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Justice Sandra Day O'Connor - I

Lead: In 1981 President Ronald Reagan made legal history by appointing Judge Sandra Day O'Connor to the Supreme Court. The first woman justice, she soon occupied the center of the court.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: O'Connor was born in Texas in 1930 but grew up on her parent's Arizona ranch. She was attracted to the law because of a legal dispute involving her parents' property and graduated from Stanford Law School. As a student, she sat on

the board of the Stanford Law Review, a prestigious position that, had she been a man, would probably have secured her a position in an upscale law firm. Such was not the case and she and a partner formed their own legal partnership. Active in Arizona Republican politics, she was appointed to a vacated seat in the Arizona Senate and served two additional terms, elected by her colleagues as majority leader. Appointment to the Arizona Court of Appeals in 1979 established her as one of the most prominent women jurists in the country.

During the campaign of 1980, Reagan had promised to appoint the first woman to the nation's highest court. O'Connor's prominence in state

party politics and generally moderate conservative disposition attracted the attention of the administration, and she became one of the top candidates for the Court. She was confirmed by a vote of 99-0. During her years on the Court she generally voted with the conservative side thus helping to forge a rightist majority. Nevertheless, she was not hesitant to vote against her brethren on the right and she established a record of judicial restraint and independence that often found her in the center of the Court and, on matters of women's reproductive rights, gender discrimination and First Amendment disputes, helped secure the majority. Next time: the essential center.

**In Richmond Virginia, this is Dan
Roberts.**

Resources

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