



Sandra Day O'Connor

Sandra Day O'Connor was born on March 26, 1930 in El Paso, Texas. She grew up on her family's 198,000 acre cattle ranch. In 1952, she graduated from Stanford Law School and married fellow law student John O'Connor. The Connor's settle in Phoenix Arizona. Sandra Day O'Connor was the first woman appointed to the supreme Court by President Reagan in 1981.

A former Republican majority leader in the Arizona State Senate, Justice O'Connor is a conservative member of the Supreme court, however, Justice O'Connor has also had the role of a "critical 'swing' Vote." She held the deciding vote for such controversial decisions as a constitutional right to abortion, state affirmative action, mental capacity standards for the death penalty, and school prayer.

"Justice O'Connor's reputation on the court indicates that she is not interested in "bright line" decisions but establishing "intermediate principles." Justice O'Connor is a staunch defender of federalists and believes in deference to the states (wash. Post, October 20, 1994)." Her positions include support of the death penalty, and limiting affirmative action. O'Connor wrote that the federal government should respect "legitimate" state interests and the states should not have a federally-imposed "agenda." Justice O'Connor is also a leader among Establishment Clause cases, recognizing the "symbolic significance" of governmental acts but supporting the "endorsement test" to determine the extent of religious association. Justice O'Connor is described as very disciplined and determined, playing an "active role" in questioning lawyers from the bench. Justice O'Connor overcame the prejudice of woman in the work force and became the first woman on the supreme court. Justice proved that woman can be powerful and in influential.