



A LEGACY OF LATINA LEADERSHIP

Las Primeras® Awardees

1990-2019

About MANA: Founded in 1974, MANA, A National Latina Organization® (MANA) is a national grassroots membership organization with chapters, individual members and affiliates across the country. The MANA Mission is to empower Latinas through leadership development, community service, and advocacy. MANA contributes the leading Latina voice on many of the major issues in the public sphere impacting women, youth and families; particularly in the areas of education and mentoring, health and well-being, financial literacy, equal and civil rights, and immigration reform.

Since 1990, the MANA Las Primeras® Awards have honored Latinas who demonstrate important 'firsts' in their fields with a national impact. The achievements of these extraordinary women show the important contributions Latinas make to this country. Las Primeras® serves as an educational program and commemoration of how far we have come, yet serves as an important reminder of the long road ahead for full inclusion of Latinas in the top levels of leadership in this country. When we are asked, "Where are your Latina Leaders?" - we can confidently and proudly point to this list of exceptional, accomplished women.

LAS PRIMERAS®

1990

- The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lethinen, U.S. House of Representatives, First Latina Elected to Congress
- The Honorable Dr. Antonia Novello, First Latina Surgeon General of the United States
- The Honorable Mari-Luci Jaramillo, First Latina to serve as a United States Ambassador
- The Honorable Minerva Bernadino, First Latina Ambassador to the United Nations and First Woman elected Vice President of the Economic and Social Council of the U.N.
- Dr. Ellen Ochoa, First Latina Astronaut
- Rita di Martino, First Latina to serve as U.S. Ambassador to UNICEF

1991

- The Honorable Lena Guerrero, First Woman and Ethnic Minority to serve on Texas Railroad Commission
- Victoria Corderi, First Latina national news anchor (CBS)
- The Honorable Anna Caballero, First Latina to seek and be elected to the Salinas, California, City Council
- The Honorable Elma Teresa Salinas Ender, First Latina appointed and elected to a District Court bench in Illinois and the United States
- Miriam Santos, First Female and First Hispanic to serve as Chicago City Treasurer

LAS PRIMERAS®

1992

- Anita Perez-Ferguson, First Mexican-American woman in the history of California to run for the U.S. House of Representatives
- The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard, First Latina to run and get elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from the 33rd Congressional District of Los Angeles
- Yvonne Shepard, President and CEO, AT&T of Puerto Rico. Highest Ranking female and minority for a major corporation in the U.S.

1993

- The Honorable Nydia Velasquez, First Puerto Rican female to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives
- Clarissa Pinkola-Estes, First Latina on New York Times' Bestseller list
- Liz Balmaseda, First Latina to receive the Pulitzer Prize
- Dr. Carmen de la Cruz Rocco and Paula S. Gomez, Among the first to detect a pattern of anencephaly along the border, forcing the EPA to intervene
- Sandy Martinez Pino, First Female administrator for the Olympic Games

LAS PRIMERAS®

1994

- Jane L. Delgado, Leadership role in the field of women's and environmental health issues
- Gloria Lopez Hernandez, Co-Founder of MANA
- Ilka Tanya Payan, AIDS activist, actress, columnist, immigration attorney and a member of the New York Commission on Human Rights
- The Honorable Martha Vasquez, First female judge in the U.S. District Court of New Mexico

1995

- Carolyn Curiel, First person of color and the first Hispanic to serve a U.S. President
- Tish Hinojosa, Singer, composer and recording artist
- Jackie Nespral, News anchor and reporter
- Mary Rodas, Toy Tycoon, Youngest Member of the Hispanic American Hall of Fame
- Angelina Sanchez, Union activist

LAS PRIMERAS®

1996

- Lisa Fernandez, Olympic Gold Medalist, Softball
- Linda Chavez-Thompson, First person of color elected to a top office in the AFL-CIO
- Belen B. Robles, First female president of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

1997

- The Honorable Norma V. Cantu, first Latina Assistant Secretary, and Director, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education
- Aida Barrera, Creator and Producer of Carrascolendas, the first bilingual network television production
- Elizabeth Martinez, First Latina Executive Director of the American Library Association
- Laura Angelica Simon, Winner of the 1997 Sundance Film Festival Freedom of Expression Award

LAS PRIMERAS®

1998

- Aida Alvarez, First Latina to serve as a member of the President's Cabinet, Administrator of the Small Business Administration
- Terri De La Haya, Helped to create a \$27 million facility to house the Texas Institute in a poor and under-served area of San Antonio.
- Maria Echaveste, First Latina to serve as Deputy Chief of Staff to the President of the United States
- Miguelina Maldonado, National Minority AIDS Council
- Rachel McLish, World champion body builder, actress and author
- Anna Santiago, First Youth Advocate and Spokesperson for the National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids

1999

- The Honorable Loretta Sanchez, U.S. House of Representatives
- Dr. Marta Sotomayor, Honored for her work in building affordable housing
- Elvira Valenzuela-Crocker, Honored for her service to MANA
- Amalia Murguia, Honored for her work in building strong families

LAS PRIMERAS®

2000

- The Honorable Polly Baca, First Latina elected to a state legislature in the U.S., first minority woman elected to Colorado State Senate, first Latina to be nominated for U.S. Congress, First Latina to co-chair National Democratic Presidential Nominating Convention, and First Latina to serve in State Senate Leadership
- The Honorable Irma Rangel, First Latina elected to the Texas House of Representatives
- The Honorable Belda Garza, First Hispanic Democrat elected to state office in Michigan
- Carmen Delgado-Votaw, First Latina Chief of Staff of a Congressional Office

2001

- Linda Alvarado, First Hispanic owner of a Major League Baseball Franchise: Colorado Rockies
- Anna Escobedo Cabral, First Latina President and CEO of the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility
- Sila M. Calderon, First Woman elected Governor of Puerto Rico
- Nellie Kaniski, Honored for service to the U.S. Marine Corps and MANA
- Elizabeth Vargas, Honored for her contributions to journalism at ABC News
- Anna Maria Arias, Founder and Publisher of the first national magazine for Latinas: Latina Style

LAS PRIMERAS®

2002

- Elizabeth Lisboa Farrow, Honored for her contributions in business and her dedication to mentoring and providing internship opportunities for young Latinos
- The Honorable Frances Garcia, Inspector General of the U.S. Government Accounting Office
- The Honorable Rosario Marin, U.S. Treasurer, highest ranking Latina in the George W. Bush Administration
- Norma Rodriguez, Honored for her work on behalf of the Latino community in her post as City Clerk of San Antonio, Texas

2003

- Linda Garcia Cubero, Honored for her work to create a stamp in recognition of Hispanics in America's defense branches and designed by 10 Congressional Medal of Honor recipients
- The Honorable Petra Jimenez Maes, First Latina Chief Justice of the New Mexico Supreme Court
- Irma Maldonado, Honored for her service in the areas of Latina health and her leadership in creating the MANA Las Primeras® Awards
- Barbara Martinez Jitner, First Latina Executive Producer of a primetime network television drama

LAS PRIMERAS®

2003, Continued

- ❖ Gloria Rodriguez, Honored for her contributions to U.S. Hispanic media and her leadership in the founding of major national organizations for Latinos
- ❖ Jennifer Rodriguez, First Cuban-American to win an Olympic Gold Medal
- ❖ Maria de Lourdes Sobrino, Honored for her business success and contributions to U.S.-Mexico trade
- ❖ Maria L. Tukeva, Honored for her contributions to immigrant education as Principal of Bell Multicultural High School in Washington, DC

2004

- ❖ Jane Garcia, Honored for her advocacy for corporate responsibility
- ❖ The Honorable Alma L. Lopez, First Latina to serve as the Chief Justice of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals
- ❖ The Honorable Patricia Madrid, First woman elected to District Court in New Mexico

LAS PRIMERAS®

2005

- Evangeline Elizondo, First Board President of MANA
- The Honorable Rebecca Vigil-Giron, Secretary of State of New Mexico, highest ranking Latina in state public service nationwide
- The Honorable Delia Garcia, Honored for her service in the Kansas House of Representatives
- Captain Kathlene Contres, U.S. Navy, ranking Latina line officer on active duty and first woman to lead the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute

2006

- Brigadier General Angela Salinas, U.S. Marines, First Latina to become a United States Marine Corps general officer
- Milka Duno, Highest finish by a female driver in the 24 Hours of Daytona NASCAR race
- Belle Ortiz, Honored for her contributions to music education through mariachi music

LAS PRIMERAS®

2006, Continued

- The Honorable Iris Y. Martinez, First Latina elected to the Illinois State Senate
- Alma Morales Riojas, First Latina to Chair the Board of Directors for the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility

2007

- Kimberly Casiano, First Latina to serve on the Board of Directors of a top five Fortune 100 company: Ford Motor Company
- Patricia Diaz Dennis, First Latina to Chair the Board of Directors for the Girl Scouts of the USA
- The Honorable Hilda Solis, U.S. House of Representatives, First woman to be given the Profiles in Courage Award by the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation
- The Honorable Leticia Van de Putte, Honored for her public service as a member of the Texas House of Representatives

LAS PRIMERAS®

2008

- Michelle Caruso-Cabrera, Honored for her contributions to economics and media on CNBC
- Martha Tijerina, First Latina news anchor, KWEX San Antonio, Texas
- Dr. Juliet V. Garcia, First Latina University President, University of Texas Brownsville
- The Honorable Gloria Molina, First Latina elected to the California State Legislature

2008

- Commander Yvette Gonzalez Davids, U.S. Navy, First Latina commanding officer of a naval warship
- The Honorable Sonya E. Davids, Honored for her service to President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush
- Irma Garcia, First Latina Director of Athletics for an NCAA Division I school: St. Francis College

LAS PRIMERAS®

2009

- Hilda Diaz-Balart, Honored for her contributions to public service, mother of Congressmen Mario and Lincoln Diaz-Balart
- Maria Macias, Honored for her contributions to public service, mother of Congresswomen Linda and Loretta Sanchez

2010

- The Honorable Carmen Lomellin, First Latina U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States
- Bettie Baca, Honored for her leadership in the founding of MANA
- Theresa Alvillar Speake, First Hispanic to serve as Director of the Office of Minority Economic Impact and Diversity at the U.S. Department of Energy

LAS PRIMERAS®

2011

- Amanda A. Renteria, First Latina Chief of Staff in the U.S. Senate
- Rear Admiral Raquel C. Bono, U.S. Navy, Honored for her service as a combat surgeon and to the Surgeon General of the Navy
- Lieutenant Jessica Davila, U.S. Coast Guard, First Latina Coast Guard helicopter pilot
- Sara Manzano Diaz, Honored for her service as the Director of the Women's Department at the U.S. Department of Labor

2014

- The Honorable Katherine Archuleta, First Latina Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management
- Margarita Engle, First Hispanic Newberry Honor recipient for children's literature

LAS PRIMERAS®

2016

- The Honorable Judy Chapa, First Deputy Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of the Treasury Office of Financial Education
- Azucena Maldonado, Founder of the Latina Golfers Association

2018

- The Honorable Katherine Michelle De La Isla, First Latina Mayor of Topeka, Kansas

2019

- The Honorable Sylvia Garcia, First Latina Elected to the United States House of Representatives from Texas (1 of 2)
- The Honorable Veronica Escobar, First Latina Elected to the United States House of Representatives from Texas (1 of 2)



IN THE WORDS OF 2014 MANA LAS PRIMERAS® AWARDEE, THE HONORABLE KATHERINE ARCHULETA, “WHILE IT IS GOOD TO BE THE FIRST, WE SHOULD ALL STRIVE TO BE THE *FIRST OF MANY.*”

While this is not a comprehensive list of Latina luminaries in the United States who have broken barriers, nor does it paint a complete picture of the progress being made in every industry, our hope is that in the last 30 years, MANA has been able to elevate the profiles of true Latina Leaders. These awardees come from all walks of life, have struggled and persevered throughout their careers, and have earned great accomplishments. They stand as shining examples of the possibilities that exist for Latino Americans and have paved the way for the next generation of leaders to follow and surpass.