

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Supreme Court of Texas Mourns the Passing and Honors the Life of Justice Ruby Kless Sondock

AUSTIN — The Justices of the Supreme Court of Texas today expressed their sorrow at the passing of former Justice Ruby Kless Sondock, a pioneering jurist whose distinguished service to the people of Texas spanned many decades.

Justice Sondock, who was honored by the Court earlier this year on her 100th birthday, passed from this life on July 21, 2026. Appointed in 1982 by Governor William P. Clements, she was the first woman in Texas history to serve on the Supreme Court of Texas in regular service.

Justice Sondock devoted her life to the law and to the fair and equal administration of justice. Her courage, intellect, and unwavering commitment to excellence inspired generations of Texas lawyers and judges. Her legacy lives on in the countless Texans she inspired and in the judiciary she helped shape.

Justice Sondock's historic legal career began before she graduated as valedictorian of the University of Houston Law Center's 1962 class. She initially pursued a legal education with the aim of becoming a secretary, but she passed the bar exam before graduation and began practicing law with a prestigious Houston law firm even before she finished her degree. She argued a case before the Supreme Court of Texas during her first year of practice.

Throughout her career, Justice Sondock achieved a series of historic firsts. After serving as judge of the Harris County Domestic Relations Court, she became the first female district judge in Harris County when Governor Dolph Briscoe appointed her to the newly created 234th District Court. In 1982, Governor William P. Clements, Jr. appointed her to the Supreme Court of Texas, making her the first woman ever to serve on the Supreme Court of Texas in regular service. She later returned to the 234th District Court, where she served with distinction until her retirement from the bench in 1988.

Justice Sondock's influence extended far beyond her judicial service. She remained active in the legal community for decades, mentoring young lawyers and judges, participating in continuing legal education programs, and supporting organizations

dedicated to improving the administration of justice. She was a familiar and welcome presence at Supreme Court events, where her wisdom, warmth, and graciousness inspired all who had the privilege of knowing her.

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court proclaimed April 26, 2026, as “Justice Ruby Kless Sondock Day” in celebration of her 100th birthday and in recognition of her extraordinary contributions to the law and the State of Texas.

“The Court mourns Justice Sondock’s passing and honors her extraordinary life of service,” Chief Justice Jimmy Blacklock said. “We extend our condolences to her family, her friends, and the many Texas lawyers and judges who mourn her passing and celebrate the life she devoted to the pursuit of justice under the law for every Texan.”