

The Influence of Prominent Female Lawyers on the Legal Profession: International Study

Devendra Singh¹, Urvi Amin², Sapna Sawant³

Assistant Professor¹, 2nd Year LLB², Advocate³

Nalanda Law College, Gorai, Borivali (W), Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Abstract: *Participation of women in legal profession has been crucial in the development of the judicial arena. Female lawyers persist in advocating for justice and facilitating the advancement of other women in the legal profession, whether through courtroom defence, corporate representation, or influential court decisions.*

Numerous female legal professionals have made noteworthy contributions to the domain of law. To commemorate Women's History Month, we are showcasing renowned and accomplished female lawyers and their profound influence on the legal field.

Keywords: Female lawyers, legal profession, women's right, women attorney

I. INTRODUCTION

Although Hillary Rodham Clinton is commonly associated with her role as a former first lady and presidential contender, it is worth noting that her professional journey really originated in the legal domain. Clinton is widely recognized as a prominent female legal professional, owing to her extensive and prominent career including the fields of law, government, and politics.

Clinton, a graduate of Yale Law School, gained professional experience as a corporate lawyer, whereby he dedicated over 15 years to advocating for companies and corporations at the esteemed Rose Law Firm.

In conjunction with her roles as a U.S. senator and secretary of state, Clinton's noteworthy accomplishments encompass her involvement in the formulation and enactment of the State Children's Health Insurance Program during her tenure as first lady. The legislation, enacted in 1997, expanded healthcare support to children who lacked insurance coverage and had little income.

Clinton's extensive legal expertise and significant commitment to public service have established her as one of the most prominent female lawyers and political personalities globally.

Important Aspects of Hillary Rodham Clinton's Legal Profession:

In 1977, Clinton played a significant role in the establishment of the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families.

In 1993, she served as the chairperson of the National Health Care Reform task team in her role as First Lady.

In 2000, Clinton inadvertently secured a seat in the U.S. Senate, making her the inaugural female elected representative from the state of New York.

From 2009 until 2013, she held the position of United States Secretary of State.

Gloria Allred

Gloria Allred is a prominent female attorney who has gained significant recognition for her advocacy of women's rights. Having obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of Pennsylvania and a Master of Arts degree from New York University, Allred's extensive professional background as an attorney, spanning over four decades, significantly enhances her impact and notoriety in the field.

Allred has emerged as a prominent advocate for women's rights and has played a pivotal role in advocating for victims of sexual harassment, employment bias, and unjust termination of employment or contractual agreements in prominent legal disputes. In addition, she oversees a company that is committed to advocating for individuals who have experienced prejudice due to their gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, health, and other factors.

Allred's notable achievements in the realm of law are exemplified by her receipt of an honorary Juris Doctor degree from the esteemed University of West Los Angeles School of Law. These accolades confirm her position as one of the most exceptional female lawyers and demonstrate her lasting impact on the legal system, women's rights, and advocacy for minority groups through the legal system.

Key Aspects of Gloria Allred's Legal Profession

Allred was one of the first partners in the establishment of the legal firm Allred, Maroko & Goldberg (AM&G) in 1976. AM&G is a prominent organization within the women's rights movement, as it has been involved in a greater number of women's rights lawsuits compared to any other private company in the United States. In 1978, Allred established and now serves as the president of the Women's Equal Rights Legal Defense and Education Fund (WERLDEF).

The individual in question was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award by The National Trial Lawyers in 2014.

Sandra Day O'Connor

When contemplating the most exceptional female lawyers, Sandra Day O'Connor promptly springs to mind. O'Connor, as the inaugural female associate justice of the United States Supreme Court, serves as a pioneering figure for women in the legal profession and serves as an exemplary figure for aspiring legal practitioners.

O'Connor, who is currently retired, obtained a bachelor's degree in economics from Stanford University in 1950 and a law degree from Stanford Law School in 1952. She completed her education during a period characterized by restricted prospects for women in the legal profession. Through unwavering determination, O'Connor ascended to the position of deputy county attorney prior to being nominated by President Ronald Reagan for a vacancy in the United States Supreme Court.

During her tenure of 25 years on the Supreme Court, O'Connor made significant contributions to groundbreaking decisions that tackled various issues such as productive rights, sexual harassment, gender equality, and other related matters. These contributions solidified her position as a profoundly renowned legal expert.

Prominent Aspects of Sandra Day O'Connor's Legal Profession

In 1972, O'Connor achieved the distinction of being the inaugural female to assume the position of Republican majority leader in the state senate.

In 1980, she played a pivotal role in the establishment of two prominent organizations: the National Association of Women Judges in 1979 and the Arizona Women Lawyers Association.

In 1981, O'Connor was appointed as the inaugural female Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

In the abortion rights case *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* in 1992, O'Connor played a pivotal role as the swing vote that upheld the *Roe v. Wade* ruling.

Sonia Sotomayor

Sonia Sotomayor holds the distinction of becoming the inaugural Hispanic and third female justice to adjudicate the U.S. Supreme Court. She serves as a significant source of inspiration for several others.

Sotomayor, who was born to parents of Puerto Rican descent, received a diagnosis of diabetes during her early years. Tragically, her father went suddenly when she was nine years old. Nevertheless, she shown remarkable resilience in the face of challenges and prejudice. The individual obtained her Juris Doctor degree from Yale Law School and commenced her esteemed professional journey as an assistant district attorney in Manhattan.

In 1991, she achieved her long-held aspiration to become a judge by being appointed to a position on the U.S. District Court for New York. This resulted in her becoming the youngest judge in the Southern District and the first Hispanic federal judge in the state of New York. In May 2009, President Barack Obama nominated Sotomayor for the U.S. Supreme Court after serving for 11 years on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, which is widely recognized as one of the most demanding judicial positions in the country.

Prominent Aspects of Sonia Sotomayor's Legal Profession

Sotomayor assumed the position of Assistant Direct Attorney in Manhattan in 1979.

In 1984, the individual commenced employment in a private practice, assuming the role of a general civil litigator.

Sotomayor assumed the role of a judge in 1992 with her appointment to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

In the year 1998, she was designated as a member of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

In 2009, former President Barack Obama selected Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court, making her the first Hispanic and third woman to serve on the court.

Loretta Lynch

Loretta Lynch was appointed as the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York by President Bill Clinton in 1999. She served in this role for a duration of approximately two years before resuming her private practice. The U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York was reappointed by President Barack Obama in 2020, and she served as the office's leader for a duration of five years. President Obama nominated her in 2015 to assume the position of the 83rd United States Attorney General. Through her appointment, Lynch achieved the distinction of being the inaugural African American female attorney general and the second female attorney general.

Lynch, in his role as attorney general, played a key role in resolving prominent cases related to corruption and law enforcement in the United States. A noteworthy endeavor undertaken by the individual in question was an inquiry into the Baltimore Police Department, initiated in the year 2015. Lynch has achieved historical significance as a renowned African American female attorney, so establishing a precedent for subsequent generations to emulate her achievements.

Key Aspects of Loretta Lynch's Legal Profession

In 1990, Lynch assumed the position of assistant U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York, marking the beginning of her professional career.

In 1999, President Bill Clinton appointed her as a U.S. attorney.

After being appointed by President Barack Obama, Lynch resumed her career as a U.S. attorney in 2010.

In 2015, she assumed the role of U.S. attorney general inside the Department of Justice, leveraging her authority to advocate for the rights of minority groups, particularly the LGBTQ+ community.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Ginsburg obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in government from Cornell University, pursued her legal education at Harvard Law School, and obtained a law degree from Columbia Law School, all as a result of her mother's support and encouragement during her upbringing.

Ginsburg's fervor for academics persisted throughout her professional trajectory, as seen by her engagement in research endeavors in Sweden for the Project on International Procedure at Columbia Law School. Subsequently, she assumed esteemed roles as a law professor at both Rutgers University and Columbia Law School.

Throughout her studies and career, she shown unwavering commitment to advocating for gender-based equality, exemplified by her establishment of the ACLU Women's Rights Project.

In 1980, Ginsburg was designated as a member of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, subsequently resulting in her nomination and successful confirmation as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. From 1993 until her demise in 2020, she held a position of service. Today, she is commemorated for her significant influence on the legal profession and the obstacles she overcame while championing women's rights throughout her professional journey.

Prominent Aspects of Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Legal Profession

In 1969, RBG played a key role in establishing the inaugural law magazine dedicated to women's rights, known as the Women's Rights Law Report.

In 1972, she played a key role in the establishment of the Women's Rights Project under the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

In 1980, the appointment of RBG to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit occurred.

In 1993, she achieved the distinction of being the second woman to be appointed as a justice of the Supreme Court.

II. CONCLUSION

Lawyers specializing in women's rights play a crucial and indispensable role in facilitating this process by offering legal counsel, advocacy, and assistance to women who encounter instances of prejudice and violence. Additionally, they strive to support legal reforms and policies aimed at safeguarding women's rights and fostering gender equality.

Through their adeptness and tenacity, and frequently in the midst of challenging circumstances, each of these influential women played a pivotal role in advancing novel legislation and fostering fairer policies as they actively opposed instances of injustice. They have made significant contributions to the legal sector that need to be emulated and celebrated.

[1]. REFERENCES

- [2]. <https://www.collegesoflaw.edu/blog/2021/03/24/6-famous-female-lawyers-and-their-impact-on-the-field/>
- [3]. <https://hbr.org/2019/08/why-women-and-people-of-color-in-law-still-hear-you-dont-look-like-a-lawyer>
- [4]. UN Women. (2011). 2011-2012 Progress of the world's women: In pursuit of justice.
- [5]. Cook, R. J., & Cusack, S. (2010). *Gender stereotyping: transnational legal perspectives*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- [6]. UNWomen. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2011/ProgressOfTheWorldsWomen-2011-en.pdf>
- [7]. Jeline Fenwick https://www.americanbar.org/groups/business_law/resources/business-law-today/2023-november/see-her-hear-her-historical-evolution-women-in-law/