



**For Immediate Release**  
Friday, December 1, 2023

**LDF Media**  
[media@naacpldf.org](mailto:media@naacpldf.org)

**LDF Mourns Passing of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the First Woman on the Supreme Court**

The Legal Defense Fund (LDF) is saddened by the passing of retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, a trailblazing jurist who became the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court. O'Connor died on December 1, 2023 at her home in Phoenix, Arizona. She was 93 years old.

LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson issued the following statement:

“We are saddened to learn of the passing of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor who, through her steadfast commitment to public service and the common good, broke barriers in becoming the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court. A trailblazer and icon, Justice O'Connor inspired the nation—matching power with passion and poise in her service to the law.

“During her twenty-five year tenure, Justice O'Connor dealt with many significant issues that came before the Court, ranging from reproductive rights to affirmative action. She was a proponent and advocate of racial equality, holding an ambitious vision that our nation still works to realize. Notably, in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, she wrote for the majority, penning a landmark decision to permit race-conscious admissions in higher education to boost the enrollment of Black people and other historically marginalized groups. While her predictions on the need for race-conscious admissions were premature, her recognition of the importance of the need to consider race in higher education remains one of the Court's most significant decisions. Justice O'Connor leaves behind an indelible legacy.”

###

*Founded in 1940, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) is the nation's first civil rights law organization. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please*

*refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.*