

Judge Sonia M. Rodriguez True

EDUCATION

University of Washington School of Law, Seattle, Washington
Juris Doctorate, July 2000

University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, June 1997
Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy, American Ethnic Studies
Honors: Dean's List, Education Opportunity Program Honors List

BAR ADMISSION

Washington State Supreme Court, Admitted November 2000
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Washington, Admitted July 2003
Yakama Nation Tribal Court, Admitted August 2003

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Yakima County Superior Court, Yakima, Washington
Judge, September 2022 to present

Appointed to serve as judge in a court of general jurisdiction. As a Superior Court Judge, preside over a variety of civil and criminal proceedings, including bench and jury trials. Assess credibility of witnesses, hear and evaluate evidence, analyze and apply law to facts, prepare written opinions and decisions. Issue search and arrest warrants. Initiate and participate in domestic violence workgroup. Review, revise and create various local rules for approval.

Yakima County Superior Court, Yakima, Washington
Commissioner, February 2021 to September 2022;

Served as a court commissioner in a court of general jurisdiction. Performed duties as a judicial officer in civil cases, including divorce, custody, paternity, child support, domestic violence, adoption, and adult and minor guardianship cases. Conducted settlement conferences, issued search warrants, implemented training for guardians ad litem, collaborated with attorneys to modify local family court rules. Facilitated redesign of family court website to be more accessible to users.

True Law Group, P.S., Yakima, Washington

Formerly known as Law Office of Sonia M. Rodriguez True, P.S. and Morales Rodriguez, P.S.

Principal Shareholder/Managing Partner, January 2004-February 2021

Managed and administered all aspects of this law firm, including supervision of 8 employees. Represented clients in dissolution, custody, paternity, child support, non-parent custody, adoption, and other complex family law matters. Represented parents and children in dependency and termination of parental rights cases (contract with Office of Public Defense). Trained and recruited attorneys to volunteer at Casey Family Legal Clinic, including presentation of CLE on assisting pro se litigants in non-parent custody cases. Represented parents and children in At-Risk Youth, Truancy, and CHINS cases.

Represented indigent defendants by contract in criminal cases in Wapato Municipal Court. Represented clients in personal injury matters. Served as Pro Tem Commissioner in Yakima County Superior Court.

Yakima Valley College, Yakima, WA.

Taught Business Law course for fall quarter in 2015.

Contreras & Morales, Inc., P.S., Yakima, Washington

Associate Attorney, July 2002-January 2004

Represented clients in dissolution, custody, paternity, child support and personal injury cases. Represented parents and children by contract with Yakima County in dependency, termination, At-Risk Youth, CHINS and Truancy cases.

Columbia Legal Services, Yakima, Washington

Staff Attorney, September 2000-July 2002

Represented clients in dissolution, custody, unlawful detainer, and immigration cases. Interviewed and counseled clients. Drafted pleadings including motions, briefs, and agreements. Advocated for clients in public housing and public benefits cases. Attended and gave legal presentations at community meetings.

Tucker and Stein, P.S., Bellevue, Washington

Rule 9 Legal Intern, February 2000-July 2000

Represented public defense clients charged with criminal misdemeanor offenses. Appeared in Bellevue and Northeast District courts for pre-trial, sentencing, and post-sentencing hearings. Interviewed and counseled clients.

Federal Defenders of Eastern Washington and Idaho, Boise, Idaho

Rule 9 Legal Intern, June 1999-December 1999

Represented clients charged with federal criminal offenses. Appeared in court for initial appearances, detention, probation revocation, change of plea and sentencing hearings. Researched and drafted motions, memoranda, and portions of briefs, on trial, sentencing, and appellate issues. Interviewed and counseled clients. Handled own caseload with supervision, and provided support to staff attorneys and investigator. Attended training related to the development of trial advocacy skills.

Columbia Legal Services, Seattle, Washington

Law Clerk, Community Legal Clinic, June 1998-June 1999

Advocated for clients in child support, public benefits, and housing cases. Represented clients in administrative hearings. Drafted motions and briefs for hearings and trials. Interviewed and assessed new clients.

The Defender Organization, Seattle, Washington

Legal Intern, June 1998-September 1998

Researched and drafted memoranda regarding civil commitment and sexual offender issues.

The Defender Organization, Seattle, Washington

Investigator Intern, June 1997-September 1998

Assisted attorneys in preparation of misdemeanor, felony and dependency cases by interviewing witnesses, drafting reports, running criminal history checks and photographing crime scenes.

Office of the Attorney General, Seattle, Washington
Intern, Consumer Protection Division, November 1995-September 1997

Informally mediated 25-30 new and ongoing complaints at a time. Contacted business owners to resolve complaints. Researched consumer issues. Advised consumers regarding complaint resolution. Provided consumer information and referral sources. Determined restitution amounts for approximately 200 consumers in major lawsuit.

SAFECO Life Insurance Company, Redmond, Washington
Intern, Individual Underwriting and Issue, Summer 1995

Researched state laws regarding life insurance and prepared memoranda on findings. Tracked legislative developments regarding life insurance. Drafted and edited provisions of state-by-state life insurance policies.

Proyecto Saber Program, Seattle School District, Seattle, Washington
Tutor/Volunteer, October 1994-June 1995

Provided academic assistance to at-risk high school students in all subject areas, in an effort to increase Latino high school graduation rates. Served as a liaison between students, teachers and administrative staff. Facilitated parent involvement. Organized extra-curricular activities for students, such as clubs, barbecues, and sports teams. Advised students in all aspects of their daily lives.

The Callison Partnership, Seattle, Washington
Intern, Human Resources Department, Summer 1994

Tracked performance review process for approximately 300 employees. Collaborated with all levels of employees to complete the review process. Assisted in other areas of human resources such as employee benefits and requirements for government contracts.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Co-chair elect and Peer Counselor, Judicial Assistance Services Program, Washington Courts, 2021-present
Member, Rotary International, Downtown Yakima, 2009 to present; (Current Board of Directors Member)
Mentor and Presenter, Heritage University Law School Pipeline Project, 2022;
Founding Member, InThisTogether (gang intervention community organization), 2019 to 2022;
Member, Board of Directors, Yakima Federal Savings and Loan Association, July 2018 to February 2021;
Member, Gender and Justice Commission, Washington State Supreme Court, 2015 to 2021;
Secretary, Board of Trustees, Virginia Mason Memorial Hospital, January 2014 to February 2021;
Volunteer, Casey Family Legal Options Clinic (and assist with supervision and oversight), 2014 to 2021;
Member, Board of Directors, United Way of Central Washington, (past chair) 2013 to 2020;
Member, City of Yakima, All-America City Team, June 2015;
Member, Board of Directors, Yakima YMCA, 2011 to 2017;
Member, Board of Directors, Yakima Police Athletic League, 2010 to 2020;
Judicial Institute Fellow, Washington State Bar Association, 2012;
Member, Steering Committee, City of Yakima Gang-Free Initiative, 2010 to 2011;
Member, Board of Directors, Citizens for Safe Community, 2010 to 2012;
Member, Yakima City Council, January 2009 to November 2009;
Member, House of Delegates, American Bar Association, 2004-2008;
Member, Commission on Domestic Violence, American Bar Association, 2005-2008;
Member, Board of Directors, YWCA of Yakima, 2002-2008;
Member, Board of Directors, Rural Community Development Resources, 2005 to 2007;

Chair, Pre-Law Leadership Conference, Young Lawyer's Division, Washington State Bar Association, 2004-2005

Trustee, Southeast District, Young Lawyers Division, Washington State Bar Association, 2002-2005;
Member, Board of Directors, Washington State Hispanic Bar Association, 2002-2004;

Member, Rules of Professional Conduct Committee, Washington State Bar Association, 2002-2004
Mentor, Washington Education Foundation, 2002-2004;
Member, Board of Directors, Annie Wright Alumnae Association, 2001-2002
Member, Board of Directors, Opportunities Industrial Center

AWARDS

Casey Excellence for Children Award, 2022;
Coalition on Adoption Institute Angels in Adoption Honoree from Washington, Representative Dan Newhouse, 2021
The Meritorious Award, Latino Professional Association, 2019;
Spirit of the Dream Award, Martin Luther King Jr. Day Committee, 2019
Volunteer of the Year, Yakima County Bar Association, 2016;
Make A Difference Award, Southeast Community Center, 2016;
Community Award, Safe Yakima Valley, 2016;
Volunteer of the Year, Yakima County Bar Association, 2014;
Citizen of the Year, YWCA of Yakima, 2014;
Recent Graduate Award, University of Washington School of Law, April 2010;
City of Yakima Distinguished Service Award, February 2010;
The Governor's Award of Excellence, Governor Christine O. Gregoire, September 2009.