

2007 Las Primeras[®] Awards Presented in Washington, DC

MANA, A National Latina Organization, with headquarters in Washington, DC, twenty-one Chapters nationwide and five affiliates across the nation, celebrated the 18th Annual Las Primeras[®] Awards Gala on Thursday, October 4, 2007, at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC. Each year, MANA proudly recognizes Latinas who have accomplished “firsts” in their respective fields and significant contributions at the national level. The major Event Sponsors were Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. and State Farm Insurance Companies.

The 2007 Primeras were awarded in the following categories:

Business, Leadership, Community Service, Public Service, and Communications. The awardees in those respective categories were: Kimberly Casiano, President and COO of Casiano Communications and Board Director, Ford Motor Company; The Honorable Hilda L. Solis (D-CA), United States House of Representatives and “Profiles in Courage” Awardee; Patricia Diaz Dennis, Senior Vice President and Assistant General Council, AT&T and Chair of the National Board of Directors of Girl Scouts of the USA; The Honorable Leticia Van de Putte, Texas State Senate, President of the National Conference



Las Primeras[®] 2007 Awardees (left to right): Ms. Patricia Diaz-Dennis, The Honorable Leticia Van de Putte, Ms. Kimberly Casiano, Miss Ana Ayala, The Honorable Hilda Solis, and Ms. Michelle Caruso-Cabrera.

of State Legislatures; and Michelle Caruso-Cabrera, Co-Anchor, CNBC “Worldwide Exchange”. The first ever HERMANITA[®] Primera award was also presented to Ana Yathzin Ayala, formerly of the MANA de Chester County Chapter. Full biographies of our 2007 Primeras may be found at www.HerMANA.org.

Awards were also given to recognize outstanding individuals who support the issues of the Hispanic community, especially Latinas. This year, MANA presented the HerMANA Award to Bonnie

Erbe, host of the PBS program “To The Contrary” for her continuous efforts to spotlight Latinas, and the HerMANO Award to Ignacio Salazar, President and CEO of SER – Jobs for Progress National, Inc. for his leadership in providing access to job training for Latinas in non-traditional areas.

The Corporation of the Year Award was presented to Southwest Airlines for their generous contributions to MANA educational and training programs. Their unwavering support

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First Lady Laura Bush Recognizes HERMANITAS[®] Program

The First Lady of the United States, Laura Bush, praised the MANA HERMANITAS[®] program in an address to educators and community leaders at the Helping America’s Youth (HAY) Regional Conference in Dallas, Texas on November 8th. MANA President and CEO, Alma Morales Riojas, also presented information on the issues facing young Latinas and the strides being made by the national HERMANITAS[®] initiative, including the release of a study on the program recently published in the Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy (Volume 19, 2006-2007).



“It’s in the interests of our entire nation to make sure Hispanic youth can grow up to make positive contributions to our society — which requires eliminating

obstacles to their success,” said Mrs. Bush, further adding, “MANA, gives young Latina women the adult support and guidance they need to avoid risky behaviors, and to set ambitious goals for their lives.” The First Lady also recognized Alma Morales Riojas as a, “fellow Texan...and one of many caring adults who’ve dedicated themselves to Hispanic youth.”

HERMANITAS[®] empowers Latina adolescents by promoting educational achievement and personal enrichment; developing leadership abilities; encouraging cultural identity and awareness; and modeling proactive community involvement. The curriculum was specifically designed to incorporate community, culture, language, family, peers, and

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Message from the Board Chair

Lidia S. Martinez

It is truly an honor to have been elected Chair of the MANA National Board of Directors. I do not take this responsibility lightly, and I ask for your support in moving forward. We have some exciting times ahead of us...but it is going to take all of us working together to achieve success. We are poised in 2008 to make wonderful strides, not only with the talented Board of Directors I am privileged to work with, but with our Chapters and Affiliates throughout the nation. This is an exciting time

for MANA as we begin to look toward our 35th Anniversary in 2009.

The MANA Annual Educational and Training Conference in Fort Worth is quickly approaching. Please use the conference as an opportunity to take advantage of our training programs to not only strengthen your Chapters, but for your own personal and professional development. I look forward to seeing many of you there and getting your thoughts on the issues facing Latinas today. In this election year, it is vital for Latina voices to be heard and MANA is an excellent vehicle for us to show our strength!

We can do it! And let's have fun while at it! Here's to a great 2008!



Message from the President and CEO

Alma Morales Riojas

What a great time to be a part of this great organization, MANA. The Board of Directors YOU elected to serve, the corporate members who voluntarily

serve on the Board and our incredible Hermanita elected by the HERMANITAS® program participants make up an exceptionally talented, dedicated and generous group. Together we are off to a great start and you will be excited to learn about the emphasis we are placing on membership, leadership, and chapter strengthening and development. Their positive energy and team approach is just what we need and exactly the fuel to get us to the next level.

While we see the progress for women and for Latinas, I cannot help but be concerned that we still have a long way to go. The Presidential campaign has clearly shown that regardless of education or experience, women do not get the same treatment or level of respect as men. Whether you are or are not a supporter of the only woman running for President, you cannot help being angered by the double standard exhibited by the media, by political analysts and even ardent card carrying party members. The question is, "If a woman of that stature cannot get equal treatment, what can the rest of us expect?"

So ask yourself, "Do I need to invest in myself, my sisters, my daughters, and all women who ask only for equal rights?" I am sure your answer is the same as mine...ABSOLUTELY! Staying actively involved in MANA helps us make a difference and gets us closer to a time when we truly have equal rights. Join us in Fort Worth as we take a giant step towards equality for Latinas.

Siempre adelante,
Alma Morales Riojas

First Lady

Continued from page 1

schools. The mentors for HERMANITAS® were recruited from MANA members, and included successful Latina community leaders and organizers. The study published in the Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy showed that girls in the HERMANITAS® program:

- 1) Maintain consistent levels of self-esteem;
- 2) Display low rates of depression compared to nationwide averages;
- 3) Display an increasingly negative view of drug and alcohol use; and
- 4) Display a growing positive attitude towards school and higher education.

Helping America's Youth is a nationwide effort to raise awareness about the challenges facing our youth and to motivate caring adults to connect with youth in three key areas: family, school, and community. As the leader of the Helping America's Youth effort, Mrs. Laura

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Bush is highlighting programs which are effectively helping America's young people.

MANA President and CEO Attends the 2008 State of the Union Address

Alma Morales Riojas, President and CEO of MANA, A National Latina Organization, attended the State of the Union Address at the United States Capitol as a guest of the First Lady of the United States, Mrs. Laura Bush. Mrs. Bush recently recognized the MANA HERMANITAS® program in an address to educators and community leaders at the Helping America's Youth (HAY) Regional Conference in Dallas, Texas.



This recognition of the HERMANITAS® program highlights the achievements of MANA members across the nation who mentor young Latinas. Leadership from past MANA Presidents has contributed greatly to the implementation and continued success of the program. Irma Maldonado, Founder and CEO of HMA Associates, Inc. and Rita Jaramillo, Senior Liaison for Latino Outreach for the National Education Association, both Past MANA Presidents were instrumental in initiating this 18 year old program. Current President and CEO, Alma Morales Riojas has taken the

program to new heights. The strides being made by the national HERMANITAS® initiative were recently seen in a study published in the Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy (Volume 19, 2006-2007).

“We are honored to have the HERMANITAS® program recognized nationally and on such an important world stage as the State of the Union Address. This shows that the vital work our volunteers do each day to help young Latinas is being recognized at the highest levels. We are humbled by and grateful for the attention given to the HERMANITAS® program from

President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush. To invite MANA President and CEO, Alma Morales Riojas, to join them on such an historic night is a tribute to her leadership and the merit of the program,” said Lidia S. Martinez, Chair of the MANA National Board of Directors. She continues, “As we look toward celebrating the 35th Anniversary of MANA, this will truly stand as a brilliant legacy that we will continue to pass on for generations.”

MANA Announces National Board Election Results

In September, a call was put out by MANA, A National Latina Organization seeking candidates for open seats on the MANA National Board of Directors. Nominations were received and elections were held in November. MANA is pleased to announce the re-election of two board members as well as the election of one new member and the HERMANITAS® youth member. The Directors also appointed three individuals to represent regions that still had open seats.



Nellie Kaniski of the Western Region was elected to serve a three-year term. She is a member of MANA de Orange County, where she has served in many capacities, including Chapter President. Ms. Kaniski has a masters degree in counseling and has worked for Santa Ana College for over 25 years. She has also been instrumental in coordinating the “Adelante Girls” conference each year at the college.

Dr. Norma I. Barquet of the Eastern Region was also elected to serve a three-year term. She is an at-large MANA member from New York, where she works as the Executive Vice President, Mission to Market for Girl Scouts of the USA. She has been honored by a 2006 Educational Excellence Award from the Hispanic Business Alliance and the 2005 Women of Achievement Award from the Anti-Defamation League.



Veronica Padilla of the North Central Region was newly elected to serve a three-year term. She has been the Chapter Vice-President and President of MANA de Topeka. Ms. Padilla also serves on the Board of Directors for the Topeka YWCA, Midland Hospice/Care Connection, Living the Dream, and Martin Luther King Celebration.

Alejandra Diaz was elected for a one-year term as the HERMANITAS® youth board member. She is a 17 year old student participating in the



MANA de San Diego HERMANITAS® program. She is an honor roll student who volunteers at the local hospital, participates in the drill team and has received an Academic Excellence Award and Community Service Award from the MANA de San Diego HERMANITAS® program.



Three individuals were also appointed to serve one-year terms on the MANA National Board of Directors:

Cindy Jimenez represents the Eastern Region. She is Vice President of Government Relations for the Information Technology Association of America. Prior to joining ITAA, Jimenez worked for five years for Speaker Nancy Pelosi serving most recently as an advisor on Hispanic affairs, the federal budget, immigration and other issues. She was also a liaison to the Hispanic and Native American communities nationwide as well as the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Southwest Members of Congress.

Maria Ramirez represents the South Central Region. She has an extensive history of public service in the community. Presently she is the National Women's Vice Chair of the American GI Forum of the United State (AGIF), a position she has held for three years. She has also served on the Board of Directors for Nueces County Community Action, the National Alzheimers Association and the South Texas Alzheimer Association.



Clara Padilla Andrews represents the Western Region. She is owner and publisher of El Hispanic News, the largest bilingual weekly Oregon newspaper. She previously was Hispanic Services coordinator and supervisor for Community and Family Services Integration of Services for Multnomah County. Active in all levels of government, she served as Secretary of State for New Mexico from 1983-86.

With the addition of these individuals, each of the MANA regions across the United States is fully represented on the MANA National Board of Directors.

Las Primeras®



MANA Welcomes Record Number of Lifetime Members

Lidia S. Martinez



Lidia S. Martinez is the Corporate Community Affairs Manager for Southwest Airlines. Born in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua and raised in El Paso, Texas, Ms. Martinez studied at the University of Texas in Arlington where she received a Business Administration degree with a focus in marketing.

In addition to her work at Southwest Airlines, Martinez serves on numerous boards and is involved in a variety of organizations dedicated to empowering Hispanic communities on a much larger scale. Most recently, she was elected Chair of the MANA National Board of Directors. She is also the 1st Vice Chair for the Los Angeles-based National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC), and a member of Congressman Bob Filner's Latino Advisory Board, as well as the California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce.

In her desire to empower the future leaders of the communities she serves, Martinez is also dedicated in supporting youth programs such as the Girl Scouts of San Diego-Imperial Counties, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE), and the Heart of Los Angeles Youth (HOLA) an inner city youth organization that aids young people in advancing their lives and revitalizing their communities. Martinez remains tireless in her efforts to help others triumph and continues to draw strength from their accomplishments.

Martinez currently resides in San Diego County with her husband Ted and two children, Melyna and Teddy.

Bonnie Erbe



Bonnie Erbe joined forces with PBS and Maryland Public Television to create "To the Contrary", the country's first and only news analysis series featuring all

women panelists. The increased voice of women in positions of power brings a unique perspective to the changing American, social, economic and political landscape – a perspective featured, and celebrated, nationwide on "To the Contrary" since April 1992.

Combining a law degree with more than 16 years of experience as a journalist covering national government, Ms. Erbe has garnered a wealth of knowledge about political, social and economic issues and has become a leader in voicing women's concerns.

Ms. Erbe was recognized with the HerMANA award at the 2007 Las Primeras Awards Gala for contributions through "To the Contrary" in acknowledging Latinas as a vital part of the national dialogue on women's issues.

Esther Aguilera



Esther Aguilera is President and CEO of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI), a position she has held since November 2004. She has been recognized as one of the 100 Most Influential Hispanics in America, presented with Hispanic Magazine's 2006 Latina Excellence Award in Education, and was featured in Latino Leaders Magazine's 2007 women's issue for her positive impact in the Hispanic community.

Aguilera was previously appointed to serve as senior advisor to Energy Secretary Bill Richardson and executive director of the Department of Energy (DOE) Small Business Office. Under Secretary Richardson, Aguilera developed senior policy recommendations leading to the implementation of a nationwide Hispanic outreach program, and increased DOE's small business contracting.

She holds a BA in Public Policy from Occidental College, Los Angeles. A native of Mexico, Aguilera's family relocated to Los Angeles in 1972.

Rosa Navejar



Rosa Navejar, the first female president of the Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, has developed education programs for start up to existing businesses, created a Hispanic Leadership Development Course and opened the first Consulate satellite office in the nation.

She has served on the Board of Directors for the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce, Imagination Celebration, and Leadership Fort Worth. Her involvements include the Rotary Club, the Fort Worth Human Relations Commission, and the Hispanic Women's Network of Texas. Ms. Navejar was named Executive Woman of the Year for 2002 by Zonta International Club. In 2006, she was honored as the Coors Hispanic Leader of the Year.

Christina Diaz-Malone



Christina Diaz-Malone is Freddie Mac's Director of National Initiatives responsible for working with a diverse group of national, regional and local organizations that promote, encourage and support homeownership for immigrants, low-to moderate-income, minority and under-served communities throughout the United States.

Prior to her current position she was in Freddie Mac's Community Development Lending area where she was responsible for developing public-private partnerships in communities throughout the US. She has been an active member of the Latino community beginning with her involvement in the formation of the first Latino nonprofit social services and employment organization in Atlanta, Georgia. She teaches bilingual financial education to for-profit and non-profit financial education providers through the NeighborWorks® Institute.

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MANA de Hidalgo County Gets Involved

By: Lisa Valadez and Jayni Saenz

MANA de Hidalgo County and HERMANITAS® participated in the annual Thanksgiving Day Dinner at the Salvation Army in McAllen, TX. MANA Members, HERMANITAS®, families, friends and coworkers gathered at the shelter early Thanksgiving morning to help prepare meals for the 600+ guests. MANA de Hidalgo Board Members Irma Saldana and Lisa Valadez gathered with the youth volunteers (ages 4-17yrs) to discuss the importance of community service, advocacy and ways to make positive changes in their own communities, such as school, neighborhood, church and within their families.

MANA de Hidalgo County Chapter members also rallied together for their first Hatbox Project. The Hatbox Project benefited a local women's cancer support group from The University of Texas Medical Branch Clinic in McAllen, TX. Norma Castillo, a MANA member, is the facilitator for the group. The group meets on a monthly basis to offer support to those newly diagnosed with cancer, or who are cancer survivors. MANA de Hidalgo County purchased twenty-five beautiful hatboxes and filled them with an assortment of gifts, which were donated by chapter members. MANA de Hidalgo County wants to encourage women to feel empowered as they walk the path toward recovery.



MANA Members in the News

Elmy Bermejo, of San Francisco, has been appointed deputy secretary of external affairs for the State and Consumer Services Agency. She has served as special assistant to Senate

President Pro Tempore Don Perata since 2004 and a partner of Tommy's Heavenly Margarita Mix since 2005. Previously, Bermejo was a field representative for Senator John Burton from 1995 to 2004 and district director for Congresswoman Lynn C. Woolsey from 1993 to 1994. She is board president of the Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) and Chair of the Women's Foundation of California. Bermejo has also served on the Commission on the Status of Women since 2003.

Judge Petra Jimenez Maes, Justice of the New Mexico Supreme Court, was inducted to the Junior Achievement of New Mexico Business Hall of Fame. Laureates were selected based on their business excellence, courageous thinking and actions, vision and innovation, inspiring leadership and dedication to their communities. The ceremony was held on November 29, 2007, at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque, NM.

Delia Garcia, Immediate Past President of MANA de Wichita is currently campaigning for her third term as Kansas State Representative, and focusing a large part of her energies on promoting health initiatives.

LCDR Mark Venzor, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Advisor to the HERMANITAS® program and MANA Lifetime Member is currently serving overseas in Iraq.

If you are interested in sending Lcdr Venzor a letter of encouragement, please contact the MANA national office for his mailing address.

MANA de San Diego Brindis

(photos from Rosa Maria Robles)



2007 Las Primeras® Awards

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makes it possible for Latinas from across the nation to participate in programs that are value-added components for their local chapters, as well as personally and professionally rewarding, regardless of location.

MANA was also pleased to award the Chapter of the Year Award to MANA de Topeka. This Kansas Chapter has made strides in the community by increasing membership, seeking and receiving funding for the Chapter, providing quality educational and training opportunities, and keeping their supporters informed with an outstanding newsletter.

In awarding these individuals and organizations at the Las Primeras® Awards Gala, MANA has helped raise awareness on the accomplishments of Latinas, while raising funds to support educational programs for Latinas across the country, mentor girls ages 11-18, and advocate on issues important to health, education and economic well-being of Latinas.

An original piece of art was selected to grace the invitations, gala materials and posters for the 2007 Las Primeras® Awards Gala. Laura Lopez Cano's work, "Folklorico"©, was chosen because it represents the vivacity, culture, beauty and spirit of Latinas, while remaining true to the festive nature of the event.

The program was hosted by Myrka Dellanos, a Spanish-language journalist and television host, known to millions of viewers throughout the United States and Latin America. She is also involved in many philanthropic endeavors, including projects with World Vision, Save the Children, Habitat for Humanity, and the American Diabetes Foundation. Ms. Dellanos is also the founder of her own philanthropic organization, MROC International. In addition to these activities, Ms. Dellanos was also appointed by President George W. Bush to the Freedom Corps.

"The talent, intellect and accomplishments of each of our Primeras are evidence of the strides Latinas have made and continue to make in American society. Their achievements hold significance not only for Latinas, but for women everywhere. We are so happy to once again celebrate amazing individuals and continue to place emphasis on Latina achievement. When we hear that young Latinas do not have modern role models to look up to, we are able to point to the extraordinary women honored with a Las Primeras® award and strongly disagree. We are proud to honor them and all that they do for the community," said, President and CEO, Alma Morales Riojas.

The 2007 Las Primeras® Awards Gala was made possible by generous contributions from valued community partners Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., State Farm Insurance Companies, AT&T, Ford Motor Company, General



Motors Corporation, Southwest Airlines, the United States Navy, and WISER-The Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement.

Lifetime Members

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Ms. Diaz-Malone is a graduate of LadyCliff College in New York, and is a designated "Accredited Mortgage Professional" AMP per the Mortgage Bankers Association of America. She is the recipient of many awards for her work in the secondary mortgage market and the financial education arena. She was awarded with the "Trendsetter Award" by DTM, Dominican Times Magazine, a national publication. She is an American citizen born in the Dominican Republic.

Veronica Padilla



Ms. Padilla has been part of the original Board of Directors of MANA de Topeka since its beginning. She has held positions of leadership on the MANA de Topeka Board, including 2nd Vice President and President. She also contributes annually

to their successful Latina Awards event. Ms. Padilla is also on the Board of Directors of the Topeka YWCA, Midland Hospice/Care Connection, Living the Dream, Martin Luther King Celebration and was the Past Local President of the Fraternal Order of Police Auxiliary for six terms. She has also been a member of the American Business Women's Association and the Mayor's Council on Diversity.

Elizabeth Casas Ray



Elizabeth Casas Ray is Vice President for Creative Response Concepts Public Relations. She recently transitioned from her position as the director of Hispanic communication and outreach at the U.S. Department of

Education, where she promoted the No Child Left Behind Act in the Hispanic community. She was appointed to her post by President George W. Bush in August 2005.

Prior to joining the Department, Ray worked for two years as an editorial producer for the CNN Sunday show "Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer," handling high-profile stories and working with newsmakers from Washington, D.C., and the world beyond. Prior to joining CNN, she worked for nearly three years at News Corp. After starting in the corporation's government relations office, she joined its subsidiary Fox News Channel, working as a guest producer for both "Weekend Live with Tony Snow" and John Gibson's "The Big Story."



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HERMANITA, San Diego

President and CEO

Alma Morales Riojas

Calendar of Events

May 18-22, 2008

**State Farm Child Passenger
Safety Fellowship Training**
Fort Worth, TX

May 22-24, 2008

**MANA Annual Educational
and Training Conference**
Fort Worth, TX

May 23-24, 2008

**Freddie Mac Financial Literacy Consultant
Training**
Fort Worth, TX

July 15-20, 2008

AvanZamos® Ford Fellowship
Orlando, FL

July 17-20, 2008

HERMANITAS® Leadership Institute
Orlando, FL

October 2, 2008

Las Primeras® Awards Gala
Washington, DC

For more information about these events,
visit the MANA website at www.hermana.org or
call the MANA National office at 202-833-0060.

For membership information and application forms visit our website @

www.herMANA.org

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