

Judge Byrne's Biography



Darlene Byrne has served as Judge of the 126th Judicial District Court in Travis County, Texas since January 2001. Prior to her election in 2000, she practiced law for thirteen years.

Darlene is a graduate of the University of Houston Law Center where she graduated Magna Cum Laude, was a member of the Order of the Coif, and where she was on the editorial staff of the *Houston Law Review*.

Judge Byrne currently serves as the Senior Judicial Advisor of the Supreme Court of Texas' Permanent Judicial Commission for Children Youth and Families. She also serves as President of the Board of Directors of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ). She served as the Chair of the Travis County Juvenile Board from 2009-2012. She founded and is the lead judge for the Travis County Model Court for Children and Families. She is the supervising judge, former presiding judge, and is a founding team member of the Travis County Family Drug Treatment Court. She is also on the Board of Trustees of the Mayor's Better Austin Foundation, Inc.

She is proud to have been recognized as the recipient of the 2015 National CASA Judge of the Year

Award, the 2011 Judge of the Year by CASA of Travis County, the 2008 Texas CASA Lone Star Proud Judge of the Year Award, 2013 recipient of the Travis County Women Lawyer Association's Pathfinder Award, 2009 recipient of their Outstanding Achievement Award, and the 2005 recipient of their Government Service Award. She also received the Austin Child Guidance Center's 2013 Austin Icon for Children Award. The YWCA of Greater Austin presented her with the 2009 Woman of the Year Award in the area of racial justice.

Judge Byrne is also an Austin Bar Foundation Founding Life Fellow and a Fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation. She has served on numerous Austin and State Bar Committees and Advisory Boards for the NCJFCJ.

In her role as a mom and community member, Darlene was a board member of Girls Empowerment Network (GenAustin), a past Chair of Ballet Austin Barre, a past board member and Treasurer for the Austin Rape Crisis Center (SafePlace), and is a graduate of Leadership Austin.

Judge Byrne is the mother of three wonderful young adults (Erin, Conor, and Devin) and is the proud spouse of Dan Byrne of Fritz, Byrne, Head and Fitzpatrick, PLLC.

JACQUELINE L. WATSON is a native of El Paso and undergraduate alum of the University of Texas at El Paso. She earned her J.D. at the University of Texas School of Law. Certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, Jacqueline has practiced immigration law in Austin since 1999. She is currently an associate at the Law Office of Thomas Esparza, Jr. and serves the Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico AILA Chapter as its Chair.