

# BENITO JUAREZ

**Title:** Benito Juarez

**Artist:** Julian Martinez

**Date:** 1985

**Type:** Sculpture

**Medium:** Bronze (sculpture), Granite (pedestal)

**Location:** Hermann Park



The bronze bust of Mexican President Benito Juarez stands in the International Sculpture Garden on a granite pedestal. It is the work of Julian Martinez and has been part of the City of Houston's civic art collection since 1985.

Juarez was a lawyer of Zapotec ancestry who played a decisive role in a tumultuous period in the history of Mexico. A judge, a city councilman in Oaxaca, and a governor of the State of Oaxaca, he was a liberal power during political culture wars in mid-Nineteenth Century Mexico. He was imprisoned and exiled for his political stance when conservatives reigned in Mexico City and served as Minister of Justice and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court when the liberals were in power. In 1857, a revolution brought the conservatives back to power, and Juarez declared a rival government with himself as president. Ultimately, he and his side regained power. However, French forces invaded the country, and the conservatives invited the Austrian nobleman Maximilian Hapsburg to install a monarchy to replace Juarez's government. War ensued, resulting in the Mexican army defeating the French. A turning point in the war was the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862, which is celebrated today as the Cinco de Mayo in Mexico and among many Texans. The only full-blooded native to serve as President of Mexico, Juarez served five terms. He is considered a national hero in Mexico.

