

## Cynthia Garza

Chief, Conviction Integrity Unit, Dallas County District Attorney's Office, TX

Cynthia R. Garza is the Special Fields Bureau Chief of the Dallas County District Attorney's Office's and Chief of the Conviction Integrity Unit (CIU). Ms. Garza graduated magna cum laude with a double undergraduate degree in Sociology and Psychology, with distinction, from Southern Methodist University in 2001. She received her law degree in 2004 from Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law.

Ms. Garza established her own law firm after graduation and later joined a criminal defense firm where she honed her skills in appellate and post-conviction criminal defense. Ms. Garza joined the Dallas County District Attorney's Office's Appellate Division in 2008 and joined the Conviction Integrity Unit in January 2010. Ms. Garza served as Acting Chief of the Unit for 10 months before being named the Chief of the CIU in July 2017. She has been involved in a significant percentage of the Unit's exonerations.

Ms. Garza is the longest tenured prosecutor in any Conviction Integrity Unit in the nation and is frequently contacted by other jurisdictions for advice on establishing a CIU or best practices in running their CIU. She trains prosecutors in Dallas County, as well as travels around the state and country training criminal justice stakeholders and speaking about actual innocence and wrongful convictions. Ms. Garza also participates in legislative efforts to improve the criminal justice system in Texas, and is consulted by jurisdictions for input on criminal justice reform efforts around the nation.

Ms. Garza was named a Rising Star in 2008 and 2009 by Texas Super Lawyers Magazine and was awarded the La Cima Latina Government Leader by the Greater Dallas Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in 2014 for her work in the CIU. She was also named District Attorney Employee of the Month by Dallas County in February 2019 and received a Profiles in Leadership award from Southern Methodist University's Women's Symposium in March 2020. Ms. Garza has served on the Board of Directors for various bar associations, including the Dallas Hispanic Bar Association (DHBA) and Dallas Association of Young Lawyers (DAYL), and is currently on the Emerging Leaders Board for Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law.