



April 8, 2022  
Mid-Year Report from District 11  
Honorable Maria Salas Mendoza

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### **Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas**

#### MEMBERSHIP NEWS:

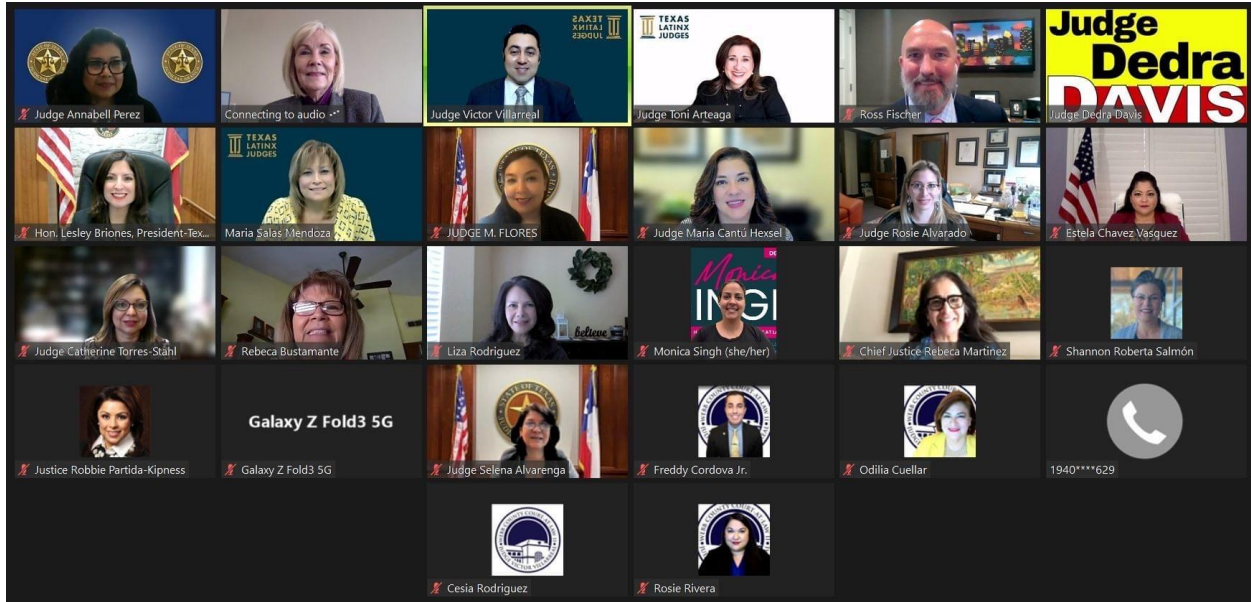
Members attended a virtual meeting of District 11 on March 2, 2022 and April 6, 2022. We have two new members: Judge Miryrea Ayala, newly appointed to Harris County Civil Court at Law No, 4, and Judge Dawn Deshea Rogers, 334<sup>th</sup> District Court, Harris County. District 11 currently has 98 members.

#### PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES:

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



On March 7, 2022, Judge Toni Arteaga 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.



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.

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 (57<sup>th</sup> Civil District Court, Austin). District 11 members in attendance: Justice Julie Countiss, Justice Gina Benavides, Sr. Ret. Judge Orlinda 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.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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 Conteras 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 in 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.

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, 407<sup>th</sup> Civil District Court (Bexas), 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.

Judge Cynthia Wheless, 417<sup>th</sup> District Court (Collin County) is this year's Texas Women Lawyers Pathfinder Award Recipient. The presentation will be made at the organization's annual meeting to be held April 29, 2022, in McKinney, Texas.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Color of Justice program will be held on April 14, 2022, in Austin, Texas. Headed by Judge Orlanda Naranjo, the program will be a hybrid in-person and virtual program to accommodate students whose schools are still promoting remote learning. With Texas Latinx support, a \$1000 scholarship will be awarded to a law student.

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

In an effort to improve membership in the north Texas areas, Justice Partida Kipness, Justice Denise Garcia, Judge Audrey Moorehead and newly elected Judge Maria Aceves are coordinating an evening social for members and prospective members on May 25, 2022. I will attend to speak and promote NAWJ.

Members will hold the first ever Faces of Justice program in El Paso on June 24, 2022; co-sponsored by Texas Latinx Judges, the plan is to award at least one \$1000 scholarship to a college student.