

## Judicial Profile

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ANTHONY D. MARTINEZ

# Hon. Irma C. Ramirez U.S. Magistrate Judge, Northern District of Texas

IRMA C. RAMIREZ was born in Brownsfield, Texas, a small town just south of Lubbock. Raised on a ranch in Tokio, Texas, her humble beginnings required her to develop a work ethic that would help her succeed in everything she set out to accomplish in her life. Judge Ramirez always strived to excel in the field of law, and she is a remarkable example of someone who broke through the boundaries of her social and economic limitations.



Judge Ramirez's family, although economically underprivileged, was extremely fortunate in other areas, including its strong sense of moral and family values. Her father, a hard-working Mexican immigrant, constantly stressed the value and importance of education to her and her two sisters. Judge Ramirez's mother, who came from a family of poor immigrant workers, also encouraged her children to gain an education, work hard, and always strive to do their best in order to achieve their

goals. In discussing Judge Ramirez's upbringing with her, it is not difficult to recognize that she takes great pride in where she came from and also credits much of her success to the principles that were instilled in her throughout her childhood.

Irma C. Ramirez discovered her love for engaging in intellectual debate during her sophomore year in high school. A reminiscent smile came upon her face as she recalled, "It was during speech class that I realized I truly loved to argue." Upon this self-discovery, Judge Ramirez decided early on that she wanted to pursue a career in the legal profession. Although it was not common in her generation for Hispanic wom-

en to set their career goals so high, Judge Ramirez did not let this discourage her or disrupt her focus. She remained confident in the knowledge that, if she retained her drive to succeed, she could overcome any obstacles along the way.

Judge Ramirez completed her undergraduate degree at West Texas State University, receiving a B.A. in 1986. While attaining her degree, she served as an intern in Yoakum County's district attorney's office. It is this experience that Judge Ramirez says "cemented [her] career in law" and put to rest any doubt she may have had about attending law school in the future. Upon graduation, she began to work as a recruiter and as an admissions counselor for West Texas State University. Judge Ramirez then relocated to Hobbs, N.M., where she spent several months as a recruiter for the College of the Southwest, before beginning work at New Mexico Junior College. During her tenure at the junior college, she administered numerous federally funded programs.

Irma Ramirez's hard work and strong desire to succeed eventually led to her being awarded a full scholarship to attend the Southern Methodist University School of Law in Dallas. In 1991, Judge Ramirez received her J.D. degree and immediately started to work at the prestigious Dallas law firm of Locke, Purnell, Rain, & Harrell (now, Locke, Lord, Bissell, & Liddell LLP). The experience she gained during her legal practice there would prove invaluable to her law career.

In 1995, Judge Ramirez joined the U.S. attorney's office, where she excelled as a prosecutor in the Criminal Division. During her time at the U.S. attorney's office, she shined as a prosecution lawyer, a job she "absolutely loved." Judge Ramirez's respect and passion for the law continued to grow even stronger when she was a prosecutor—a position that granted her the opportunity to litigate and rediscover the reason that she always wanted to become an attorney.

Unlike many judges, being appointed to the bench was not an immediate goal for Judge Ramirez, because she enjoyed practicing law. However, when Judge Boyle stepped down in 2002, many of Judge Ramirez's colleagues strongly encouraged her to apply for the post. After giving the idea some serious thought, she decided to apply, and as a result was awarded one of the most distinguished honors in the

judicial field. Judge Ramirez was sworn in on Sept. 9, 2002, by Chief District Judge A. Joe Fish. She is currently a member of the Texas Bar Association, Dallas Bar Association, Dallas Bar Foundation, and Federal Magistrate Judges' Association.

Judge Ramirez's personal philosophy as a judge is to "apply the law as written." She sees it as her responsibility to "see the issues and apply the law." Judge Ramirez possesses a very confident and strong demeanor in her courtroom. She carries herself with a great sense of pride and displays a "stern, yet fair" attitude. Judge Ramirez exudes experience and a sense of quiet integrity, and she conducts herself in a manner that is both professional and efficiently lawful. She remains extremely likable without sacrificing her powerful presence.

The judge's fondest memories of events throughout her career are not ones that involve her own accomplishments or personal successes; rather, they are memories of helping others. While serving as an assistant U.S. attorney, she coached a mock trial team at Southern Methodist University. This experience allowed her to help students learn and grow through the examination of her favorite subject—the law. Judge Ramirez still displays a plaque in her office that

recognizes and reminds her of all she did for those young people and how much it meant to them and to her. She says that, of all her awards and accomplishments, this is the one she holds closest to her heart.

Judge Ramirez's life and career are a testament to the American ideal of hard work and tenacity leading to success. From her humble beginnings and throughout her life, she has relied on her conviction that education is the gateway to achievement. When asked what her advice would be to youngsters who are striving for successful careers and facing the same obstacles she faced, her words of wisdom are simply these: "Just believe you can do it." Judge Ramirez always believes in herself, and she has certainly proved that anything is possible if you want it badly enough. She has honorably dedicated her life to upholding the Constitution of the United States of America and to maintaining justice in our court system. **TFL**

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*Anthony D. Martinez is a junior at Arizona State University. He recently served an externship with Judge H. DeWayne "Cooter" Hale of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Northern District of Texas, Dallas Division.*