UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER

A Note from the Office of Dean Leonard M. Baynes

As we celebrate Women's History Month, we are reminded of the incredible contributions that women have made throughout history: shaping our society, our culture, and our laws. During this special month, it's a time to honor the trailblazers who have shattered barriers, defied expectations, and paved the way for future generations.

Women have had a major impact on the legal profession. From advocating for equal rights to fighting injustice, women lawyers have been at the forefront of some of the most pivotal moments in our nation's history. Yet despite their significant contributions, women have often faced barriers and discrimination within our society and the legal profession.

Despite gender parity among male and female law school graduates over the past twenty years, women still comprise only 39% of lawyers. 2023 marked a milestone where women now constitute a slight majority of associates in major law firms. However, only about 25% of equity partners are women, according to the 2023 Women in Law Report. Women also remain underrepresented on executive or management committees at law firms, comprising nearly one-third of U.S. members of those committees.

We must also ensure that women receive equal pay, have access to leadership roles, and work in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment.

But it's not just about representation—it's also about amplifying the voices of women in the legal profession. We learn by listening to each other and each other's unique experiences, perspectives, and ideas.

One such leader that I would like to recognize this Women's History Month is Susan Bickley, a 1984 alumna of the University of Houston Law Center.

Susan Bickley '84

Bickley is the co-chair of Blank Rome's Houston office, serves on the firm's distribution committee to determine partner compensation, served on the firm's executive committee, governance committee, strategic planning committee, and nominating committee, and chaired the Blank Rome Women's Forum, an affinity group for women attorneys. As an attorney, she has represented public corporations, small companies, and start-ups, in a wide array of litigation involving employment issues, business and commercial issues, trade secrets, restrictive covenants, and defended local governments and public officials.

In addition to her standout career, Bickley has been an ardent supporter of her alma mater. She has served in several significant alumni leadership roles at the Law Center including being the first woman to serve as President of the UH Law Foundation and with her husband Bob Scott served as Co-Chair of the 2015 UH Law Center Annual Gala. Bickley also served as an adjunct professor teaching trial advocacy at UH Law.

Bickley has also been very active in the legal community serving as President of the Houston Bar Foundation. In 2021, the Houston Bar Association named Bickley as the recipient of the Justice Ruby Kless Sondock Award, named after trailblazing UH Law alumna who was the first woman appointed to serve on the Texas Supreme Court during its regular session. The award recognizes a woman lawyer or judge with a record of exceptional achievement and leadership in the law. Bickley also serves as Chair of the John P. McGovern Museum of Health and Medical Science's board of directors.

I am proud to count Susan Bickley in the ranks of Law Center graduates, and the Houston legal community is stronger because of her presence.

As we commemorate Women's History Month, let us continue to reflect on how to achieve greater gender equality in the legal profession. Let us honor the women who have come before us and inspire the next generation of leaders.

Please take a moment to click through the slideshow to see more about other women alumni who have not only left their mark here at the Law Center but also in their careers in law.

Sincerely,

Leonard M. Baynes
Dean, Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished Chair, and Professor of Law
University of Houston Law Center

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4170 Martin Luther King Blvd.
Houston, TX 77204-6060