

279 Sonia

Appointed in 2009, Justice Sonia Sotomayor was the first woman of color, the first person of Hispanic descent, and the first Latina to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court in its 200-plus year history.

After graduation from Princeton and Yale Law School, Sotomayor worked in private practice, taught law at Columbia and NYU, and served as an assistant district attorney in Manhattan. She also sat on the bench for the U.S. District Court in New York City and the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Of Puerto Rican descent, Sonia Sotomayor has consistently confronted inequities suffered by marginalized Americans. Notably, she advocated for the 2010 Affordable Care Act and for the legality of same-sex marriage in all 50 states.

In December 2021, she wrote a scathing dissent of the majority decision in a case involving a Texas law that prohibits most abortions. Sotomayor warned, “The court’s order is stunning. Presented with an...unconstitutional law engineered to prohibit women from exercising their constitutional rights...a majority of justices have opted to bury their heads in the sand.”

Like the Puerto Rican coqui (tiny frogs) that this figure holds in her hands, Sotomayor’s voice, like her support for human rights, carries with strength and persuasion. Like the swallow who sits on her shoulder, she represents the hope of all people.