

# Fransheneka “Fran” Watson

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*Licensed to Practice Law Since 2009*

## **GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS**

- Analytical, reliable, and diligent attorney experienced in estate planning, non-taxable estate administration, commercial disputes, and LGBTQ law.
- Licensed mediator trained to settle disputes during litigation.
- Excellent writer and presenter able to clarify and disseminate information to audiences of varied backgrounds.
- Highly skilled researcher proficient in legal and non-legal databases.
- Civically engaged community leader focused on LGBTQ Equality, Equity, Racial Justice, and Intersectionality.
- Professionally media trained.
- Regularly provides thought leadership through panel discussions and facilitated trainings.

## **WORK EXPERIENCE**

**Harris County Probate Court (2) Two**  
Staff Attorney, June 2023-present

Houston, Texas

- Review Heirship dockets.
- Review Probate of Will dockets.
- Review various applications filed in Decedent Estates.
- Assist Presiding and Associate Judges with Contested matters when needed.
- Manage Court Clerks and Interns

**City of Houston Municipal Courts Department**  
Associate Municipal Court Judge, July 2019-June 2023

Houston, Texas

- Preside over bench trials and other court proceedings with respect to the City of Houston codes and ordinances.
- Performing certain magistrate functions and general administration of the Court.

**F. Watson Law, PLLC**  
Principal Attorney, January 2019 – June 2023  
(also, November 2009-December 2015)

Houston, Texas

- General law practice focusing on estate planning and administration, guardianship, alternative dispute resolution, and commercial disputes.

- Represent pro-bono clients in various areas of law including family law, landlord/tenant, estate planning, and probate.

**Simoneaux & Watson, P.C.**

Houston, Texas

Law Partner, January 2016 – December 2018

- Houston law firm focused on protecting family legacies through the creation of trusts and estate plans, guardianship, and estate administration.

**PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS**

- Licensed Attorney, State Bar of Texas
- Associate Municipal Court Judge, City of Houston
- Mediation Certification (40 hours)
- Guardian ad Litem Certification
- Commissioned Texas Notary (including online notarizations)

**ADMISSIONS**

- U.S. District Court- Southern District of Texas

**HONORS AND AWARDS**

- Houston Bar Foundation
  - Outstanding Individual Contribution to the Houston Bar Association and Houston Volunteer Lawyers, 2021
- Houston LGBTQ Political Caucus
  - John Paul Barnich Justice Award,
- 2019 PFLAG Beaumont
  - Pride Fest Grand Marshal, 2018
- College of Humanities and Social Sciences at UHD
  - Dean's Award,
- 2018 New Leaders Council
  - Mitch Draizin Advocacy Award,
- 2017 Houston Business Journal
  - 40 under 40 Honoree,
- 2017 About Magazine F.A.C.E. Awards
  - Volunteer of the Year,
- 2016 Pride Houston, Inc.
  - Houston Female Grand Marshal, 2016
- National Association of Social Workers- Houston Chapter
  - Public Citizen of the Year Award-
- 2016 Houston Transgender Unity Committee

- Champion Ally Award- 2015
- Outsmart Gayest and Greatest Awards
  - Favorite Female Community Hero, 2015 and 2016
  - Most Prominent LGBT Activist, 2015, 2016, and
- 2017 League of Women Voters of Houston
  - Rising Star Award-
- 2013 Lone Star Legal Aid
  - Pro Bono Award-2012

## EDUCATION

### **Thurgood Marshall School of Law**

Houston, Texas

Juris Doctor, *magna cum laude*, 2009

- Thurgood Marshall Law Review
  - Executive Editor
- James M. Douglas Board of Advocates
  - Associate Moot Court Coordinator
- CALI Awards for Excellence
  - Best Oral Argument
  - International Human Rights
  - Federal Jurisdiction
- ABA Texas Regional Arbitration Competition
  - Semi-Finalist
- Academic Dean's List
- Pro Bono Service Award

### **University of Houston-Downtown**

Houston, Texas

Bachelor of Science- Psychology, *magna cum laude*, 2005

- Outstanding Student in Psychology
- Certificate of Excellence, Student Research Conference
- Academic Dean's List

## PUBLICATIONS

Watson, Fran "Protecting the Vulnerable: Transwomen of Color and the Legal System." *The Houston Lawyer*, Volume 59:4. Jan./Feb. 2022.

Watson, Fran. "Out of the Ashes: A Journey of Mental Health and Self-Care." *Spectrum South*, Web. Dec. 2017.

Watson, Fran. "Eliminating Homelessness Takes A Village." *Outsmart Magazine* Web. Sept. 2015.

Watson, Fran. "Why Black Lives Should Matter to You." *Equality Texas*, 19 Aug. 2015, <https://www.equalitytexas.org/guest-post-why-black-lives-should-matter-to-you/>.

Fransheneka J. Watson, Raising the Damage Award for the Loss of a Beloved Pet via the Creation of a New Category: Pet as a "Non-Functional Dependent," 33 T. Marshall L. Rev 315 (2008).

## ASSOCIATIONS

- State Bar of Texas
  - LGBT Law
- Section Houston Bar Association
  - LGBTQ+ Committee
  - AIDS Outreach Committee
  
- Mayor Turner's LGBT Advisory Board
  - Communications Committee, 2017-2018
- Montrose Grace Place
  - Advisory Board Member, 2017
  - Board President, 2014-2017
  - Board Member, 2014
  
- Houston GLBT Political Caucus
  - President, 2016-2017
  - Vice-President, 2015
  - Board Member 2014
  
- New Leaders Council, Houston Chapter
  - Chapter Co-Director, 2016-2017
  - Communications Co-Chair, 2015-2016
  - Inaugural Class Fellow, 2015
  - Black Caucus (National), 2017
  - Women's Caucus (National), 2015
  
- Trans Legal Aid Clinic-Houston
  - Co-Founding Attorney
  - Board Member, 2016-2019