



**LEADERSHIP**

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Brigadier General Wilma Vaught declares, "What I wanted to be when I grew up was - in charge." Increasingly women are becoming leaders in all capacities as generals, elected officials, ministers, community leaders, and corporate executives. In this century surely we will see a woman elected to the highest office in the land, the Presidency of the United States. With leadership comes great responsibility and women are equal to the challenge. However, there is a continuing debate over the qualities required of a leader and how women can best fulfill them. Some believe that women have special characteristics, such as placing high value on consensus building and cooperation, which especially qualifies them to be leaders. Others believe that women as a group are not better or different leaders than men, but similar to men, advancing on their own merits and personality. Women today are leading countries and companies. Old barriers are breaking down and the possibilities seem endless as glass ceilings begin to shatter.

## LEADERSHIP – POLITICAL

Elected Positions from Harris County <sup>1,2</sup> – Federal	Number of Men	Number of Women	Percentage of Women Elected Officer Holders
U.S. Senate (Texas Delegation)	1	1	50%
U.S. House of Representatives (Harris County Delegation)	7	1	12.5%

Senator and one U.S. Representative from Harris County who are female. State senators representing Harris County remain all male, as do probation judges and all constables. The only

The percentage of women who hold elected office from Texas and Harris County ranges from a high of 50% (U.S. Senate) to a low of 0% (Harris County Constables and Harris County Delegation to the State Senate). In the 108th U.S. Congress, 14% of the 100 seats in the Senate and 13.6% of the 435 seats in the House of Representatives are held by women.<sup>3</sup> According to The Center for American

Elected Positions from Harris County <sup>1,2</sup> – State	Number of Men	Number of Women	Percentage of Women Elected Officer Holders
Texas State Senators – Harris County Delegation	7	0	0%
Texas State Representatives – Harris County Delegation	18	7	28%

Women and Politics, Texas ranks 32nd among the 50 states in the number of women elected to its state legislature.<sup>3</sup> The Texas State Senate is comprised of 12.9% women while the Texas House of Representatives is comprised of 20.7% women.<sup>3</sup>

Although in the past Houstonians and Texans have had high-ranking and highly visible women in major offices such as governor, mayor, and police chief, no women hold these positions today. According to the Current Officials Report (2003–2004), women comprise 29.2% of current officials in Harris County. Current county officials are predominately male (71.0%) and Republican (83.9%).

In comparing the percentages of women holding elected office in 1995 (the year the data were collected for the first edition of this report) to the current report published seven years later, findings show a remarkably unchanging picture. There is still only one U.S.

percentage increase is among District Judges, which rose from 37.3% to 41.4% female. Although women in Harris County comprise 50.3% of the population and 51.0% of the registered voters (for those voters for

whom gender is known), their majorities are not reflected by a proportionate number of women holding elected office.

As of the December 6, 2003, run-off election, the City Council of Houston is comprised of 50% women and the new city comptroller is a woman, former City Council member Annise Parker. In the past, several women have used this high profile position as a springboard to higher elective office. Municipal judges

Elected Positions from Harris County <sup>1,2</sup> – Local	Number of Men	Number of Women	Percentage of Women Elected Officer Holders
Houston County Commissioners	4	1	20%
Harris County Justices of the Peace	13	3	18.8%
Harris County Constables	8	0	0%
District Court Judges	34	24	41.4%
County Criminal Court Judges	9	6	40.0%
County School Trustees	6	1	14.3%

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are appointed by the mayor and affirmed by City Council and currently 55.6% are female. The city's department heads and managerial employees are 22.5% female and 77.5% male.<sup>3</sup> In the police department 88.6% of employees are male and 11.4% are female.

Gender and Party Affiliation of Current Harris County Elected Officials, 2003 <sup>2</sup>	Percentages
Male Republicans	58.0%
Female Republicans	25.8%
Male Democrats	12.9%
Female Democrats	3.2%
Total	99.9%

Department Heads, Employees with Supervisory and Managerial Responsibilities, City of Houston, 8/31/02 <sup>4</sup>	Total	Black Women	Hispanic Women	White Women	Other Women	Total Women	Black Males	Hispanic Males	White Males	Other Males	Total Males
	Department Heads, Supervisory & Managerial Employees	4,609	481	132	368	54	1,035	755	496	2,168	155
Police Department Employees	1,341	52	14	81	6	153	142	147	874	25	1,188
Department Heads & Equivalent	20	2	2	4	0	8	3	1	8	0	12

Data Sources:

- 1 League of Women's Voters of the Houston Area, 2003 Voters Key to Voting Information and Elected Officials Representing Houston and Harris County.
- 2 Current Officials Report 2003-2004, Harris County, TX, Updated July 2003.
- 3 Center for Women and Politics, Texas Fact Sheet, Women in Elective Office – Historical Summary, July 2003, New Brunswick, NJ.
- 4 Department Heads, Employees with Supervisory and Managerial Responsibilities, Women Resource Request. Data as of 8/31/30. City of Houston, Department of Human Resources.

## LEADERSHIP – PROFESSIONAL

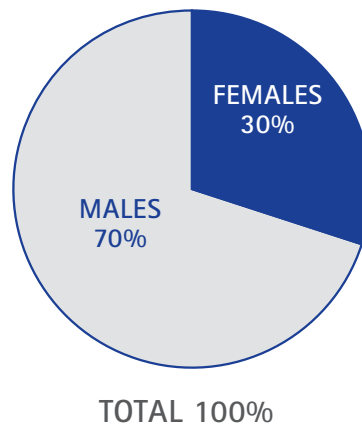
Leadership is a vital category to assess when examining the status of women. The number of women in leadership positions can provide a window into the status of women more generally. If women are leaders then it means that old stereotypes of women have fallen by the wayside and that women have more opportunities. Although there has been much controversy and debate over whether women lead differently (or even better) than men, there is little debate that women leaders are a sign of greater equality and opportunity for women. The term the "glass ceiling" has been invoked to describe the situation that, although many women have succeeded in moving up in corporations and other organizations, many times they seem to reach a glass ceiling where they can see higher positions but cannot break through to reach them. There are indications that the situation is even worse for women of color; some have even described it as a "Lucite ceiling," that is, like a glass ceiling it is a clear obstacle, but harder even than glass to break through.<sup>2</sup>

Medicine and law are two prominent professions that often produce community leaders. According to

the State Board of Medical Examiners, female physicians comprise 22.4% of the physicians in the state. The percentage in Harris County is slightly higher, that is, female physicians make up 27.4% of physicians in the county.<sup>1</sup>

Statewide, female attorneys are 28% of the membership of the State Bar and in Harris County, 30% of all attorneys are female.<sup>3</sup> Since the first edition of this report to present, the number of female attorneys in Harris County increased by three percentage points, from 27% in 1995 to 30% in 2002. Across the state, female attorneys are younger and have been licensed for fewer years than male attorneys. The median age of male attorneys in Texas is 48 years and the median number of years licensed is 18 compared to the median age for a female attorney

ATTORNEYS IN HARRIS COUNTY, 2002-2003<sup>2</sup>



of 41 years and licensed for 10 years.<sup>4</sup> Women attorneys are more likely than their male counterparts to work in urban areas. Women attorneys are less likely than men to work in private law firms and more likely to be employed as government attorneys and in-house counsel. Women represent a larger proportion of minority attorneys (40%) than non-minority attorneys

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(27%) in Texas. The proportion of women among Texas law students increased from 41 to 48 percent in the last decade with the highest percent of female students in the state at Texas Southern University (51%) followed closely by the University of Houston (50%) and Southern Methodist University (50%).

Each year the Houston Business Journal publishes a Book of Lists<sup>5</sup> that catalogs top businesses in various industries ranked by revenues, number of employees, and other criteria. The book is a helpful resource to assess the status of women in Houston's public and private businesses. Some findings include:

- Of Houston's top 100 public companies ranked by fiscal year 2001 revenue, no companies are headed by women.

Race/Ethnicity of Female Attorneys, Harris County, 2002 <sup>2</sup>	Percentage
Anglo	86%
African American/Black	6%
Hispanic/Latina	4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%
Native American Indian	<1%
Other	1%

- Of Houston's 25 highest paid executives of public companies ranked by cash compensation in FY 2001, none are women.
- Of the list of executives receiving the largest salaries



**Data Sources:**

1 Physicians by Gender and County, January 2003. Texas State Board of Medical Examiners. <http://www.tsbme.state.tx.us/demo/docs/d2003/0103/gender.htm>

2 Sokoloff, N.J. (1992). Black women and white women in the professions. New York: Routledge.

3 Harris County: Attorney Statistical Profile (2002-2003). State Bar of Texas, Department of Research & Analysis. Austin, TX.

4 Annual Report on the Status of Women in the State Bar of Texas (2002-2003). State Bar of Texas, Department of Research & Analysis. Austin, TX.

5 Book of Lists 2003, Volume 33, Number 53. Houston Business Journal. Houston, TX.

6 Snooks, M.K., & Turell, S.C. (2003). A Retrospective Study of the High School Experiences of Women Leaders in the Greater Houston Area. The Women's Resource (formerly the Greater Houston Women's Foundation). Houston, TX.

among the highest-ranking public positions in Harris County ranked by annual salary, four of 25

Attorneys in Harris County, 2002 - 2003 <sup>2</sup>	Percent
Males	70%
Females	30%
Totals	100%

executives (16%) are women.

- Of the largest employers in Harris County ranked by number of full-time employees, 1 of 25 (4%) companies is run by a woman.
- Of the largest Houston-area Colleges and Universities ranked by 2001 fall enrollment, 6 out of 25 institutions (24%) are headed by women.
- Of Houston fastest-growing small businesses ranked by sales growth percentage between 1999 and 2001, 30 of 100 (30 %) have at least one female principal.

The HBJ Book of Lists also includes a list of the top 50 Woman-Owned Businesses in the area ranked by 2001-year end revenue.<sup>5</sup> These fifty businesses employ over 5,000 employees and generate revenues in excess of 1.6 billion dollars.

The Women's Resource commissioned a study to examine the high school experiences of women leaders in the greater Houston area.<sup>6</sup> The survey found that women leaders demonstrated leadership characteristics early by being quite involved in extracurricular activities in high school, often holding leadership positions. Frequently cited activities included sports, journalism, and drama/theater programs. The women noted that they often had strong support from their parents, other family members, and community leaders such as coaches or religious leaders. The women leaders had numerous suggestions that they would give to young women upon entering high school who wished to followed their successful journeys. These included: look for mentors, make social connections, avoid "bad" marriages or marry later, and connect with other women.