opportunity to receive trauma-informed, wraparound services as well as intensive outpatient drug treatment.

Judge Emily Miskel, 470th District Court (Collin), spoke at the Texas Bar CLE Advanced Criminal Law seminar on *Electronic Evidence, AI, and DeepFakes*, on July 21, 2022, in Dallas, Texas.

Chief Justice Dori Contrera, 13th Court of Appeals, Chief Justice Rebeca C. Martinez, 4th Court of Appeals, U.S. District Judge Marina Garcia Marmolejo and Judge Antonia (Toni) Arteaga, 57th Civil District Court (San Antonio), will be speakers at the St. Mary's School of Law LAWTINA Summit on August 6, 2022.

Judge Yolanda Huff, County Court #12 (Bexar) received the Judiciary Service Award from MADD at its law enforcement recognition luncheon on August 14, 2022.

Judge Gloria Lopez, 308th Family Court (Harris), spoke at the Advanced Family Law Conference, State Bar of Texas, in August 2022.

Judge Audrie Lawton, Civil Court #1 (Houston), Judge Catherine Torres Stahl, 175th District Court (San Antonio), Judge David Sanchez, 444th District Court (Brownsville), Judge Angela King, Civil Court #6 (Dallas) and Judge Linda Chew, 327th District Court (El Paso) will present a roundtable for Texas Latinx Judges on August 16, 2022; the program is titled, *Do As I Learned Not As I Did*.

Justice Dennise Garcia, 5th Court of Appeals, received the Louise B. Raggio Award, and Justice Erin Nowell, 5th Court of Appeals, was recognized as Outstanding Jurist by the Dallas Women Lawyers Association in August 2022.

Judge Selena N. Solis, 243rd District Court (El Paso), as program chair, coordinated a fantastic celebration of Women's Equality Day for the League of Women Voters on August 27, 2022.

Judge Yolanda Huff, County Court #12 (Bexar) was the featured speaker for The African American Network (TAAN) at its Coffee Talk segment on September 3, 2022, with the focus on mental health and the judiciary.

The Dallas Bar Association recognized Judge Irma Carrillo Ramirez, U.S. District Court, Northern District, for its Living Legends program on September 15, 2022.

Judge Linda Chew, 327th District Court (El Paso) received the State Bar of Texas Judicial Section's Lifetime Achievement Award at the Texas Bar Foundation Luncheon held during the Annual Judicial Conference in September 2022. The award given by her peers recognizes Judge Chew's reputation for and commitment to judicial excellence, her significant length of service and her long term, consistent and significant contribution to the betterment of the judiciary, access to justice and the system of justice in Texas. Judge the Judiciary, was Dean of the College of New Judges, and Local Administrative Judge for the El Paso Council of Judges from 2019-2022, and a long-time member of NAWJ.

Chief Justice Rebeca Martinez, 4th Court of Appeals, was elected Chair-Elect of the Judicial Section, State Bar of Texas, at the Texas Center for the Judiciary Annual Meeting in September 2022.

Judge Audrey Moorehead, County Criminal Court #3 (Dallas), is this year's recipient of the Hon. Cleo Steele Committed Mentor Award given by the JL Turner Foundation on September 15, 2022.

Judge Toni Arteaga, 57th Civil District Court (Bexar), has been named honorary chair for the Hispanic Women's Network of Texas State Conference.

Justice Leticia Hinojosa, 13th Court of Appeals, is being recognized by the Hispanic Women's Network of Texas as a 2022 Trailblazer at its State Conference to be held in San Antonio, Texas, from Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 2022.