

# SOUTHEAST TEXAS RECORD

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## Johnson becomes first woman on 9th District appeals court



By **Marilyn Tennissen**

Jan 21, 2014

As her mother slipped the black robe onto her shoulders, Leanne Johnson became the first female justice on the Texas Ninth District Court of Appeals in Beaumont.

Johnson was sworn in by Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Nathan Hecht in a ceremony Jan. 17 at the Jefferson County Courthouse.

With 27 years of trial and appellate experience, Johnson was appointed by Gov. Rick Perry in November to serve on the appeals court after Justice David Gaultney retired. The term will expire at the next general election.

Prior to her appointment, Johnson was in private practice with Orgain Bell & Tucker LLP in Beaumont.

Her experience includes personal injury defense, complex civil litigation, toxic tort defense,



graduating magna cum laude in 1983.

She then received a law degree – with High Honors -- in 1986 from the University of Arkansas School of Law, where she served as a member of the Law Review, Moot Court Team, Moot Court Board while also holding a part-time job.

After law school, Johnson clerked for U.S. District Court Judge Nauman S. Scott in the Western District of Louisiana.

She is board certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in Personal Injury Trial Law and is licensed to practice in Texas and Arkansas.

She has been a member of the State Bar of Texas, Arkansas Bar Association and the Bar Association of the Fifth Federal Circuit and a life fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation. She is a member and past board member of the Jefferson County Bar Association, and a past member of the Texas Association of Defense Counsel.

In Southeast Texas, she volunteers her time as a board member of the Boy Scouts of America Three Rivers Council and the Julie Rogers Gift of Life Program, and a volunteer for the Beaumont Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic.

Mary Johnson places the black robe of the judiciary on her daughter Leanne Johnson.

Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Nathan Hecht gives the oath of office as judge for the Texas Ninth District Court of Appeals to Leanne Johnson on Jan. 17.

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