

THE FACETS OF JUSTICE

*A Dive Into
Judicial Diversity*

Hispanic Justices

VOLUME 4

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
The History of Hispanic Americans and the Law	5
By the Numbers	6
The History of Hispanic Justices on State Supreme Courts	10
The History of the New Mexico Supreme Court	10
The History of the Colorado Supreme Court	16
The History of the California Supreme Court	18
The History of the Michigan Supreme Court	22
The History of the Texas Supreme Court	23
The History of the Florida Supreme Court	26
The History of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals	30
The History of the New York Court of Appeals	33
The History of the Oregon Supreme Court	35
The History of the New Jersey Supreme Court	36
The History of the Washington Supreme Court	38
The History of the Connecticut Supreme Court	40
The History of the Arizona Supreme Court	41
The History of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court	43
The History of the Maryland Supreme Court	44
States that Have Never Had a Hispanic Supreme Court Justice	45



Building a Diverse **Judiciary for All.**

Welcome to **The Faces of Justice report**, a showcase of state court judges who bring professional and personal diversity to our courts. Each issue will hone in on and uplift different state court judges of various backgrounds.

Introduction

95% of all lawsuits in the United States — the overwhelming majority — are filed in state courts. These courts have a powerful effect on the interpretation and enforcement of our laws and civil rights; members of these courts must represent a diverse array of backgrounds and lived experiences to ensure that state courts deliver justice for all residents of the United States.

This report highlights the historical presence of Hispanic justices on 14 state supreme court benches across the nation, exploring the backgrounds of the Hispanic justices who serve or have served on each of these state supreme courts. The report also addresses the 36 state supreme courts that have never had a Hispanic justice serve on its highest court, including several states with high populations of Hispanic people.

Like members of other ethnic and racial minority groups in the United States, Hispanic people remain underrepresented in the legal profession, particularly in government positions and amongst the state and federal judiciaries. This gap in representation exacerbates the centuries-old history of disparity faced by this community. Promoting demographic diversity on state courts ensures that the lived experiences of all communities are represented in our legal system and advances the United States towards a legal system that is truly fair for all.



The History of Hispanic Americans and the Law

From the time English colonists were establishing the colonies of New England on the East Coast of the United States, the descendants of Spanish colonists and indigenous peoples were settling the territories that would become the Southwestern United States. Yet due to deep cultural ties to Spanish and indigenous languages and cultures, Hispanic people have been perceived as outsiders, not fully integrated into American culture and society, and have suffered centuries of oppression and discrimination as a result.

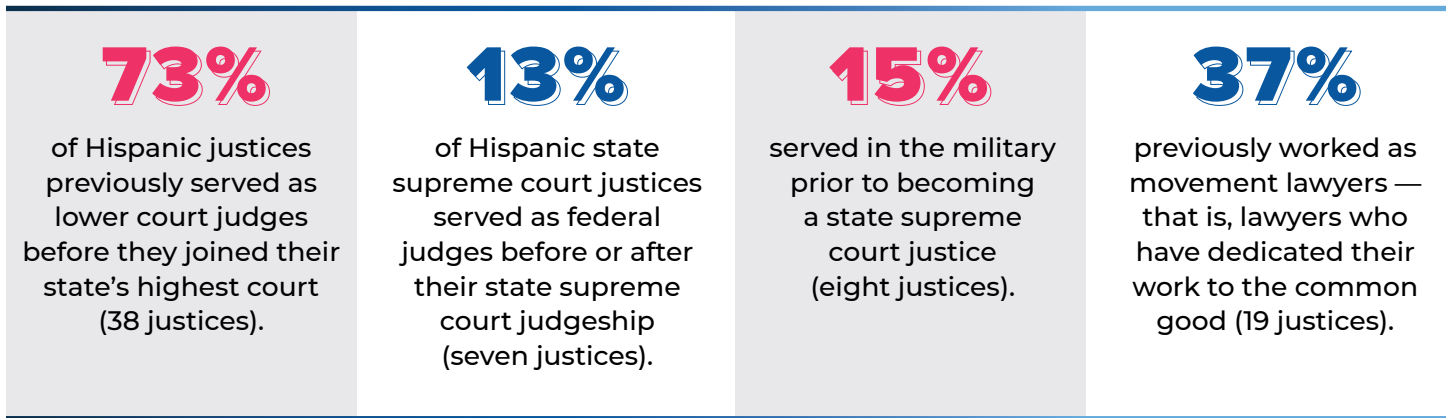
Americans of Hispanic descent experienced the same barriers to full participation in society faced by members of other minority groups until the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1965 and continue to experience discrimination, underrepresentation, and unequal access in many sectors of American society today — including the legal profession. As more western and southwestern states joined the union throughout the late 19th and early 20th century, Americans of Hispanic descent faced unequal treatment similar to the Jim Crow laws the white majority imposed on Black Americans, resulting in segregated schools and discrimination in higher education access against Hispanic students, hiring and workplace discrimination against Hispanic workers, segregated housing for Hispanic families, barriers to mortgage and loan access for Hispanic borrowers, disenfranchisement, harassment, and intimidation against Hispanic voters, and discrimination that leads to poorer outcomes for Hispanic people who are impacted by the criminal legal system.

As a result of this systemic discrimination against Americans of Hispanic descent, Hispanic people have continued to face barriers to representation and equal access in law school admissions, law firm hiring, and when interacting with the legal system as civil plaintiffs, criminal defendants, and jury members, including access to translation or court services conducted in Spanish or other indigenous languages. In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the systemic exclusion of Hispanic Americans from juries was an unconstitutional violation based on the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The ruling recognized that Hispanic Americans, who were classified as white by the U.S. Census Bureau and other government entities, were nonetheless experiencing systemic discrimination due to their Spanish and indigenous culture. In 1967, a group of Hispanic American attorneys formed the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) to further challenge systemic discrimination against Hispanic Americans in the courts and in American society. Today, MALDEF is a leader in the protection and advancement of civil rights for Hispanic Americans.

By the Numbers

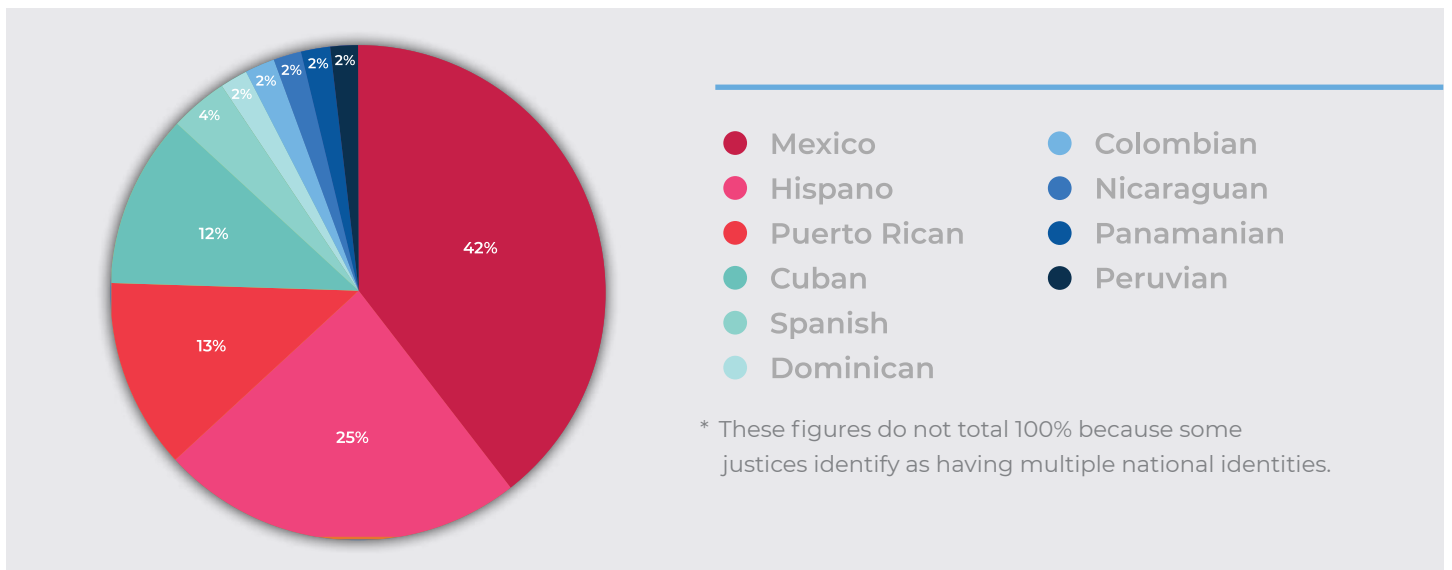
Who are the United States' Hispanic State Supreme Court Justices?

Fifty-two Hispanic justices have served on 14 state supreme courts since Eugene Lujan, the first Hispanic justice to serve on any state supreme court, was elected to the New Mexico Supreme Court in 1945. Twenty Hispanic justices are currently serving on 13 state supreme courts, though one justice (Mary Yu of the Washington Supreme Court) has indicated she will retire in December 2025.



Heritage of Hispanic State Supreme Court Justices

Of the 52 Hispanic state supreme court justices, 42% are of Mexican descent; 25% are Hispanos of New Mexico or Colorado; 13% are of Puerto Rican descent; 12% are of Cuban descent; 4% are of Spanish descent; 2% are of Colombian descent; 2% are of Dominican descent; 2% are of Nicaraguan descent; 2% are of Panamanian descent; and 2% are of Peruvian descent.*



State Breakdowns

Only 14 states (28%) have had a Hispanic justice serve on their state's supreme court (NM, CO, CA, MI, TX, FL, NY, OR, NJ, WA, CT, AZ, MA, MD), while 36 states (72%) have never had a Hispanic justice serve on their supreme court bench. The New Mexico Supreme Court has had 12 Hispanic justices. Nine Hispanic justices have served on the Texas Supreme Court or the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, seven Hispanic justices have served on the Florida Supreme Court, and five have served on the California Supreme Court. New York, Colorado, New Jersey, and Arizona have each had three Hispanic justices serve on their highest courts, and Washington has had two Hispanic state supreme court justices. Michigan, Oregon, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maryland have each had one Hispanic justice serve on their state supreme court.

Nine of New Mexico's 12 Hispanic state supreme court justices served as their court's chief justice; three of Florida's seven justices served as the chief justice of the Florida Supreme Court; and two of Colorado's three Hispanic justices served as the chief justice of that state's court. Of California's five Hispanic state supreme court justices, just one has led that court (Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero, who currently serves as the chief justice of the California Supreme Court). One of Washington's two Hispanic justices has served as that court's chief justice. Michigan and Oregon have both had just one Hispanic justice of their state's highest court, and both of those justices served as the chief justice of their court for part of their tenure. Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maryland have also had just one Hispanic justice serve on their high court, but none have served as chief justice. New York, New Jersey, and Arizona have each had three Hispanic state supreme court justices, and none have ever served as their court's chief justice. And Texas, with nine Hispanic justices having served on its supreme court or court of criminal appeals, has never had a Hispanic justice lead either court.

How Hispanic Justices Have Gotten to their State Supreme Courts

Of the 52 Hispanic justices who have served on their state's highest court, 83% (43 justices) were initially appointed to their courts. Of those, 67% (29 justices) were required to run for election to remain on their court, and three of those justices (10%) were removed from their court by voters in either their initial or subsequent bids to stay on their court. Of the justices appointed to their state's highest court, Democratic governors appointed 56% (24 justices) in 10 states (NM, CO, CA, TX, FL, NY, NJ, WA, CT, AZ), and Republican governors appointed 44% (19 justices) in eight states (CA, MI, TX, FL, NJ, AZ, MA, MD). In New Mexico, supreme court justices run in partisan elections the first time they stand for election to the state's high court and run in nonpartisan retention elections if they choose to seek an additional term on the court. Justices in Texas run in partisan elections; justices in Michigan, Oregon, and Washington run in nonpartisan elections; and justices in Colorado, California, Florida, Arizona, and Maryland run in retention elections. The governors of New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut may choose to reappoint incumbent justices to additional terms. Massachusetts has no retention method, and justices of its high court may continue to serve until they reach the state's mandatory retirement age of 70.

Ten of the 15 Hispanic justices to serve on their state's highest court were directly elected to those courts in four states (NM, MI, TX, OR). This includes Dorothy Comstock Riley, who was both appointed and directly elected to the Michigan Supreme Court. Riley was initially appointed to the court by the governor and removed only weeks later when a majority of the court's justices ruled that the governor had lacked the authority to appoint her. She won election to the court the following year.

Nineteen of the 52 current Hispanic justices served or are serving for more than 10 years, and an additional 19 justices have served between five and 10 years. Of the 14 that have served fewer than five years, seven are currently serving, and six of these seven justices are serving terms that will last at least five more years. The seventh faces the option of a retention election to a full six-year term when her current term expires in 2026.

How Do State Supreme Courts Compare to the Hispanic Population in Their State?

New Mexico has the highest Hispanic population as a percentage of its total population, with 47.8% of residents identifying as Hispanic. New Mexico has had the most Hispanic state supreme court justices of any state, with 12 Hispanic state supreme court justices, three of whom are currently serving. New Mexico has had a Hispanic justice serving on its state supreme court since Justice Eugene Lujan joined the court in 1945, except from 1968, when Justice David Chávez retired, until 1973, when Justice Joe L. Martínez joined the court.

California ranks first among states for the total number of Hispanic residents, with over 15.7 million Hispanic residents in 2024. California also has the second-highest Hispanic population as a percentage of its total population, with 40% of California residents identifying as Hispanic. California's first Hispanic justice joined its high

court in 1982, with four Hispanic justices serving since then, including the court's current chief justice. California has had a Hispanic justice serving on its supreme court for 26 of the past 43 years.

Colorado has the seventh-highest Hispanic population as a percentage of its total population, with 22.4% of residents identifying as Hispanic. Colorado also ranks eighth among states for the total number of Hispanic residents, with over 1.3 million Hispanic residents living in Colorado. Colorado's first Hispanic justice joined the court in 1979, and a Hispanic justice has served on the Colorado Supreme Court for 44 of the 46 years since then.

Texas ranks second among states for total Hispanic residents, with 12.1 million Texas residents identifying as Hispanic. Texas also ranks third among states for the percentage of Hispanic residents, with 38.8% of Texans identifying as Hispanic. The first Hispanic justice of the Texas Supreme Court joined the court in 1984, and the first Hispanic judge of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals joined that court in 1991; Texas has had a Hispanic judge or justice serving on its high courts for civil or criminal appeals for 29 of the past 41 years.

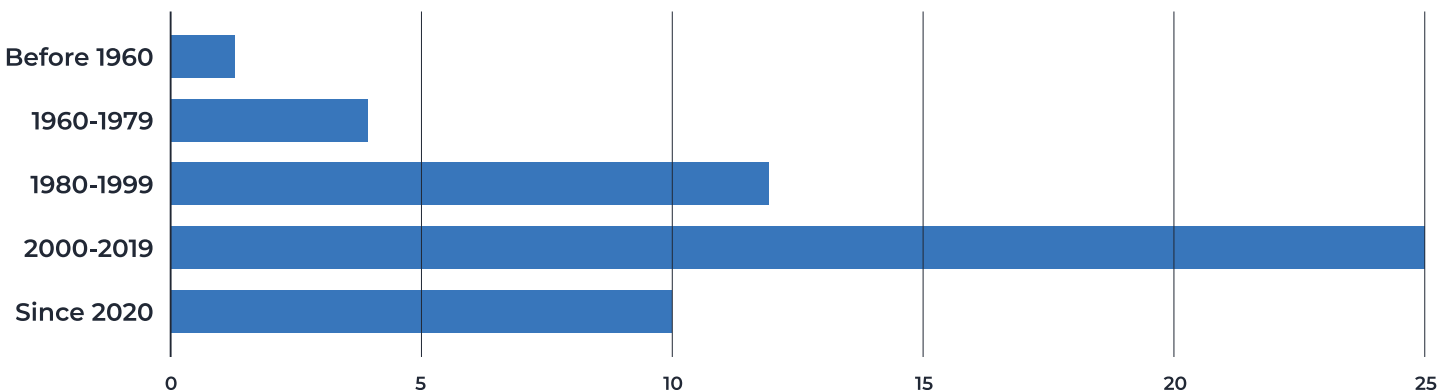
Florida ranks third among states for the total number of Hispanic residents, with nearly 6.2 million Hispanic residents. Florida also ranks sixth among states for the percentage of Hispanic residents, with 26.5% of Florida residents identifying as Hispanic. Florida has had seven Hispanic justices in the history of its state supreme court, four of whom are currently serving. Florida's first Hispanic justice joined the high court in 1985, and a Hispanic justice has served on that court for 31 of the past 40 years.

Arizona has the fourth-highest Hispanic population as a percentage of all residents, with nearly 31% of Arizona residents identifying as Hispanic. Arizona also ranks sixth among states for total number of Hispanic residents, with more than 2.3 million residents identifying as Hispanic. While Arizona has three Hispanic state supreme court justices, all of whom are currently serving, the first Hispanic justice to join the Arizona Supreme Court was only sworn in to the court in 2017, and the first Hispanic woman to serve on the court joined in early 2025.

Among the top 10 states for Hispanic population as a percentage of total population are Nevada, with the fifth highest Hispanic population at 29.3%; and Illinois, with the 10th highest Hispanic population at 18.7%. Over three million Hispanic people live in Nevada, and nearly 13 million Hispanic people live in Illinois, which also ranks fifth among states for the number of Hispanic residents. Still, neither of these states has ever had a Hispanic justice serve on its highest court. North Carolina and Georgia also rank in the top 10 states for total number of Hispanic residents, with over 1.2 million Hispanic people residing in each state, yet neither state has had a Hispanic justice serve on its highest court.

Hispanic Justices on State Supreme Courts Through the Decades

Before 1960, only one state (New Mexico) had a Hispanic state supreme court justice: Eugene Lujan, who served on the state's highest court from 1945 to 1959. Between 1960 and 1980, three more Hispanic justices served on the New Mexico Supreme Court, and Luis Rovira was appointed to the Colorado Supreme Court in 1979. Between 1980 and 1999, 12 Hispanic justices joined state high court benches, including the first Hispanic justices to ascend to the high courts of California, Michigan, Texas, Florida, and New York, and additional Hispanic justices who joined the Colorado and New Mexico benches. Twenty-five Hispanic justices joined state supreme court benches between 2000 and 2019, including the first Hispanic justices to join the high courts of Oregon, New Jersey, Washington, Connecticut, and Arizona. Since 2020, 10 Hispanic justices have joined state supreme court benches, including Dalila Arguez Wendlandt, the first Hispanic justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, and Angela Eaves, the first Hispanic justice to serve on the Maryland Supreme Court.



The History of the New Mexico Supreme Court

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE NEW MEXICO SUPREME COURT



Eugene D. Lujan

Associate Justice
(1945–1951; 1953–1957)

Chief Justice
(1951–1953; 1957–1959)

Eugene David Lujan became the first Hispanic justice to serve on the New Mexico Supreme Court when he was elected to a four-year term on the court in November of 1944. He was chosen by his peers to serve as the court's chief justice in 1951, becoming the first Hispanic person and the first non-white person to serve as chief justice of any state supreme court. He was born in New Mexico while it was still a U.S. territory in 1887 and began his career working for the U.S. State Department as an emissary to Bolivia during World War I before earning bachelor's and master's degrees in law at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He worked in private practice and served as a district attorney and a district court judge before his election to the state's highest court. He was reelected to the court twice, serving as its chief justice from 1951 to 1953 and again from 1957 until his retirement on December 31, 1959. He died in 1980 at the age of 92. Numerous members of his family have gone on to hold public office in New Mexico, including his granddaughter, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D). His family are Hispanos of New Mexico who can trace their presence in New Mexico back at least 12 generations.

SINCE JUSTICE LUJAN

David Chávez, Jr.

Associate Justice
(1960–1967)

Chief Justice
(1967–1968)

David Chávez, Jr. was appointed to the New Mexico Supreme Court by Gov. John Burroughs (D) on January 1, 1960, upon the retirement of Justice Lujan. He was born in 1897 in Los Chavez, New Mexico Territory, to a Hispano family that had lived in the area for generations. He served in the U.S. Army during World War I before earning a bachelor's degree from the University of New Mexico and a law degree from the Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C. He served as mayor of Santa Fe for two years before becoming a district court judge. He resigned from the bench to serve again in the U.S. Army during World War II, where he served in the Army's Judge Advocate General Corps and assisted in the prosecution of 40 Nazis who were Dachau concentration camp guards. He returned to the district court bench in Santa Fe after the war. In 1947, he was appointed to serve as a judge of the federal District Court of Puerto Rico by President Harry S. Truman (D), where he served until returning to New Mexico in 1950. He worked in private practice in Santa Fe until his appointment to the state's highest court in 1960 and remained on the court for eight years, serving as its chief justice from 1967 until his retirement in 1968. He died in Las Vegas, New Mexico, in 1984 at the age of 86. He was the younger brother of U.S. Senator Dennis Chávez (D), the first Hispanic attorney in the United States.

Joe L. Martínez

Associate Justice
(1973–1975)

Joe L. Martínez was elected to the New Mexico Supreme Court in 1972. He was born in New Mexico in 1909 to a Hispano family that had lived near Quay, New Mexico, for at least eight generations. He began his career as an aide to New Mexico Gov. Clyde Tingley (D) and later served on the staff of U.S. Senator David Dennis Chávez (D). From 1944 to 1945, he was an attorney for the U.S. Senate Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program. He returned to New Mexico in 1946, where he began a private law practice. He ran unsuccessfully for a seat in the U.S. Congress in 1946 and was elected attorney general of New Mexico in 1948, serving from 1949 to 1952. He returned to private practice and later served as an assistant district attorney and a district court judge. He was elected to an eight-year term on the New Mexico Supreme Court in 1972 and served on the court from 1973 until his resignation in 1975. He died in Albuquerque in 1990 at the age of 88.

Dan Sosa, Jr.

Associate Justice
(1975–1979; 1980–1989)

Chief Justice
(1979–1980; 1989–1991)

Dan Sosa, Jr. was appointed to the New Mexico Supreme Court by Gov. Jerry Apodaca (D) in 1975. He was born in an adobe house built by his mother's father in Las Cruces, New Mexico, in the 1860s. His grandparents and great-grandparents emigrated from Mexico to New Mexico in the mid-19th century. He attended college at New Mexico A&M but left to fight in World War II, serving in the U.S. Air Force and flying 35 combat missions over Nazi-occupied Europe. He returned to New Mexico after the war, where he finished his bachelor's degree in business administration at New Mexico A&M and earned a law degree from the University of New Mexico School of Law in 1951. He returned to Las Cruces and opened a private law practice, trying personal injury and domestic relations cases. He was elected to serve as district attorney for Doña Ana, Otero, and Lincoln counties in 1956 and later served as a municipal court judge in Las Cruces. In 1965, he joined nine other attorneys to create the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund. He was appointed to the state's highest court in 1975 and won election to full eight-year terms in 1978 and 1984. He served as the court's chief justice from 1979 to 1980 and again from 1989 until his retirement from the court in 1991. Sosa died in 2016 at the age of 92 in the home where he was born in Las Cruces.

Joseph F. Baca

Associate Justice
(1989–1994; 1996;
1997–2002)

Chief Justice
(1994–1996; 1996–1997)

Joseph Francis Baca was elected to the New Mexico Supreme Court in 1988 and was sworn into his first term on the bench on January 1, 1989. He was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1936 to Hispanic parents whose families had resided in New Mexico since it was a territory of Spain. After graduating from law school in 1964, he was a law clerk for the New Mexico Highway Department and an assistant district attorney in Santa Fe until 1966. He entered private practice, where he remained until 1972, when Gov. Bruce King (D) appointed him to the Second Judicial District Court bench. He was elected to a full term later that year and reelected in 1978 and 1984. In 1988, he won the Democratic primary for a seat on the state's highest court and won the general election that fall. He was retained for another term on the court in 1996. He served as the court's chief justice from 1994 until 1997, except for two months in 1996 when he temporarily stepped down as the court's chief justice to allow a colleague who was forced to retire for medical reasons to assume the role. Baca retired from the court in July 2002 and has continued to work as an arbitrator and mediator.

Patricio M. Serna

Associate Justice
(1996–2012)

Chief Justice
(2001–2003)

Patricio M. Serna was elected to the New Mexico Supreme Court in 1996 and sworn in on December 5, 1996. He was born in 1939 in Reserve, New Mexico, to Hispanic parents whose families had lived in New Mexico for at least five generations. After he graduated from law school, he worked in Washington, D.C. for four years at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission before returning to New Mexico to serve as an assistant attorney general in the office of Toney Anaya. He became a district court judge in Santa Fe in 1985, where he served until his election to the state's highest court in 1996. He served as the court's chief justice from 2001 to 2003 and was retained to a second eight-year term in 2004. He retired from the court in 2012.

Petra Jimenez Maez

Associate Justice
(1998–2012; 2014–2018)

Chief Justice
(2003–2005; 2012–2014)

Petra Jimenez Maes is the first Hispanic woman to serve on the New Mexico Supreme Court. She was born in Albuquerque in 1947 to parents whose families immigrated to New Mexico from Mexico. She was among the first Hispanic women to earn a law degree from the University of New Mexico School of Law when she graduated in 1973. She was an attorney at Northern New Mexico Legal Services from 1975 until her appointment to New Mexico's First Judicial District Court in Santa Fe in 1981, becoming the first woman to join that bench. She was reelected twice and served as a district court judge until her election to the New Mexico Supreme Court in November of 1998. She became the first Hispanic woman to serve as chief justice of the New Mexico Supreme Court when she was chosen by her peers to lead the court from 2003 to 2005 and led the court again from 2012 to 2014. She retired from the court on December 18, 2018.

Edward L. Chávez

Associate Justice
(2003–2007; 2010–2018)

Chief Justice
(2007–2010)

Edward Louis Chávez was appointed to the New Mexico Supreme Court by Gov. Bill Richardson (D) in 2003. He was born in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1957. Both of his parents were Hispano and had ancestors who had lived in New Mexico for generations. Before joining the state's highest court in 2003, he served as president of the Legal Aid Society of Albuquerque and as chair of the UNM Mental Health Center and the New Mexico Supreme Court Disciplinary Board. He was elected to a full term on the court in 2006 and retained to a second full term in 2014. He served as the court's chief justice from 2007 to 2010. He retired from the court in 2018.

Case Highlight

Justice Chávez wrote for the majority when the New Mexico Supreme Court struck down the state's ban on same-sex marriage in *Griego v. Oliver* in December 2013. Justice Chávez wrote that “barring individuals from marrying and depriving them of the rights, protections, and responsibilities of civil marriage solely because of their sexual orientation violates the Equal Protection Clause under Article II, Section 18 of the New Mexico Constitution. We hold that the State of New Mexico is constitutionally required to allow same-gender couples to marry and must extend to them the rights, protections, and responsibilities that derive from civil marriage under New Mexico law.”

Barbara J. Vigil

Associate Justice
(2012–2014; 2016–2021)

Chief Justice
(2014–2016)

Barbara J. Vigil was elected to the New Mexico Supreme Court in November of 2012, defeating an incumbent who had been appointed to replace retiring Justice Patricio M. Serna. Vigil was born and raised in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Hispano parents whose families had lived in New Mexico for several generations. Though not Native American, she attended St. Catherine's Indian School, a Catholic boarding school in Santa Fe for Native American children across New Mexico, after the death of her mother when she was 12. She earned an accounting degree from New Mexico State University and a law degree from the University of New Mexico School of Law. She maintained a private law practice and served as a children's court judge and a district court judge until her election to the state's highest court in 2012. She succeeded Petra Jimenez Maes as the court's chief justice, serving from 2014 to 2016. She retired from the court in 2021 and joined the cabinet of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D), serving as secretary for New Mexico children, youth and families until 2023. She has continued to serve as a member of the Governor's Policy Advisory Council. She performs volunteer diplomatic work between Santa Fe and its sister city, Santa Fe de la Vega in southern Spain, working to maintain and grow cultural ties between Spain and New Mexico.

Case Highlight

Justice Vigil wrote the majority opinion in *Fry v. Lopez and Allen v. LeMaster*, which set aside death sentences for the last two inmates on New Mexico's death row in 2019. The court's majority ruled that state law prohibited the execution of the two men, who were convicted and sentenced in 1994 and 2000 and had remained on death row after the state repealed the death penalty in 2009. The court determined that moving forward with the executions would violate the state law's requirement that a death sentence not be imposed when doing so would be excessive or disproportionate to penalties in similar cases.

THE NEW MEXICO SUPREME COURT TODAY



Michael E. Vigil

Associate Justice
(2018–2020; 2022–
Present)

Chief Justice
(2020–2022)

Michael Edward Vigil was elected to the New Mexico Supreme Court in November 2018. He was born in Santa Fe in 1952 to a Hispano family. As a student at the University of New Mexico in the early 1970s, he joined students who organized to advance social, economic, and civil rights issues. After graduating from law school, he worked as a staff attorney to the newly formed New Mexico Court of Appeals until entering private practice in 1979. He practiced personal injury and criminal defense, and also worked for the Community Law Center in Santa Fe, where he represented labor unions, litigants in civil rights issues with a specialty in police brutality cases, and community organizations including La Clinica del Pueblo de Rio Arriba, a clinic that has provided patient-centered medical care to rural New Mexicans since the 1960s. He traveled to Nicaragua in 1979 to serve as a labor consultant and legal observer as part of his work with the National Lawyers Guild. He was appointed to the First Judicial District court bench in 1994 and the New Mexico Court of Appeals in 2003, where he served until his election to the Supreme Court in 2018. He served as the court's chief justice from 2020 to 2022. His current term on the court expires in December 2030.

Term Ends: December 2030



Julie J. Vargas

Associate Justice
(2021–Present)

Julie J. Vargas was appointed to the New Mexico Supreme Court by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham in 2021. She was previously a judge of the New Mexico Court of Appeals and worked in private practice in commercial and personal injury law for over 20 years before becoming a judge. She was born in Albuquerque to a Hispano family that had resided in New Mexico for many generations. She was retained to an eight-year term on the court in 2022. Her current term expires in 2030.

Term Ends: December 2030



Briana Zamora

Associate Justice
(2021– Present)

Briana Zamora was appointed to the New Mexico Supreme Court by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham in 2021. She was previously a judge of the New Mexico Court of Appeals, the Second Judicial District Court, and the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court. Before joining the bench, she worked in private practice and as an assistant district attorney and assistant state attorney. Her family are Hispanos who have lived in the Albuquerque area for generations. She was retained to a full term on the court in 2022. Her current term expires in 2030.

Term Ends: December 2030

The History of the Colorado Supreme Court

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE COLORADO SUPREME COURT



Luis Rovira

Associate Justice
(1979–1990)

Chief Justice
(1990–1995)

Luis Rovira was the first Hispanic justice and chief justice of the Colorado Supreme Court. He was born in 1923 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He was raised by his mother in New York City and New Jersey following his parents' divorce when he was four years old; during his childhood, he continued to regularly visit his father, a native and lifelong resident of Puerto Rico. He enrolled at the University of Colorado but left to enlist in the U.S. Army during World War II. He was an infantryman in the European theater, fighting in France and the Netherlands, and remained in Germany for a year after the end of the war in Europe to help facilitate the United States' occupation of West Germany. He returned to the U.S. and re-enrolled at the University of Colorado, using the G.I. Bill to earn a bachelor's degree. He then attended law school, also at the University of Colorado. As a supervised law student, he represented a fellow University of Colorado student who brought a suit against a local barbershop that had refused him service for being Black. After graduation he transferred his reserve status to the Air Force and began training in the Judge Advocate's General Corps of the U.S. Air Force. He did not become a full-time JAG but was a reserve JAG for much of his life. After Rovira's law school graduation, he worked as an attorney in private practice. He joined a team of attorneys appointed to defend seven Colorado residents who were accused of being communists during the Red Scare. He later opened a private law practice, where he specialized in environmental law. He became a district court judge in 1976 and was appointed to the Colorado Supreme Court by Gov. Richard Lamm (D) in 1979. He became the court's chief justice in 1979 and remained in that position until he retired from the court in 1995. He died in Denver in 2011 at the age of 88.

Case Highlight

Justice Rovira wrote the majority opinion in the Colorado Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Evans v. Romer*, which held that a voter-approved amendment to Colorado's constitution that barred local governments from recognizing the LGBTQ+ community as a protected class violated the U.S. Constitution's Equal Protection Clause. The state appealed the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1996, which affirmed the Colorado Supreme Court's conclusion with its own landmark holding in *Romer v. Evans* that members of the LGBTQ+ community are guaranteed equal protection under the U.S. Constitution, extending the holding to every jurisdiction in the United States.

SINCE JUSTICE ROVIRA

Alex J. Martinez

Associate Justice
(1997–2011)

Alex Joseph Martinez was appointed to the Colorado Supreme Court by Gov. Roy Romer (D) in 1996. He was born in 1951 in Denver, and his family are native Hispanic Coloradans. After earning his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Colorado in 1973 and 1976, he began his legal career as a deputy state public defender in Denver. He later supervised the state public defender's office in Pueblo. He was appointed to the Pueblo County Court bench in 1983 and the 10th Judicial District bench in 1988. He was appointed to the state's highest court in 1996 and took the bench in 1997. Voters retained him in 2000 and 2010. He left the court in 2011 and has continued to serve as the city of Denver's manager of safety and the general counsel to the Denver Public School District.

THE COLORADO SUPREME COURT TODAY



Monica Márquez

Associate Justice
(2010–2024)

Chief Justice
(2024– Present)

Monica M. Márquez is the first Hispanic woman to serve as a justice and chief justice of the Colorado Supreme Court. She was born in Austin, Texas, and grew up in Grand Junction, Colorado. Her father, Jose D.L. Márquez, is a native Coloradan Hispano and was the first Hispanic judge of the Colorado Court of Appeals. She attended Stanford University and Yale Law School and began her career practicing private commercial litigation and employment law. She then joined the Colorado Attorney General's office. She later became a deputy attorney general in charge of the State Services section, where she represented executive branch agencies and statewide elected officials, including the governor, secretary of state, treasurer, and attorney general. She was appointed to the Colorado Supreme Court in 2010 by Gov. Bill Ritter (D) and retained by voters in 2014 and 2024. Her peers chose her to become the court's chief justice in 2024, and she is the first Hispanic woman to serve in that role. She is also the only member of the LGBTQ+ community to serve as a justice and chief justice of the state's highest court.

Term Ends: January 2034

Case Highlight

Justice Márquez wrote the Colorado Supreme Court's 2021 opinion in [*People in Interest of TB*](#), which held that the state's law requiring juveniles who had been adjudicated in multiple sexual misconduct cases to enter the state's sex offender registry for the remainder of their natural life was a violation of the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment.

The History of the California Supreme Court

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT



Cruz Reynoso

Associate Justice
(1982–1987)

Cruz Reynoso was the first Hispanic justice to serve on the California Supreme Court. He was born in 1931 to a Chicano family in Brea, California, where he worked from the age of eight in orange groves alongside his parents and 10 siblings. He attended a segregated grammar school for Mexican American children and later graduated from Fullerton Union High School, Fullerton Community College, and Pomona College. He served in the U.S. Army's Counterintelligence Corps for two years before enrolling at the University of California at Berkeley School of Law, where he was the only person of Hispanic heritage in his graduating class of 1958. From 1958 to 1959, he studied constitutional law at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México under a fellowship from the Ford Foundation. He began his career providing legal services to poor and indigent residents of El Centro, California, and the surrounding areas. He was a legislative assistant in the California State Senate from 1959 to 1960, an assistant executive officer and staff secretary at California's Fair Employment Practices Commission from 1965 to 1967, and an associate general counsel for the state's Equal Employment Opportunity Commission from 1967 to 1968. Alongside activists that included Cesar Chavez, Delores Huerta, and Larry Itliong, he assisted James D. Lorenz in founding the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation in 1966. The organization became a nationwide leader among legal services programs, and he served as its deputy director in 1968 and as its first Hispanic executive director from 1969 to 1972. Governor Jerry Brown (D) appointed him to serve as a judge of California's Third District Court of Appeal in Sacramento in June of 1976 and to the California Supreme Court in February of 1982. He was retained to the court by 52% of voters in that same year. He faced a retention election again in 1986 alongside two colleagues, including Rose Bird, the first woman to serve as the court's chief justice. Voters removed all three justices after a campaign in which opponents characterized them as soft on crime; they remain the only three supreme court justices to be removed from the court by voters in the state's history. After leaving the court in 1987, Reynoso returned to private practice and also worked as a mediator. He joined the law school faculty at UCLA and UC Davis and later served as a member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. In 2000, President Bill Clinton (D) awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, for his efforts to address social inequality in rural communities through his leadership of the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation and for his service as the first Hispanic justice of the California Supreme Court. He died in Oroville, California, in May of 2021 at the age of 90.

Case Highlight

Justice Reynoso wrote the majority opinion when the California Supreme Court ruled in 1984 in *People v. Aguilar* that California's constitution requires courts to provide non-English speaking people who have been accused of crimes with an interpreter during the entirety of their criminal court proceedings. Justice Rovira wrote that "in the ethnic richness of California, a multiplicity of languages has been nurtured. The people of this state, through the clear and express terms of their constitution, require that all persons tried in a California court understand what is happening about them, for them and against them."

SINCE JUSTICE REYNOSO

John Arguelles

Associate Justice
(1987–1989)

Carlos R. Moreno was a justice of the California Supreme Court from 2001 to 2011. He was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1948 to parents who immigrated to California from Mexico. He and his four older siblings were raised by his mother and uncle after their parents separated. The family spoke Spanish at home, and he was the first member of his family to attend college. He graduated from Yale University in 1970, where he helped found the university's first student affinity group for Mexican American students, which is now the Yale chapter of the Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán. He returned to California and graduated from Stanford Law School in 1975. He began his career in the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, where he prosecuted civil and criminal consumer protection cases. In 1979, he joined a private firm and practiced general commercial litigation in business matters. He also served as the president of the Mexican American Bar Association. He began serving as a judge of the Los Angeles Municipal Court in 1986 and joined the Los Angeles County Superior Court in 1993. In 1997, he was nominated to a seat on the United States District Court for the Central District of California by President Bill Clinton (D) and confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 1998. He resigned from the court in 2001 when Gov. Gray Davis (D) appointed him to fill a vacancy on the California Supreme Court. He was retained by voters in 2002 and 2010 and retired from the court in 2011. President Barack Obama (D) nominated him to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Belize in 2013; he was confirmed to the ambassadorship by the U.S. Senate in 2014 and remained in the position until the end of the Obama administration in 2017. He has since returned to private practice and works as a mediator and arbitrator in Los Angeles.

Carlos Moreno

Associate Justice
(2001–2011)

Carlos R. Moreno was a justice of the California Supreme Court from 2001 to 2011. He was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1948 to parents who immigrated to California from Mexico. He and his four older siblings were raised by his mother and uncle after their parents separated. The family spoke Spanish at home, and he was the first member of his family to attend college. He graduated from Yale University in 1970, where he helped found the university's first student affinity group for Mexican American students, which is now the Yale chapter of the Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán. He returned to California and graduated from Stanford Law School in 1975. He began his career in the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, where he prosecuted civil and criminal consumer protection cases. In 1979, he joined a private firm and practiced general commercial litigation in business matters. He also served as the president of the Mexican American Bar Association. He began serving as a judge of the Los Angeles Municipal Court in 1986 and joined the Los Angeles County Superior Court in 1993. In 1997, he was nominated to a seat on the United States District Court for the Central District of California by President Bill Clinton (D) and confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 1998. He resigned from the court in 2001 when Gov. Gray Davis (D) appointed him to fill a vacancy on the California Supreme Court. He was retained by voters in 2002 and 2010 and retired from the court in 2011. President Barack Obama (D) nominated him to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Belize in 2013; he was confirmed to the ambassadorship by the U.S. Senate in 2014 and remained in the position until the end of the Obama administration in 2017. He has since returned to private practice and works as a mediator and arbitrator in Los Angeles.

Mariano-Florentino Cuéllar

Associate Justice
(2015–2021)

Mariano-Florentino "Tino" Cuéllar was a justice of the California Supreme Court from 2015 to 2021. He was born in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico. He attended primary schools in Mexico and Texas until he was 14, when his family immigrated to Calexico, California. He attended Harvard University, graduating in 1993, and went on to earn a degree from Yale Law School in 1997 and a Ph.D. from Stanford University in 2000. He joined the faculty of Stanford Law School in 2001, where he also served as the co-director of the university's interdisciplinary Center for International Security and Cooperation and director of its Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. His work at both organizations focused on cyber and nuclear security, global health, and poverty eradication. He took leave from Stanford from 2009 to 2010 to serve in the administration of President Barack Obama (D) as a special assistant for justice and regulatory policy at the White House Domestic Policy Council, where he assisted the administration's domestic agenda, including the passage of legislation including the Fair Sentencing Act, the Food Safety Modernization Act, and the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act and the repeal of the U.S. military's Don't Ask Don't Tell policy toward servicemembers of the LGBTQ+ community. He was appointed to fill a vacancy on the California Supreme Court by Gov. Jerry Brown (D) in 2014 and confirmed in 2015. He retired from the court in 2021 to assume the presidency of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Case Highlight

Justice Cuéllar wrote the majority opinion when the California Supreme Court upheld a decision from the California Court of Appeal in 2021 holding that the state's constitution forbids the detention of people who have been accused of crimes solely because they are unable to pay bail. Justice Cuéllar wrote in *In re Kenneth Humphrey* that "the common practice of conditioning freedom solely on whether an arrestee can afford bail is unconstitutional."

THE CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT TODAY



Patricia Guerrero

Associate Justice
(2022–2023)

Chief Justice
(2023–Present)

Patricia Guerrero is the first Hispanic woman to serve on the California Supreme Court and the first Hispanic chief justice of the state's highest court. She was born in 1971 in California's Imperial Valley and raised there by parents who immigrated to California from Mexico. She graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1994 and Stanford Law School in 1997. She began her career providing pro bono legal services to the Immigration Justice Project. She was an assistant U.S. attorney from 2002 to 2003, when she entered private practice. She remained there until she became a judge of the San Diego County Superior Court in 2013. She was elevated to the California Court of Appeal in 2017. She was appointed to the California Supreme Court by Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) in February 2022 and elevated to chief justice by Newsom in August 2022. Voters retained her to a 12-year term as the court's chief justice in November of that year.

Term Ends: January 2035

The History of the Michigan Supreme Court

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Dorothy Comstock Riley

Associate Justice
(1982–1983; 1985–1987;
1991–1997)

Chief Justice
(1987–1991)

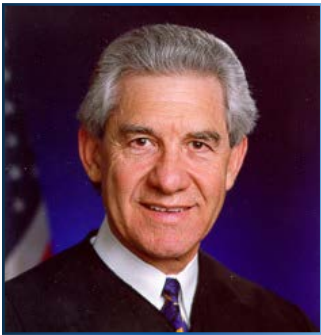
Dorothy Comstock Riley was the first Hispanic woman to serve on any state's supreme court. She was born in 1924 in Detroit, Michigan. Her mother, Josephine Grima Comstock, was born in Tamaulipas, Mexico, in 1892 and immigrated to the United States to become one of the first five women to graduate from Indiana University's Training School for Nurses and the first student from Mexico to graduate from Indiana University in 1917. Riley received an undergraduate degree from Wayne State University in 1946 and a law degree from Wayne State University Law School in 1949. She began her legal career as a solo practitioner after several Detroit law firms refused to hire her because she was a woman. She later opened a firm with other attorneys, including her husband, and was appointed to serve as assistant Wayne County friend of the court and an interim Wayne County circuit court judge in 1972. Justice Riley became the first woman to serve on the Michigan Court of Appeals when Gov. William Milliken (R) appointed her to fill a vacancy on that court in 1976. She was elected to a full six-year term on the court in 1978. In 1982, she ran for one of two contested seats on the Michigan Supreme Court and narrowly lost to incumbent Justice Blair Moody and her colleague on the Court of Appeals, Judge Michael Cavanagh. Moody died three weeks after the election, and Milliken announced on December 9, 1982, that he would appoint Riley to fill Moody's seat. She was sworn in on the same day. The appointment caused significant controversy, with critics arguing that Milliken, whose term was set to expire in January of 1983, should have left the seat vacant to allow his successor, Gov. James Blanchard (D), to make the appointment. Upon taking office, Blanchard's attorney general filed a lawsuit that challenged Riley's authority to hold her office, arguing that the language of the state's constitution only allowed Riley to fill the remainder of Moody's term that expired on January 1, 1983, and because Moody had died before he was sworn in to his new eight-year term beginning on January 1, 1983, the seat should have become vacant on that day. The challenge was expedited to the supreme court, and in February 1983, Riley's colleagues agreed with the new Blanchard administration that the state constitution forbids holdover appointments past a term's expiration. The court's decision voided Riley's position on the court retroactive to January 1 of that year. Undeterred, Riley ran again for a seat on the court in 1984 and was elected by a large majority that November. She was sworn in to an eight-year term on January 1, 1985. Her colleagues chose her to serve as the court's chief justice from 1987 to 1991, and she became the first Hispanic woman to serve as chief justice of any state supreme court. She was reelected to a second eight-year term in 1992 and retired from the court in 1997 following the onset of Parkinson's disease. She died in Detroit in 2004.

There have been no Hispanic justices on the Michigan Supreme Court since Justice Riley.

The History of the Texas Supreme Court

Note: Texas is one of two states that have a court of last resort for civil appeals and another for criminal appeals (the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, detailed below at page 30).

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE TEXAS SUPREME COURT



Raul Gonzalez

Associate Justice
(1984–1998)

Raul A. Gonzalez was the first Hispanic justice of the Texas Supreme Court and the first Hispanic statewide official in Texas's history. He was born in 1940 in Weslaco, Texas, to parents who were migrant workers from Mexico. He graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 1963 and the University of Houston School College of Law in 1966. He began his career in private practice and also represented Brownsville's Catholic Diocese as a Diocesan attorney. He later served as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Texas and as an attorney for the Houston Legal Foundation and the city of Houston. He became a judge of the 103rd Judicial District of Texas in 1978 and the 13th Court of Appeals in 1981. He was elevated to the Texas Supreme Court in October of 1984 by Gov. Mark White (D). He graduated from the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada, and earned a Master of Laws in judicial process from the University of Virginia Law School in 1986. He was reelected to full terms in 1986, 1988, and 1994 and retired from the court in 1998.

SINCE JUSTICE GONZALEZ

Alberto Gonzalez

Associate Justice
(1987–1989)

Carlos R. Moreno was a justice of the California Supreme Court from 2001 to 2011. He was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1948 to parents who immigrated to California from Mexico. He and his four older siblings were raised by his mother and uncle after their parents separated. The family spoke Spanish at home, and he was the first member of his family to attend college. He graduated from Yale University in 1970, where he helped found the university's first student affinity group for Mexican American students, which is now the Yale chapter of the Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán. He returned to California and graduated from Stanford Law School in 1975. He began his career in the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, where he prosecuted civil and criminal consumer protection cases. In 1979, he joined a private firm and practiced general commercial litigation in business matters. He also served as the president of the Mexican American Bar Association. He began serving as a judge of the Los Angeles Municipal Court in 1986 and joined the Los Angeles County Superior Court in 1993. In 1997, he was nominated to a seat on the United States District Court for the Central District of California by President Bill Clinton (D) and confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 1998. He resigned from the court in 2001 when Gov. Gray Davis (D) appointed him to fill a vacancy on the California Supreme Court. He was retained by voters in 2002 and 2010 and retired from the court in 2011. President Barack Obama (D) nominated him to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Belize in 2013; he was confirmed to the ambassadorship by the U.S. Senate in 2014 and remained in the position until the end of the Obama administration in 2017. He has since returned to private practice and works as a mediator and arbitrator in Los Angeles.

Xavier Rodriguez

Associate Justice
(2001–2002)

Xavier Rodriguez was a justice of the Texas Supreme Court from 2001 to 2002. He was born in San Antonio, Texas, in 1961. His grandparents were born in Mexico and immigrated to Texas, where his parents were born. He received a commission from the Reserve Officers Training Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1983. He earned a bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1983, a master's degree from the University of Texas Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs in 1987, and a law degree from the University of Texas Law School, also in 1987. He continued to serve as a captain of the U.S. Army Reserve Judge Advocate General's Corps until 1993. He worked in private practice in international law until he was appointed to the Texas Supreme Court by Gov. Rick Perry (R) in 2001. He was defeated in his run for a full six-year term on the court in 2002 and left the court that November. He returned to private practice until he was nominated to serve as a judge of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas by President George W. Bush (R) in May of 2003. The U.S. Senate confirmed him later that year and he has remained on the court since then. He completed a Master of Laws degree from the Duke University Bolch Judicial Institute in 2023.

David Medina

Associate Justice
(2004–2012)

David M. Medina was a justice of the Texas Supreme Court from 2004 to 2012. He was born in Galveston Island, Texas, in 1958 to parents who immigrated to Texas from Puerto Rico. He graduated from Texas State University-San Marcos in 1980 and South Texas College of Law in Houston in 1989. He worked as litigation counsel for Cooper Industries, an electrical products manufacturer headquartered in Houston, until his appointment to the 157th State District Court bench in Harris County in 1996. He returned to Cooper Industries as its general counsel in 2000, where he remained until becoming general counsel to Gov. Rick Perry (R) in January of 2004. He served in that position until November of that year, when Perry appointed him to the Texas Supreme Court. He ran for a full six-year term on the court as a Republican in 2006 and was elected without opposition from either party. He sought a second full term in 2012 but was defeated in the Republican primary by John Devine. He left the court in December of that year. He returned to private practice and earned a Master of Laws from the University of Texas at Austin in 2017.

Eva Guzman

Associate Justice
(2009–2021)

Eva Martinez Guzman was the first Hispanic woman to serve as a justice of the Texas Supreme Court. She was born in Chicago in 1961 and raised in Houston by parents who emigrated from Mexico. She graduated from the University of Houston in 1985 and the South Texas College of Law in Houston in 1989. She worked in private practice for 10 years until she became a judge of the 309th Family District Court in 1999. She was appointed to the 14th Court of Appeals in 2001, where she served until she was elevated to the Texas Supreme Court by Gov. Rick Perry (R) in 2009. She was elected to a full six-year term on the court in 2010 and earned a Master of Laws degree from Duke University School of Law in 2014. She was elected to a second full term in 2016 and resigned from the court in 2021 to challenge Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (R) for his seat. Paxton defeated her in the Republican primary in March of 2022. She has since returned to private practice in commercial and appellate litigation in Houston.

THE TEXAS SUPREME COURT TODAY



Rebeca Aizpuru Huddle

Associate Justice
(2020–Present)

Rebeca Aizpuru Huddle has served as a justice of the Texas Supreme Court since 2020. She was born in El Paso, Texas, in 1973 to parents who emigrated from Mexico. She graduated from Stanford University in 1995 and the University of Texas School of Law in 1999. She began her legal career in private practice, handling personal injury, complex commercial, and appellate litigation matters until she was appointed a judge of the Court of Appeals for the First District of Texas in 2011. She was elected to a full term on that bench in 2012. She returned to private practice in 2017. She was appointed to the Texas Supreme Court in 2020 by Gov. Greg Abbott (R) and elected to a full term on the court in 2022. Her current term expires in December of 2028.

Term Ends: December 2028

The History of the Florida Supreme Court

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE FLORIDA SUPREME COURT



Rosemary Barkett

Associate Justice
(1985–1992)

Chief Justice
(1992–1994)

Rosemary Barkett is the first justice of Hispanic nationality and the first woman to serve as chief justice of the Florida Supreme Court. She was born Rosemary Barakat in 1940 in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico, to parents who had immigrated to Mexico from Syria. Her family spoke only Spanish at home until they moved to Miami, Florida, in 1946, when they changed their surname to Barkett. She became a U.S. citizen at 18 and entered the Sisters of St. Joseph, becoming a nun and earning an associate's degree from Saint Joseph College of Florida. She earned a bachelor's degree from Spring Hill College in 1967 and left the convent to enter law school at the University of Florida, where she graduated with a law degree in 1970. She worked as a civil litigator for nearly a decade until she was appointed to the circuit court bench in 1979, later becoming the chief judge of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit of Florida. She was elevated to the Fourth District Court of Appeal of Florida in 1984. She was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court in 1985 by Gov. Bob Graham (D). She was retained to the court in 1992 and was also chosen by her colleagues to serve as the court's chief justice that year. In 1993, President Bill Clinton (D) nominated her to serve as a judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. She was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 1994 and remained on the court until 2013, when the U.S. State Department selected her to serve as a member of the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands. Since 2022, she has served as a judge ad hoc on the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

SINCE JUSTICE BARKETT

Raoul Cantero

Associate Justice
(2002–2008)

Raoul G. Cantero III is the first Florida Supreme Court justice of Hispanic descent. He was born in 1960 in Madrid, Spain, and immigrated to Florida with his family as a child. He graduated from Florida State University in 1982 and Harvard Law School in 1985. He worked in private practice as an appellate litigator for 15 years until he was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court by Gov. Jeb Bush (R) in 2002. He remained on the court until 2008, when he retired to return to appellate litigation in Miami.

Barbara Lagoa

Associate Justice
(2019)

Barbara Lagoa served as a justice of the Florida Supreme Court in 2019. She was born in 1967 in Miami, Florida, to parents who fled Cuba during the Cuban Revolution. She graduated from Florida International University in 1989 and Columbia Law School in 1992. She worked in private practice until 2003, when she became an assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Florida. She joined the bench in 2006 when she was appointed to the state's Third District Court of Appeal. She became the chief judge of that court on January 1, 2019, and was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court eight days later by Gov. Ron DeSantis (R). In September of that year, President Donald Trump (R) nominated her to become a judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. The U.S. Senate confirmed her the following month and she resigned from the Florida Supreme Court in December of 2019 to join the federal bench.

THE FLORIDA SUPREME COURT TODAY



Jorge Labarga

Associate Justice
(2009–2014; 2018–
Present)

Chief Justice
(2014–2018)

Jorge Labarga has served as a justice of the Florida Supreme Court since 2009. He was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1952 and immigrated to Florida as a child. He graduated from the University of Florida, Gainesville, in 1976 and the University of Florida School of Law in 1979. He worked as an assistant public defender until 1982, when he joined the state attorney's office. He entered private practice in 1987, where he remained until he was appointed to the 15th Circuit Court in Palm Beach County in 1996. He was elevated to the Fourth District Court of Appeal for Florida by Gov. Charlie Crist (R) in January of 2009, a position he held for one day before Crist elevated him to the Florida Supreme Court. His peers chose him to serve as chief justice of the court from 2014 to 2018. He was retained to the court by voters in 2010, 2016, and 2022. His current term expires in 2029.

Term Ends: January 2029



Carlos Muñiz

Associate Justice
(2019–2022)

Chief Justice
(2022–Present)

Carlos G. Muñiz has been a justice of the Florida Supreme Court since 2019 and has served as the court's chief justice since 2022. He was born in 1969 in Chicago, Illinois, and raised in Falls Church, Virginia. His father was a Nicaraguan economist who worked for the International Monetary Fund and fled Nicaragua in 1979 after the start of the Nicaraguan Revolution. Muñiz graduated from the University of Virginia in 1991 and Yale Law School in 1997. He worked in private practice until 2001, when he moved to Florida to become deputy general counsel to Florida Gov. Jeb Bush (R). He returned to private practice in 2003 and returned to the Bush administration in April of 2005 as general counsel of the Florida Department of Financial Services, a position he held for a year. He again returned to private practice until 2009, when he briefly served as the deputy chief of staff and counsel to the speaker of the Florida House of Representatives. He became deputy attorney general and chief of staff to Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi in 2011, where he served for three years until returning again to private practice in 2014. In 2017, President Donald Trump (R) nominated him to become the general counsel of the United States Department of Education. He was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 2018 and remained in the position until 2019, when Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) appointed him to serve as a justice of the Florida Supreme Court. He was retained by voters in 2020 and chosen by his peers to serve as the court's chief justice in 2022. His current term on the court expires in 2027.

Term Ends: January 2027



John Couriel

Associate Justice
(2020–Present)

John D. Couriel has served as a justice of the Florida Supreme Court since 2020. He was born in Miami, Florida, in 1978 to parents who immigrated to Florida from Cuba; his father was among the approximately 14,000 unaccompanied minors sent by their parents from Cuba to the United States as part of Operation Pedro Pan. He graduated from Harvard College in 2000 and Harvard Law School in 2003 and entered private practice in New York, where he handled securities, mergers and acquisitions, and bankruptcy matters. He worked as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Florida from 2009 to 2013, when he returned to private practice, specializing in cross-border disputes, asset recovery, and government enforcement defense. He was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court in 2020 by Gov. Ron DeSantis (R). He was retained by voters in 2022, and his current term expires in 2029.

Term Ends: January 2029



Meredith Sasso

Associate Justice
(2023–Present)

Meredith Sasso has served as a justice of the Florida Supreme Court since 2023. She was born Meredith Lee Barrios in Tallahassee, Florida, in 1983; her father’s parents fled Cuba in 1953. She graduated from the University of Florida in 2005 and the University of Florida College of Law in 2008. She worked in private practice in complex commercial litigation matters until 2016, when she became the chief deputy general counsel to Florida Gov. Rick Scott (R). Scott appointed her to Florida’s Fifth District Court of Appeal in 2019, where she served for four years before being recommissioned to the newly created Sixth District Court of Appeal in January of 2023, becoming that court’s first chief judge. Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) elevated her to the Florida Supreme Court in May of that year, and she was retained by voters for a six-year term in November of 2024. Her current term expires in 2031.

Term Ends: January 2031

The History of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals

Note: Texas is one of two states that have a court of last resort for civil appeals and another for criminal appeals (the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, detailed below at page 23).

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE TEXAS COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS



Fortunato Benavides

Associate Justice
(1991–1992)

Fortunato P. Benavides was the first Hispanic judge of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. He was born in 1947 in Mission, Texas, to parents whose families immigrated from Mexico and were directly descended from the prominent Spanish colonists Francisco Báez de Benavides and Juan Cavazos del Campo. He graduated from the University of Houston in 1968 and the University of Houston Law Center in 1972. He worked in private practice for nearly a decade and also served as a judge of the Hidalgo County Court at Law from 1977 to 1979 and the 92nd District Court in Hidalgo County from 1981 to 1984. He served as a justice of the Thirteenth Court of Appeals of Texas from 1984 to 1991. He was appointed to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals by Gov. Ann Richards (D) in 1991 and served on the court until 1992. He also served as a visiting justice of the Texas Supreme Court in 1993. In 1994, President Bill Clinton (D) nominated him to serve as a judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. The U.S. Senate confirmed him later that year and he remained on the bench until he assumed senior status in February of 2012. He died in Austin, Texas, in May of 2023 at the age of 76.

SINCE JUSTICE BARKETT

Elsa Alcalá

Associate Justice
(2011–2018)

Elsa R. Alcalá was the first Hispanic woman to serve as a judge of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. She was born in 1964 in Kingsville, Texas, to parents whose families immigrated to Texas from Mexico. She graduated from Texas A&M University in 1986 and the University of Texas School of Law in 1989. She began her legal career as an assistant district attorney in the Harris County District Attorney's Office in 1989 and served as the office's chief felony prosecutor from 1994 to 1999. She was appointed to the 338th District Court of Harris County in 1999 and elected to a full term on the court in 2000. She was appointed to serve as a justice of the First Court of Appeals in June of 2002 and elected to full terms on the court in November of 2002 and 2006. She was appointed to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals by Gov Rick Perry (R) in May of 2011 and elected to a full term in 2012. She announced in 2016 that she would not seek a second term and would leave the court at the expiration of her term in 2018. Since she retired from the court, she has become an advocate for death penalty reform in Texas, working in 2019 as policy director at Texas Defender Service. This nonprofit represents capital defendants and seeks death penalty reforms, and Alcalá continues to speak publicly about the flaws she perceives with the capital punishment system in Texas, which has performed hundreds more executions than any other state.

Case Highlight

In 2015, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals stayed an execution warrant for a man on Texas's death row following allegations of prosecutorial misconduct, in *Ex parte Julius Jerome Murphy*. Judge Alcalá wrote a separate [dissenting opinion](#) that urged her colleagues to consider not just the details of the specific case, but whether the state's capital punishment system, which executes more inmates than any other state in the nation, is constitutional at all, writing that "in my view, the Texas scheme has some serious deficiencies that have, in the past, caused me great concern about this form of punishment as it exists in Texas today."

Michelle Slaughter

Associate Justice
(2019–2024)

Michelle Slaughter was a judge of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals from 2018 to 2024. She was born in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1974; her father's ancestors immigrated to Texas from Mexico. She graduated from the University of Houston in 1998 and the University of Houston Law Center in 2004. After law school she began a career in private practice, handling labor and employment and complex commercial litigation matters for Fortune 500 companies at two large international law firms. She opened a private law practice in 2010, where she handled matters involving international law, energy litigation, and real estate disputes. She was elected to the 405th District Court in Galveston County in 2012 and reelected in 2016. She ran for an open seat on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals in 2018 and was elected with nearly 75% of the votes cast. She ran for reelection to a second term on the court in 2024 and was defeated in the Republican primary. Her term on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals expired on December 31, 2024. She returned to private practice in 2025, practicing civil and business litigation and appellate law.

There have been no Hispanic judges on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals since Judge Slaughter.

The History of the New York Court of Appeals

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE NEW YORK COURT OF APPEALS



**Carmen
Beauchamp
Ciparick**

Associate Justice
(1994–2012)

Carmen Beauchamp Ciparick is the first Hispanic judge of the New York Court of Appeals, the court of last resort for the state of New York. She was born in 1942 in New York City, New York, and raised in Washington Heights. Her parents immigrated to New York from Puerto Rico. She graduated from Hunter College in 1963 and St. John's University School of Law in 1967. She worked at the Legal Aid Society until 1969, when she became an assistant counsel for the Judicial Conference of the State of New York. She became the chief law assistant of the Criminal Court of the City of New York in 1972 and counsel in the Office of the New York City Administrative Judge in 1974. She was appointed to serve as a judge of the New York City Criminal Court in 1978 and elected to the New York Supreme Court in 1982. In 1994, she was appointed to the New York Court of Appeals by Gov. Mario Cuomo (D). Gov. Eliot Spitzer (D) reappointed her to a second term on the court in 2007. She retired from the court in December 2012 upon reaching the court's mandatory retirement age of 70. She returned to private practice and also serves as the chair of the New York Board of Law Examiners.

THE NEW YORK COURT OF APPEALS TODAY



Jenny Rivera

Associate Justice
(2013–Present)

Jenny Rivera has served as a judge on the New York Court of Appeals since 2013. She was born in New York City in 1960; her mother was born in Puerto Rico in 1930 and moved to New York when she was 18. She graduated from Princeton University in 1982 and New York University School of Law in 1985. She began her legal career as a staff attorney for the New York City Legal Aid Society in the Homeless Family Rights Project, where she worked for one year. In 1986, she joined the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund in 1986, where she worked as associate counsel until 1992, when she became an administrative law judge for the New York State Division of Human Rights. She earned an LL.M. with a focus in constitutional and feminist theory from Columbia Law School in 1993. She served as a clerk to then-U.S. District Judge Sonia Sotomayor — who would become the first Hispanic justice of the U.S. Supreme Court — when she was a judge of the Southern District of New York. Rivera then joined the faculty of Suffolk University Law School in 1994 and the City University of New York School of Law in 1997. She continued to teach there for more than 15 years, also serving as a special deputy attorney general for civil rights in the New York Attorney General's office from 2007 to 2008 and as a visiting professor at American University Washington College of Law in Washington, D.C. in 2011. She was appointed to the New York Court of Appeals by Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) in 2013. Her current term expires in 2027.

Term Ends: January 2031



Michael Garcia

Associate Justice
(2016–Present)

Michael J. Garcia has served as an associate judge of the New York Court of Appeals since 2016. He was born in Queens, New York, in 1961; his father's family immigrated to the United States from Spain and Cuba. He earned a bachelor's degree from the State University of New York at Binghamton in 1983 and a master's degree from the College of William and Mary in 1984. He earned a law degree from the Albany Law School of Union University in 1989. He practiced corporate law at a Wall Street law firm for one year after law school, then became an assistant U.S. attorney in the Southern District of New York from 1992 to 2001, where he was involved in the investigation and prosecution of high-profile terrorist activity including the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 1995 Bojinka plot, and the 1998 United States embassy bombings in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya. He was the assistant secretary of commerce for export enforcement from 2001 to 2002. From 2002 to 2003, he served as the acting commissioner of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, where he led that agency's transition into the Department of Homeland Security. He was the assistant secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the Department of Homeland Security from 2003 to 2005. He served as the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York from 2005 to 2008. He was also vice president of the Americas for the international police organization Interpol from 2003 to 2006, also serving on the organization's executive committee. He left the Justice Department in 2008 and returned to private practice, handling insider trading and corporate espionage matters. He was appointed to the New York Court of Appeals by Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) in 2016. His current term expires in 2030.

Term Ends: February 2030

The History of the Oregon Supreme Court

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE OREGON SUPREME COURT



Paul De Muniz

Associate Justice
(2001–2006)

Chief Justice
(2006–2012)

Paul J. De Muniz is the first Hispanic justice and chief justice of the Oregon Supreme Court. He was born in 1947 in Glendale, California; his father's family were Hispanos of Colorado, California, and New Mexico. His parents divorced when he was two years old, and his mother raised him in Portland, Oregon. After graduating from high school, he served in the Vietnam War as a member of the U.S. Air Force. He graduated from Portland State University in 1972 and Willamette University College of Law in 1975. He began his legal career as a deputy state public defender and later worked in private practice, where he specialized in complex criminal and civil litigation. He was appointed to the Oregon Court of Appeals in 1990 and elected to a full term on the court that November. He was elected to an open seat on the Oregon Supreme Court in 2000. He was elected to a second full term in 2006 and also became the court's chief justice. He retired from the court at the end of his second term in 2012 and returned to private practice.

There have been no Hispanic justices of the Oregon Supreme Court since Justice De Muniz.

The History of the New Jersey Supreme Court

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE NEW JERSEY SUPREME COURT



Roberto Rivera-Soto

Associate Justice
(2004–2011)

Roberto A. Rivera-Soto is the first Hispanic justice to serve on the New Jersey Supreme Court. He was born in New York City in 1953 and raised in Puerto Rico by his parents, who were of Puerto Rican descent. He graduated from Haverford College in Haverford, Pennsylvania, in 1974 and Cornell University School of Law in 1977. He was an assistant U.S. attorney in the criminal division of the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania from 1978 to 1980. He then entered private practice and went on to serve as general counsel to several hotel and casino corporations. He was nominated to fill a vacancy on the New Jersey Supreme Court by Gov. James McGreevey (D) in 2004 and confirmed by the state senate later that year. He served one term on the court and retired in 2011 to return to private practice.

SINCE JUSTICE RIVERA-SOTO

Faustino Fernandez-Vina

Associate Justice
(2013–2022)

Faustino J. Fernandez-Vina was an associate justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court from 2013 to 2022. He was born in Santiago, Cuba, in 1952; his family fled the Castro regime when he was 10 years old and settled in New Jersey. He graduated from Widener University in Chester, Pennsylvania, in 1974 and Rutgers University School of Law in Camden in 1978. He entered private practice and worked as a civil litigator until 2004, when he was appointed to serve as a judge of the Superior Court of the Camden Vicinage. He began his service in the civil division and transferred to the family division in 2006. He became presiding judge of the civil division in 2007 and assignment judge of the Camden Vicinage in 2012. He was nominated to serve as an associate justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court by Gov. Chris Christie (R) in September 2013. He was confirmed by the New Jersey Senate and sworn in to the court in November 2013. He remained on the court until he reached the mandatory retirement age of 70 in February of 2022 and has since returned to private practice.

THE NEW JERSEY SUPREME COURT TODAY



Michael Noriega

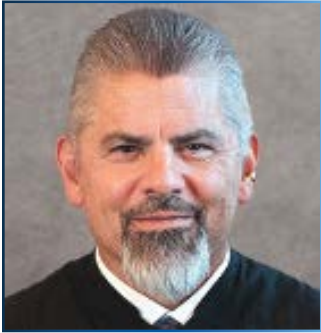
Associate Justice
(2023–Present)

Michael Noriega has served as a justice of the Supreme Court of New Jersey since 2023. He was born in Weehawken, New Jersey, in 1978 and raised in Union City by parents who immigrated to New Jersey from Peru. He graduated from Rutgers University in 1999 and Seton Hall University School of Law in 2002. He worked in Essex County as an assistant deputy public defender until 2008, when he founded his own law firm and practiced immigration and criminal law. He also provided pro bono counsel to indigent, underage clients facing removal proceedings. Gov. Phil Murphy (D) nominated him to fill a vacancy on the New Jersey Supreme Court in May of 2023. He was confirmed by the New Jersey Senate and sworn in to the court that July, becoming the first public defender to serve on the New Jersey Supreme Court. His current term expires in June of 2030.

Term Ends: June 2030

The History of the Washington Supreme Court

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE WASHINGTON SUPREME COURT



Steven González

Associate Justice
(2012–2021, 2025–
Present)

Chief Justice
(2021–2025)

Steven Charles González is the first Hispanic justice and the first person of color to serve on the Washington Supreme Court. He was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1963 and raised there by his mother; his father's family were refugees who fled Mexico during its revolution in the early 20th century. He studied at Pitzer College in Claremont, California, and studied abroad at Waseda University in Tokyo and Nanjing University in China. He graduated from Pitzer in 1985 and studied international trade at Hokkaido University in Japan on a Rotary International scholarship for nearly two years. He then enrolled at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law, where he graduated in 1991. He entered private practice and later prosecuted domestic, elder, and child abuse cases as an assistant city attorney for the city of Seattle. He was an assistant U.S. attorney in the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington from 1997 to 2002. He was appointed to fill a partial term as a judge of the King County Superior Court in 2002, winning election to the remainder of the term later that year. He was reelected to the court in 2004 and 2008. He was appointed to the Washington Supreme Court by Gov. Christine Gregoire (D) and sworn in to the court in January of 2012. He was elected to full terms on the court in 2012, 2018, and 2024. He served as the court's chief justice from 2021 to 2025 and continues to serve as an associate justice. His current term expires in January of 2031.

SINCE JUSTICE RIVERA-SOTO



Mary Yu

Associate Justice
(2014-Present)

Mary Yu is the first Hispanic woman, the first Asian American, and the first openly gay justice to serve on the Washington Supreme Court. She was born in 1957 in Chicago to a father who immigrated from China and a mother who immigrated from Mexico. She earned a bachelor's degree from Dominican University in 1979 and a master's degree from Mundelein College of Loyola University in Chicago in 1989; both of her degrees were in theology. She worked for a decade at the Peace and Social Justice Office of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago before enrolling at the University of Notre Dame Law School, where she graduated in 1993. After law school she moved to Washington to work as the deputy chief of staff to the King County prosecuting attorney. She was appointed as a judge of the King County Superior Court in 2000, where she served for 14 years. Gov. Jay Inslee (D) appointed her to the Washington Supreme Court in 2014. She was unopposed in her race to fill the remainder of the partial term in 2015 and was elected to full six-year terms on the court in 2016 and 2022. She announced in September 2025 that she would retire from the Washington Supreme Court on December 31, 2025.

Case Highlight

Justice Yu wrote the majority opinion in the court's ruling in [*Barr v. Snohomish County Sheriff*](#) (2009), ruling that sheriffs are not required by Washington law to issue concealed pistol licenses to people with felony convictions, even if they are under seal. The case was brought by a person whose application for a CPL was denied on the basis that his sealed juvenile record contained two class A felonies.

The History of the Connecticut Supreme Court

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE CONNECTICUT SUPREME COURT



Carmen Espinosa

Associate Justice
(2013–2017)

Carmen E. Espinosa is the first Hispanic justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court. She was born in Yabucoa, Puerto Rico, and raised in New Britain, Connecticut. She earned a bachelor's degree from Central Connecticut State University in 1971, a master's degree from Brown University in 1973, and a law degree from The George Washington University Law School in 1976. She worked as a special agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. She later worked as an assistant U.S. attorney for the District of Connecticut from 1981 to 1992, working in both the civil and criminal divisions. In 1992, she was appointed to the Connecticut Superior Court. She was appointed to the Connecticut Appellate Court in 2011 and to the Connecticut Supreme Court by Gov. Dannel Malloy (D) in 2013. She retired from the court in 2017 and became a senior justice.

There have been no Hispanic justices of the Connecticut Supreme Court since Justice Espinosa.

The History of the Arizona Supreme Court

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE ARIZONA SUPREME COURT



John Lopez IV

Associate Justice
(2017–Present)

John R. Lopez IV is the first Hispanic justice to serve on the Arizona Supreme Court. He was born in Texas in 1968; his father’s ancestors immigrated to Texas from Mexico in the late 19th century. He graduated from the University of Texas in 1992 and Arizona State University College of Law in 1998. He began his legal career as a civil litigator in Phoenix. He worked in the office of the U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona from 2007 to 2014. He served as the solicitor general for the state of Arizona in the Office of the Attorney General from 2015 to 2017. He was appointed to the Arizona Supreme Court in 2017 by Gov. Doug Ducey (R) and elected to a full six-year term on the court in 2020. His current term expires in January of 2027.

SINCE JUSTICE LOPEZ



James Beene

Associate Justice
(2019–Present)

John P. Beene has been a justice of the Arizona Supreme Court since 2019. He was born in 1965; his mother has Mexican ancestry. He graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 1988, and the University of Arizona College of Law in 1991. He began his legal career at the Pinal County Attorney’s Office in 1992 and worked as a trial attorney in the Maricopa County Attorney’s Office from 1992 to 1995. He was the chief counsel to Arizona’s Residential Utility Consumer’s Office from 1995 to 1997 and worked in the office of the city attorney for Peoria, Arizona from 1997 to 1999. From 1999 to 2005, he was an assistant attorney general in the Capital Litigation Section of the Arizona Attorney General’s Office, which handles all post-conviction proceedings for death-row inmates for the state of Arizona. He returned to the Maricopa County Attorney’s Office from 2005 to 2009. He served as a judge of the Arizona Superior Court for Maricopa County from 2009 to 2017 and the Arizona Court of Appeals from 2017 to 2019. He was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Arizona Supreme Court by Gov. Doug Ducey (R) in 2018 and assumed office in 2019. He was elected to a full term on the court in 2022. His current term ends in January of 2029.

Term Ends: January 2029



Maria Elena Cruz

Associate Justice
(2025–Present)

Maria Elena Cruz is the first Hispanic woman and the first Black justice to serve on the Arizona Supreme Court. She was born in New York City in 1972. Her mother was born in the Dominican Republic and her father was born in Puerto Rico; she lived in Puerto Rico from the time she was a young child until she moved to Arizona with her parents at the age of 14. She graduated from the University of Arizona in 1998 and the University of Arizona College of Law in 2001. She worked in the Yuma County Attorney's Office from 2002 until 2004 and also worked in the office of the Yuma County Legal Defender in 2004. She was a solo practitioner from 2005 until 2008, practicing criminal defense and family law. She also served as a judge of the Cocopah Tribal Court during this time. She was a judge of the Yuma County Superior Court from 2009 until 2017 and the Arizona Court of Appeals from 2017 until her appointment to the Arizona Supreme Court by Gov. Katie Hobbs (D) in January 2025. Her current term expires in January of 2027.

Term Ends: January 2027

2020

The History of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE MASSACHUSETTS SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT



Dalila Argaez Wendlandt

Associate Justice
(2020–Present)

Dalila Argaez Wendlandt is the first Hispanic justice to serve on the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. She was born in 1969 in New Orleans, Louisiana; her parents immigrated to the United States from Colombia. She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1991 and a master's degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1993. She graduated from Stanford Law School in 1996. She worked in private practice for 20 years, litigating patent and trade secret misappropriation cases. She was appointed to the Massachusetts Appeals Court in 2017, where she served until she was appointed to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in 2020 by Gov. Charlie Baker (R). She will reach the state's mandatory retirement age of 70 on October 10, 2039, and must retire from the court before that date.

Term Ends: October 2039

The History of the Maryland Supreme Court

THE FIRST HISPANIC JUSTICE OF THE MARYLAND SUPREME COURT



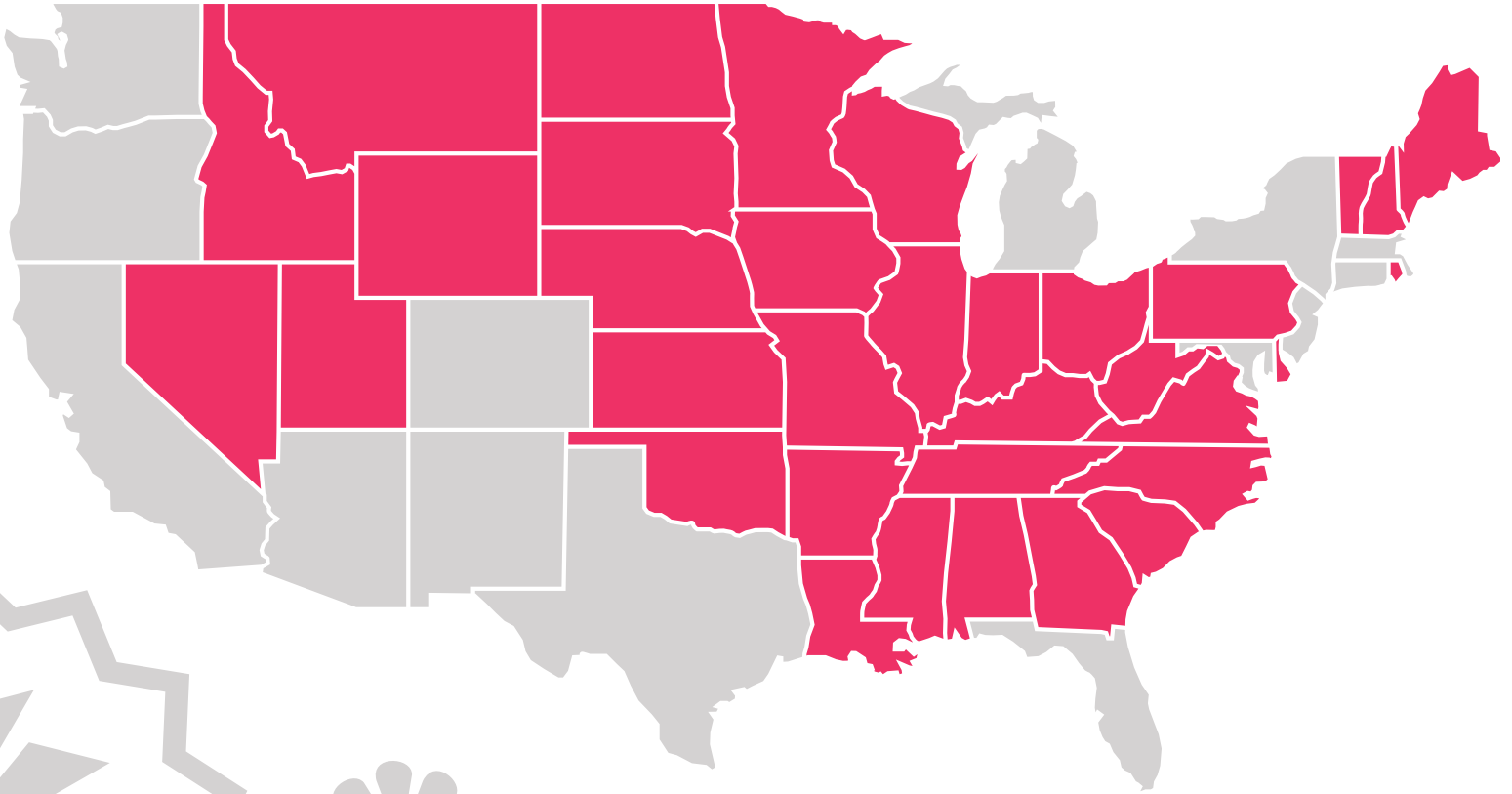
Angela Eaves

Associate Justice
(2022–Present)

Angela Eaves is the first Hispanic justice to serve on the Maryland Supreme Court. She was born in 1959 in Canal Zone, Panama. Her mother is Panamanian, and her father is a noncommissioned officer in the U.S. Army. She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas in 1981 and dual master's and law degrees from the University of Texas and University of Texas School of Law in 1986. She began her legal career as an assistant city attorney for the city of Dallas, where she worked from 1987 to 1989. She was a staff attorney at the Maryland Legal Aid Bureau from 1993 to 2000. She became an associate judge of the Harford County District Court in 2000, where she served until 2007. She was a Harford County Circuit court judge from 2007 until 2015, when she became a Harford County administrative judge. She was appointed to the Maryland Supreme Court in 2022 by Gov. Larry Hogan (R) in February of 2022 and sworn in the following month. She was retained to a full ten-year term on the court in 2024. Her current term expires in December of 2034.

Term Ends: December 2034

States that Have Never Had a Hispanic Supreme Court Justice



Alabama
Alaska
Arkansas
Delaware
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa

Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada

New Hampshire
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota

Tennessee
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming