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December 30, 2021

Law School News

RWU Law Remembers Sarah Weddington

The pioneering lawyer, who passed away this week, successfully argued the landmark case of *Roe v. Wade* (1973) – and inspired many students during her appearances at RWU Law.

December 30, 2021

| Michael M. Bowden



Sarah Weddington meets with students during a 2009 visit to RWU Law.

Sarah Weddington, the Texas lawyer whose successful arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court in the landmark case of *Roe v. Wade* (1973) led to the legalization of abortion throughout the United States, died Sunday at her home in Austin. She was 76.

Largely through the good offices of her friend, former RWU Law Careers Dean Anthony Bastone, Weddington made several appearances at RWU Law over the years. They were major

events, complete with luncheons, dinners, and full-house crowds in the Selya Courtroom.

“Many of our alumni, especially female alumni, still talk about her visits as a highlight of their law school experience,” noted Assistant Dean of Admissions Michael Donnelly-Boylan.

“Regardless of your views on abortion, Sarah told a remarkable story,” added Professor and former RWU Law Dean David Logan. “Just a couple years after graduating from UTexas law school, and unable to find a job, she took on and won a pro bono case that literally changed the world. For [students] trying to imagine what can be done with a law degree, [Weddington’s presentations were] informative and maybe even uplifting.”

“I was 26 years old and a 3L at RWU Law when I met Sarah Weddington,” recalled Kim Ahern ’09, now Director of Policy and Senior Counsel to Rhode Island Governor Daniel J. McKee. “Coincidentally, that was the same age Sarah was when she argued the landmark case of *Roe v. Wade* before the United States Supreme Court. It was a privilege to speak with her about her storied career and her experience arguing one of the most consequential cases in American history. She made sure the next generation of lawyers – and especially, young female law students – knew the duty each of us have in becoming lawyers. In particular, she urged all of us who are willing to share in the responsibility of protecting choice – a lesson that still rings true today.”

Weddington’s legacy continued to resonate for the present generation of law students, female and male alike.

“When I was a 1L in Professor Logan's Torts class, I had the privilege of attending [an online] presentation by Sarah Weddington, where she shared her story and experience arguing *Roe v. Wade*,” said current 2L Arya Omshehe. “Her impact on reproductive justice will continue to be felt for generations. As an aspiring attorney, one can only dream of leaving a legacy as enduring as hers. I pray that the advocates of today will build upon the foundations she has laid for the freedom of tomorrow. My memory of meeting Attorney Weddington is a blessing. I am truly grateful for having met such a remarkable woman, and learned firsthand about her remarkable career and remarkable life.”

Sarah Weddington’s New York Times obituary can be found [here](#).