



LEONOR

Serrano

Leonor Serrano Pablo

First female lawyer to appear before the Court of Appeal of Barcelona

Hinojosas de Calatrava (Ciudad Real), 1890 -Madrid, 1941

Leonor Serrano Pablo was a teacher, primary school inspector (1913-1937) and lawyer (1930-1938), who, according to the press, became the first woman lawyer in Spain to appear professionally before the Court of Appeal (Audiencia Provincial) of Barcelona.

She was born in Hinojosas de Calatrava, in the province of Ciudad Real, on 23 February 1890. She pursued her baccalaureate at the Instituto de Huesca and graduated on 7 October 1927, which enabled her to access university Law studies during the period 1927-1930, first at the Universidad de Barcelona (six courses passed) and later at the Universidad de Zaragoza, where she took all the courses from the second to fifth year in just two academic years. She earned her Law degree there in 1930 at the age of 40, making her just the second woman to earn a Law degree in Zaragoza.

That same year she returned to Barcelona, and on 27 September 1930 she requested admission to the Bar Association of Barcelona to work in that profession. The Governing Board agreed to allow her to join on 6 October 1930.

Her first professional act before a court (Court of Appeal of Barcelona / Audiencia Provincial) was on 22 April 1932, and according to the press (*El Luchador: Diario Republicano* and *El Sol*, both in the 22 April 1932 editions), it was the first trial in which a woman served as a lawyer: 'Yesterday morning was the debut of Mrs Leonor, the first woman lawyer in our city to appear before the Courts of Justice'. Also through the press, we learn that that same year she was appointed a member of the Juvenile Court of the province of Barcelona (*La Vanguardia*, 21 February 1932). She was one of the only three women lawyers appointed to participate in the *I Congreso Jurídico Catalán* in 1936.

The Civil War truncated her career in both Education (1937) and Law (1938). She was taken off the register of the Bar Association of Barcelona on the agreement of its Governing Board on 17 August 1938 because she had failed to pay the fees. She went into exile in France, returned to Madrid on 4 April 1939, unable to exercise her profession, and survived by teaching private classes. Leonor Serrano Pablo died in Madrid on 24 April 1941.

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