

# Ruth Jones McClendon

## Biography

Ruth Jones McClendon was first elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1996, representing District 120 in San Antonio. Her service during the 81st Regular Session of the Legislature marks her seventh term in office.

McClendon has served two terms as Chair of the House Committee on Rules and Resolutions. She also served as a member of the House Committee on Transportation during the 81st Legislative Session. Additionally, she has held a coveted seat for four (4) terms on the powerful House Appropriations Committee, which writes the \$180 billion budget for the state of Texas. She served as Vice-Chair of the Criminal Justice Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, and was one of five members of the House appointed to serve on the Joint Conference Committee in May, 2009, to refine and approve recommendations for the final form of the \$180 billion budget.

In addition, she has served two appointed terms on the influential Sunset Advisory Commission (SAC). The SAC is comprised of five House members and five Senate members, in addition to two public members serving on the panel. The work of this Commission continues through the interim period between Sessions, when members study reports about the several agencies under periodic review for renewal of their agency operations. The Commission receives public testimony, in order to evaluate the performance of state agencies and make recommendations for improved operations. The commission may vote to change the organizational structure of a state agency, and even vote to abolish agencies or entities which may no longer serve an essential purpose. Proposals of the Commission are brought forward as legislation for the House and Senate to consider as enactments to redefine and improve the workings of the agencies that were reviewed by the SAC.

During the interim between the 81st and 82nd Legislative Sessions, Representative McClendon will serve on the Joint Criminal Justice Oversight Committee, to which she was appointed by Speaker of the House, Joe Straus, in April, 2009. The Committee is charged with responsibility for conducting an in-depth examination of the state's criminal justice system, recommending strategies to the Legislature for solving identified problems, and advising the Legislature in developing plans, programs, and future legislature to improve the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. The Committee will submit its next report to the Legislature in January, 2011.

Texas Monthly distinguished her with "Honorable Mention" as one of the Best Legislators of the 81st Session. Capitol Inside named her as one of seven House members of the twelve legislators in the "Top Tier" of Legislators of the 81st Session. Altogether, Representative McClendon has authored, sponsored, co-sponsored and passed more than 160 bills, excluding resolutions, during her tenure in the Texas House. Her legislative priorities include improving educational opportunities for students throughout the state, fighting for health care for children and the frail and elderly, creating a climate for businesses to flourish, keeping our neighborhoods safe, enabling counties to implement restorative justice programs, and improving the state's transportation system. Rail relocation and improvement continues to be a priority of special emphasis for Representative McClendon.

Since her election to the Texas Legislature in 1996, Representative McClendon has also served on the following committees: Pensions & Investments (Chair of Budget and Oversight), the Select Committee on Property Tax Relief and Appraisal Reform, the Appropriations Subcommittee on Public Education, Economic Development, Local & Consent Calendars, Public Safety, Juvenile Justice and Family Issues, State Affairs, and Public Health Committees. She is founder of the Community Crime Prevention Network, Inc., and President and CEO of RJMcClendon and Co. She served as a San Antonio Councilwoman and Mayor Pro Tempore from June 1993 - August 1996.

Previously, she served seventeen years as a juvenile probation officer and administrator in Bexar County.

McClendon says, "When seeking a career in politics, you must first obtain as much education as possible. In the world of politics, you need to be equipped with a breadth of knowledge on just about everything."

Putting her words into action, McClendon created the McClendon Scholars Program in August, 2004. The program is a collaborative initiative between the Representative and the University of Texas at San Antonio. Coordinated by the UTSA Institute of Law and Public Affairs and headed by Dr. Richard Gambitta, the program provides undergraduate and graduate students with the opportunity to serve as interns in the Texas House of Representatives during the regular 140 day legislative session. Each intern receives a stipend of \$10,000 for full-time work during the session. At the end of the 81st Session, Sixteen (16) McClendon Scholars have successfully completed their internships in the Texas House.

Those who know Representative McClendon best describe her as a Christian, humanitarian, stateswoman, and a tireless advocate committed to helping others. Her tenure, genuine dedication to serving her constituents, and her uncommon ability to build consensus on major policy issues have earned her many leadership roles in the Texas Legislature.

Representative McClendon considers her greatest accomplishments are being a mother, having a rewarding family life in the midst of the rigors of public service, and being able to serve her community as a state representative, because all these missions require perseverance and hard work, and the non-tangible rewards are tremendous. She credits the late Congresswoman Barbara Jordan as the historical leader who had the greatest influence on McClendon's life as a child, when she grew up in Houston's Fifth Ward. McClendon says the formidable obstacles that she has faced in her life have been few, but "discrimination has been an ongoing obstacle that we all must fight." Representative McClendon is listed in Who's Who in American Politics, Who's Who of American Women, World's Who's Who of Women, International Who's Who of Professional & Business Women and Who's Who in Texas History. She has received more than 450 awards and honors for her legislative, public service and professional work.

***Representative McClendon was honored on September 10, 2007 with the Texas Advocacy Award from the American Cancer Society. The award was presented at the Texas Pain Summit meeting in Austin by Dr. Larry C. Driver, Professor of Anesthesiology & Pain Medicine at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, recognizing her for "outstanding legislative advocacy for the quality of life of cancer patients." Representative McClendon authored legislation in 2007 to establish an interim review committee to study current disparities in legislation affecting pain management and distribution of pain medications, and report on its findings to the 81st Legislative Session.***