



A Note from the Office of Dean Leonard M. Baynes

In 1987, Congress passed a law designating the month of March as Women's History Month. Every president since then has issued a proclamation also recognizing this designation. This month provides us with the opportunity to honor the incredible contributions of women in the legal profession. Recognizing women's accomplishments during this month serves as a powerful reminder of the progress we've made, the challenges that remain, and the extraordinary strength and resilience of women who have shaped our history and continue to influence our future.

This year's [theme](#) is "Moving Forward Together! Women Educating and Inspiring Generations," and it is only fitting to honor the groundbreaking achievements of UH Law alumna Justice Ruby Kless Sondock — a true trailblazer whose career has shaped the legal profession in Texas and inspired generations of women.

As Dean of the University of Houston Law Center, I have had the privilege of knowing Justice Sondock for over a decade. Her contributions throughout her distinguished career have been nothing short of extraordinary.

Justice Sondock has accomplished many firsts throughout her remarkable career. As one of just five women in the University of Houston Law Center's Class of 1962, she graduated as valedictorian. At the time, her goals were modest. In her own words, she hoped to become the "best legal secretary in town." Her achievements would far exceed that early ambition.

Within just her first year of practice, she presented a case before the Texas Supreme Court. After practicing law for 12 years, she was appointed as a judge on the Harris County Domestic Relations Court in 1973, becoming the first woman district court judge in Harris County. After serving in this role for four years, she was then appointed to the 234th District Court, again making her the first woman to have that honor.

In 1982, Sondock broke another barrier. She was appointed to the Texas Supreme Court to serve the unexpired term of a deceased justice, making her the first woman to serve on the Texas Supreme Court in a regular session. After her term, she returned to the District Court and then worked as a private mediator in Houston.

Her impact has been widely recognized. She was named a Texas Legal Legend by the Litigation Section of the State Bar of Texas. The Houston Bar Association named an award after her — all are fitting tributes to her career defined by courage, integrity, and excellence. Justice Sondock's legacy is not only one of professional achievement but also of opening doors for other barrier breakers.

Justice Ruby Kless Sondock's story is a powerful reminder of how far we have come as a profession and as a nation. Her career stands as an inspiration to all, proving that barriers are meant to be broken.

This month, let us not only celebrate the achievements of women, but open more doors for the next generation of trailblazers.

Please take a moment to [click to the slide show](#) to see more women UH Law Center graduates, law faculty, and administrators who have made a significant impact while at the Law Center, in the world of academia, the legal profession, and society.

Sincerely,

Leonard M. Baynes
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