

Bio of Ileta A. Sumner, esq.

Born and raised by a single mother (who passed away the week before Ileta's 8th grade graduation) in the projects of San Francisco, Ms. Sumner was the first African American valedictorian of her Catholic all-girl high school. Due to financial difficulties, Ms. Sumner joined a dance company after high school and was the youngest performer in the dance production "Dance Between the Lines," the longest running dance show in San Francisco. Thereafter, she procured her B.A. in Political Science, cum laude, from Rockford College (now known as Rockford University), and her J. D. from Boston College Law School.

Getting married and moving to Spain immediately after law school, Ms. Sumner began her legal career three years later at Bexar County Legal Aid in San Antonio, Texas, in a position underwritten by a grant provided by a fund from the "Violence Against Women Act" and began representing victims of family violence. After four years, Ms. Sumner single-handedly created the first legal department at the 20+ year old Battered Women's Shelter with a program under HUD, becoming the shelter's first General Counsel, representing homeless victims of family violence who resided in shelters, transitional residential facilities and on the street in Bexar and contiguous counties, driving as many as 500 miles a week to meet with clients.

While working as general counsel, Ms. Sumner served as President of the San Antonio Black Lawyers Association; director and Treasurer of Texas Women Lawyers; as well as editor and contributor of the Bexar County Women's Bar (BCWB) newsletter for eight years on her way to becoming a Director, Vice President and the organization's first African American President. Her working world came to a screeching halt in 2005 when she contracted viral cardiomyopathy (a type of congestive heart failure). Although she is now living with multiple medical maladies, Ms. Sumner continues to volunteer with local legal organizations such as the William S Sessions American Inn of Court, the San Antonio Legal Services Association (SALSA), served two-terms as a Director for Disability Rights Texas and is a contributing author for the San Antonio Bar Association magazine, *San Antonio Lawyer*. Ms. Sumner was the recipient of the BCWB's "Belva Lockwood Young Lawyer Award" in 1999 and the San Antonio Bar Foundation's "Peacemaker Award" in 2022.

During her active career and her years of medical recovery thereafter, Ms. Sumner has been the recipient of Alumna of the Year from her high school, college, and law school; the Belva Lockwood Young Lawyer Award from the BCWB; awards from the State Bar of Texas, the Texas Bar Foundation and Boston College Law School for her work in public interest law as well as local/state/national awards for her legal writing and her efforts in improving access to justice to those who otherwise would be cast out of the legal system. She has been happily married to MSgt. James H. Sumner, IV for over 30 years, and together they are the parents of Josh, a computer animation student, and Jayson, who is studying music composition and arrangement.