



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS**

**- News Release -**



**AMARILLO, TX** – Senior District Judge Mary Lou Robinson will celebrate her 39th year as a federal district judge on Tuesday, May 1. She has released the following statement:

Effective May 1, 2018, I will be assuming inactive senior judge status.

It has been my distinct honor and privilege to serve as a United States District Judge for the Northern District of Texas, Amarillo Division.

Judge Robinson has been a judge in Amarillo for more than 63 years. She was appointed judge of the newly created County Court at Law in Potter County in 1955. She was later elected judge of the 108th District Court in Amarillo in 1961, and she was subsequently reelected in 1964, 1968, and 1972.

In 1973, Judge Robinson was appointed justice of the Seventh Court of Appeals, making her the first female appellate judge in the State of Texas. She was appointed chief justice of that court in 1977, the first female chief justice in Texas, and she continued to serve as chief justice until her appointment to the federal bench in 1979. When appointed to the federal bench, Judge Robinson was only the second female in Texas to be appointed to a federal bench.

When Judge Robinson took senior status in 2016, she was the longest serving active federal judge in the Northern District of Texas and in the entire Fifth Circuit.

Judge Robinson graduated from Amarillo High in 1944. She received an associate's degree

from Amarillo College in 1946, a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Texas in 1948, and a law degree from the University of Texas School of Law in 1950.

Judge Robinson has received many awards and honors throughout her distinguished career. She was named one of the 100 Legal Legends by Texas Lawyer and was also named Distinguished Alumna by Amarillo College in 2004. Judge Robinson received the Outstanding Fifty-Year Lawyer Award presented by the Texas Bar Foundation, the Sandra Day O'Connor Award for Professional Excellence by the Texas Center for Legal Ethics, the Chief Justice Charles L. Reynolds Lifetime Achievement Award by the Amarillo Area Bar Association, the Samuel Pessarra Outstanding Jurist Award by the State Bar of Texas, and the Girl Scouts 2007 Woman of Distinction. In 2015, she was honored as a Texas Legal Legend by the State Bar of Texas. In 2016, the Amarillo Globe-News honored Judge Robinson with its Woman of the Year award. That same year, she was honored by the Texas Chapters of American Board of Trial Advocates as Jurist of the Year. The awards bestowed on Judge Robinson are too many to name, but some of the other significant ones include:

1973 Texas Woman of the Year by the Texas Federation of Business & Professional Women

1976 by West Texas State University as one of the 10 Outstanding Panhandle Women

1979 Amarillo High School Sandie Hall of Fame

1997 Woman of Distinction by Soroptimist International of Potter and Randall Counties

1998 Career Achievement Award from Amarillo Women's Network

2008 Texas Woman to Watch by Amarillo Business and Professional Women

2009 Amarillo Old Lawyer of the Year by the Amarillo Area Young Lawyer's Association

2010 Judicial Recognition Award by the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

2016 Lifetime Achievement Award by Amarillo Women's Network

Paul Harris Fellow of the Rotary Club of Amarillo

In discussing Judge Robinson, Chief Judge Barbara M.G. Lynn said,

Judge Mary Lou Robinson has been an inspiration to jurists throughout the country, particularly to women who have used her fine example as a motivation to seek judicial office. Her decision to take inactive senior status leaves a great void that no one else can fill. We on the Northern District bench and all citizens of Texas owe her an immeasurable debt for her lifetime of service.

Former Chief Judge Sidney A. Fitzwater, who is currently presiding over cases in the Amarillo division, said,

Judge Robinson is not only a trail blazer in the truest sense of the word, but a model judge. When she donned her robe and entered the courtroom, it was to do justice: with wisdom, patience, and often courage. Few judges will leave a mark on the federal and state courts that is as indelible and wide-ranging as the one she leaves. Although we will miss her as an active member of our court, we are grateful that she will remain our colleague and friend.