

## **BIOGRAPHY**

# **VANESSA D. GILMORE**

In 1994 when Judge Vanessa Diane Gilmore was sworn in, she was then the youngest sitting federal judge in the nation. She grew up in Silver Spring, Maryland was also the youngest member of her freshman class at her alma mater, Hampton University in Virginia. Gilmore decided to undertake a career in law after she represented herself and won a minor civil lawsuit. She graduated from the University of Houston Law Center in 1981.

In 1982, Gilmore began a 13-year tenure at a Houston law firm known as Vickery, Kilbride, Gilmore and Vickery where she specialized in civil litigation. Gilmore also became an active member of the Houston civic community, serving on the boards of a number of civic and charitable organizations including a term as president of the YWCA of Houston. She also became involved in the Texas political arena while serving as counsel and teacher in the area of election law.

Her civic activities outside of the courtroom brought her to the attention of Governor Ann Richards who in 1991 appointed Gilmore to the Texas Department of Commerce Policy Board, where she also served as chairperson from 1992 to 1994. Her appointment to that board made Judge Gilmore the first African-American to serve on this board responsible for increasing business, promoting tourism and developing job training in Texas. In 1993, she also served as chairperson of Texans for NAFTA. In this capacity, she worked regularly with diplomatic leaders, including the President of Mexico, to increase U.S. trade opportunities. Judge Gilmore was nominated to the federal bench by President Bill Clinton in 1994 and became the first University of Houston graduate to be appointed to the Federal bench.

Judge Gilmore is the co-author of “A Boy Named Rocky”, a book for the children of incarcerated parents and is a frequent speaker on issues related to these children and their families. She has worked on initiatives to help these families with access to resources for their children. Gilmore is the author of three other books including “Saving the Dream”, a fiction novel that Gilmore hopes will encourage other families and single people to pursue their own dreams of parenting through adoption. She is the recipient of numerous civic awards for community service.

Gilmore has served on the boards of Hampton University, the River Oaks Baptist School and the First Tee of Houston. She currently serves on the boards of the DePelchin Children’s Center and Texas Children’s Hospital.