



**Sarah Herring Sorin (1861 – 1914)  
Arizona's First Woman Lawyer  
2019 Inductee from Mining's Past**

Sarah Herring Sorin was Arizona's first woman lawyer and the first woman to argue a case at the United States Supreme Court unassisted by a male attorney. She was born in New York City on January 15, 1861, to William and Mary Inslee Herring. The Herrings had five children: Sarah, Howard, Mary, Bertha and Henrietta.

Sarah attended Normal College and after graduating began teaching grammar school in 1879. Her father inherited mines in Arizona Territory and moved with some of the family in 1880 to Bisbee then to Tombstone. The three oldest children stayed in New York City until Howard graduated from high school the next year when they joined the family out west. Sarah taught school in Tombstone and served as principal and school librarian. Her favorite activities were riding horseback and playing music.

In 1891, Sarah quit teaching to read law and to assist her father in his law office. In November 1892 she passed a rigorous oral examination in open court and was admitted to practice in the First Judicial District Court of the Territory of Arizona in Tombstone. She became the first woman lawyer in Arizona. She was admitted to

practice at the Arizona Supreme Court, also. Desiring more legal education, Sarah attended New York University's School of Law, one of the few law schools to accept women students. She graduated with an L.L.B. in 1894, ranking fourth in her class. She returned to Tombstone to practice civil law and specialize in mining law.

In 1896 the Herring family left declining Tombstone and moved to thriving Tucson, Arizona. Sarah married Thomas Robertson Sorin, a mining enthusiast and rancher, on July 21, 1898. She continued to practice law with her father in Herring & Sorin. In 1906 she was the 24th woman to be admitted to practice at the U.S. Supreme Court. After her father's death in 1912, Sarah moved to Globe and became counsel for Old Dominion Copper Mining & Smelting Company.

On November 6, 1913, Sarah argued on behalf of United Globe Mines at the U.S. Supreme Court. She was the first woman to plead her case alone without accompanying male counsel. She won the case that involved the disputed ownership of two mines. She was only the fourth woman to argue a case before the high court.

On April 30, 1914, Sarah died from pneumonia at the age of 53, but her name lives on. Each year, the Arizona Women Lawyers Association bestows the Sarah Herring Sorin Award to a member who supports the advancement of women in the legal profession. Sarah Sorin has been inducted into the Arizona Women's Hall of Fame and the Women's Plaza of Honor at the University of Arizona. A Sarah Herring Sorin Professor of Law faculty chair has been inaugurated at New York University School of Law. She is also included in Stanford Law School's Women's Legal History Biography Project.