



THE 19th ANNUAL
HISPANIC FORUM
Scholarship GALA

Garden
GLOW

celebrating a bright future

July 15th 2017

← BRAZOS CENTER →
BRYAN, TEXAS

Presidential Welcome:

Irma Pineda



As President of the Hispanic Forum of Bryan/College Station for 2016 and 2017, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 19th Annual Hispanic Forum Scholarship Gala.

Tonight, the Hispanic Forum will, once again, award \$100,000.00 in scholarships to deserving students from Bryan and College Station! I am also proud to announce that this year we will award scholarships to students that will be attending technical and trade schools. As the population continues to age it has been found that there is a demand for skilled trades such as welders, electricians, machinists etc. We, the Hispanic Forum want to encourage students that want to further their education in the trades as well. We will also highlight the achievements of businesses and individuals who continue to improve the cities of Bryan and College Station.

Reaching our fundraising goal was possible given the dedicated volunteer members of the Hispanic Forum, and would not have been possible without the generous donations and support from the individual and businesses who contributed to the Forum's cause. We are so grateful for your generosity. I wish to personally thank and encourage each of you to continue supporting the Forum's student scholarship program. Additionally, combined with the Forum's efforts, continue to improve our community and to change lives.

I am proud to have served as President for 2016 and 2017 and equally proud of the members of the Hispanic Forum. It truly has been a privilege to work alongside of such a group of dedicated individuals whose diligent work and drive has made possible the scholarships that we will award tonight. The Hispanic Forum is made up of people with a passion to improve our community by encouraging the youth in our community to further their education and to become productive individuals in whatever path they may take. To my fellow members: Thank You to each and every one of you for your dedication and support.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to this evening's invitees, donors and sponsors for attending and supporting our event focused on the education of our local youths. There are so many businesses, individuals and groups that help make this event possible. Your support is what makes this night possible and more importantly helping the deserving students of our community.

Lastly, to the students and recipients of the scholarships tonight, I want to wish each of you the best of luck as you begin your first year of college or trade school. Your freshman year will be a year of many "news". New life, new school, new friends, new goals, new achievements and even new obstacles. I encourage each of you to get involved in "college life". Don't just attend college or school, be a part of your school, join clubs, fraternities, sororities, whatever your interest are just get involved. Being a part of the community will help you to become a successful student and to attain the goal you set when you completed your first college application. When times get tough reach out to your family, counselors and other students for words of wisdom and encouragement. Remember that this community has faith in you and that one day you can give back to the community that helped you!

On behalf of the Hispanic Forum of Bryan/College Station please enjoy your evening!

Sincerely,
Irma Medina Pineda
2016/2017 Hispanic Forum President

Our History

The Hispanic Forum of Bryan/College Station is a community effort offering financial help for higher education to deserving *local* students. While emphasizing the celebration of Latino culture, the Hispanic Forum also promotes allegiance to U.S. core values, patriotism and active social involvement as paths to better citizenship.

The need to recognize individual Latinos, Latino-owned businesses and to financially support aspiring local students drove the formation of the Hispanic Forum in 1997. That year, a local Bryan I.S.D. language teacher, Ms. Janie Hall, was awarded the first Hispanic Forum *Person of the Year* award. Along with teaching six high school Spanish classes daily, Ms. Hall organized the student group “H.Y.P.E.” – *Hispanic Youth Promoting Education*, to highlight cultural awareness and civic pride in young Latinos. Mrs. Hall also founded and sponsored the Bryan High School *Folklorico* Dance program that taught students the intricate movements and history behind Hispanic folkloric dance. Ms. Hall’s *Person of the Year* award paved the way for the creation of the Forum’s *Business, Person of the Year* and *Lifetime Achievement* award categories being celebrated tonight.

From 1997-1999, the young Hispanic Forum organized banquettes (receptions) to raise scholarship funds. Pledged funds were presented to students during a ceremony that highlighted the efforts of community leaders like Mrs. Hall. The successful event highlighted the need for continued recognition of local Latinos in this community. And as the need for scholarship dollars for local students also continued to grow, so did the Hispanic Forum’s annual banquette. The *Scholarship Gala* evolved, and now features a silent auction, awards program, dinner and award-winning entertainment at a community-wide celebration.

While the Hispanic Forum hosts numerous community activities throughout the year, the Scholarship Gala has become its signature event. *The Gala* showcases year-long fundraising efforts of Forum members and highlights community businesses, organizations and citizens who volunteer time, talents and skills to help graduating local seniors attend post-high school education. The Gala has now raised and awarded over \$663,900.00 in college scholarships.

As the largest minority group in the United States, it is imperative that Hispanics continue contributing to our region’s success. The Hispanic Forum highlights local Latino achievement to actively engage supports and services specific to the success of Hispanic and all local students. By creating a more effective voice for the Hispanic Community, the Forum works to create a better life for all members of Bryan/College Station. The Forum invites you to join with the 2017 Bryan/College Station organizations and citizens giving generously to make higher education a reality for our deserving local graduates. Enjoy!

Our Mission

The mission of The Hispanic Forum of Bryan/College Station is to unify the residents of our community, state and nation to address social, educational, political, economic, and cultural issues that impact Hispanics and every resident in Bryan/College Station, Texas.

Hispanics are now the largest minority group in the United States. If this sizeable population is to continue contributing to our region's success, it is necessary to provide new opportunities and needed services through active community attention. By constructing a more effective voice for the Hispanic community, we can work to create a better life for all members of Bryan/College Station, Texas. We invite you to join us in this worthy effort.



2017 Executive Officers

From Left to Right:

Greg Rodriguez - Sergeant at Arms

Carlos Medina - Vice President

Maria Medrano – Historian

Irma Pineda – President

Dora Davila – Treasurer

Andrea Robles - Secretary

Joseph “Jody” Rodriguez - Public Relations

Marie Portales Rodriguez - Public Relations (not pictured)

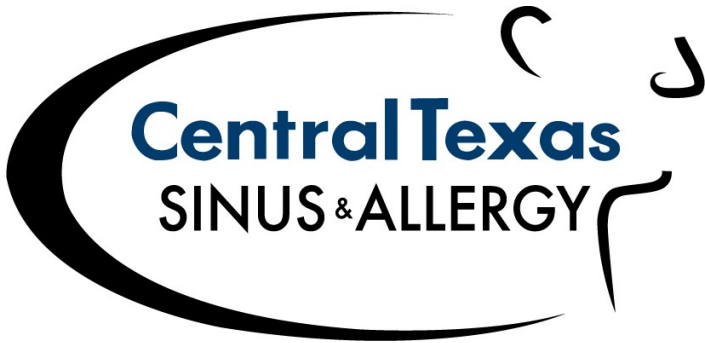
2017 Membership



Kory Ashcraft
Sandy Ashcraft
Wanda Baker
Rosa Cantu
Irma Cauley
Jaime Cavazos
Dora Davila
Corina De La Cruz
Rose Mary Garcia
Veronica Garcia
Angela Guerra
Joe Guerra
Veronica Hernandez
Reuben Marin
Alice Marino
Monica Martinez
Carlos Medina
Michael Medina
Sally Medina
Maria Medrano
Marcos Mendez
Debbie Montalbano
Albert Navarro
Rafael Pena

Ann Ramirez-Perez
Gene Perez
Irma Pineda
Lupe Pineda
Marco Portales
Rita Portales
Eddie Ramirez
Mark Ramirez
Janelle Ramirez
Josie Ramirez
Nora Reyna
Gloria Garcia-Rhodes
Andrea Robles
Greg Rodriguez
Joseph "Jody" Rodriguez
Marie Portales Rodriguez
Patty Romero
Al Saenz
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Mary Lou Torres
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– Dr. Salzer



*Congrats to the 2017 Hispanic
Forum Scholarship Recipients*

Keynote Address: *Dennis Garcia-Rhodes, Jr.*



Dennis Garcia-Rhodes, Jr. is the eldest son of Gloria and Dennis Rhodes. Always an inquisitive child, he began to read at the age of 2 ½, demonstrating skills and determination early to his parents – both of whom are educators. By fifth grade, he had won the President’s Education Award, and entered the George Bush Library Essay Contest where he won first place. His essay is now archived in the Presidential library, and surely foreshadowed his later middle school successes in athletics, choir, National Junior Honor Society and Presidential Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement.

By his high school years, Dennis’ extra-curricular activities included football, baseball, basketball, track and choir. He served as President of the National Honor Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Young Life, HYPE, and Mexican American Seniors. He consistently made All-Region Choir, and earned the lead role in Rudder High School’s first-ever musical, “Give My Regards to Broadway.” He participated in B/CS Chamber of Commerce’s Junior Leadership Brazos, and was selected to participate in Boys State - a leadership program that provided a foundation in politics, government, and patriotic duty. During his senior year, Dennis was selected for First Team Academic All-State in football and baseball, and was awarded the “Highest Academic Player of the Year” his Junior and Senior years. He also served on the Fiestas Patrias Mexicanas Court of Honor, and was crowned “King” of the 2012-2013 academic year. Dennis graduated 4th in his high school class in 2013, was elected “Most Likely to Succeed” by his peers and was the “Student of the Year” grand scholarship winner of the 2013 Hispanic Forum Scholarship Gala. When the Forum last saw Dennis, he had been accepted to Texas A&M University, and aspired to study Biomedical Science.

At TAMU, Dennis continued to be active in organizations that included the Biomedical Science Association, Executive Council of Health Organizations and Public Health Student Association. He “shadowed” professionals in Pediatrics, Ophthalmology, Family and Sports Medicine and Gynecology while continuing to volunteer for the community at the Annual Banquet for the Brazos Valley African American Museum, Chaplain Services’ Health and Information Fair, Brazos Valley Food Bank’s Food for Families, Junior Leagues’ Stuff the Bus, Relay for Life, and TAMU’s Big Event, to name a few.

Dennis graduated from Texas A&M University in only three years with a Bachelor’s degree in Biomedical Science. He is now pursuing a Master’s Degree in Public Health, and aspires to attend medical school. He continues to explore various fields of medicine. Tonight, he seeks to offer his perspective on the impact, the efforts, and the contributions of sponsors and Forum members alike have made in his life. The Hispanic Forum of B/CS is hopeful that Dennis’ past, future, and continued successes demonstrate a glimpse of what individual, community improvement and advancement your continued support will promulgate.

2017 Recognition Award Categories

Annually, the Hispanic Forum of Bryan/College Station recognizes individuals and business that have benefitted our community. Award categories include:

The Hispanic Forum's ***Person of the Year***

This award is given to a person of Hispanic descent who has contributed to the growth and awareness of this community through recent acts of service.

The Hispanic Forum's ***Business of the Year***

The Forum's Business of the Year recognizes a Hispanic-owned business that has positively affected our community, and that has encouraged local economic vitality and growth.

The Hispanic Forum's ***Educator of the Year***

The Forum's Educator of the Year award honors a person who has exemplified professionalism in teaching not only in traditional academic settings, but who has worked to ensure access and success of diverse populations in academia and in all traditionally-underrepresented disciplines.

The Hispanic Forum's ***Presidential Excellence Award***

This award is given to an individual or entity chosen by the president of the Hispanic Forum for accomplishments, role in the community or other outstanding achievement. The Forum hopes that this acknowledgement encourages further advancement by the award recipient, and that the recipient continues to inspire others to improve our community.

The Hispanic Forum's ***Lifetime Achievement Award***

This award is presented to an individual of Hispanic descent who has dedicated over a decade of his/her life to improving Bryan/College Station. The award seeks to recognize individuals who have touched the lives of many, in the past and for years to come.

Former Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients

1999	Arthur L. Davila	2007	Ramiro Quintero,	2013	Anastacio "Andy"
2000	Oscar Chavarria		Jesse Flores &		Herrera
2001	Pete L. Rodriguez		Steve Garza	2014	Minnie Davila
2002	Jose V. Martinez	2008	Eddie Rodriguez	2015	Emilio Lopez, Sr.
2003	Vera Manriquez	2009	John Velasquez	2016	Daniel Ruiz
	Castillo	2010	Julie Ramirez		
2004	Susie Velasco	2011	Jose Montemayor,		
2005	Patricia Garcia		& Joe Marin		
	Burk	2012	Dorothy Salazar		
2006	Amalia Herrera		Hernandez		
	Grimaldo				

2017 Person of the Year: Roy Lopez



Roy Lopez was born in Bryan, Texas. He graduated from Bryan High School in 1977, and from Texas A&M University with a Business Administration degree in 1982. He began his professional career at the Greater East Texas Higher Education Authority where he worked for 11 years. Yet for the past 16 years, Lopez has been employed in the Admissions and Financial Aid Office of Texas A&M University, where he has been recognized for outstanding efforts to recruit the brightest students to Texas A&M University.

Lopez has been active in Latino education/awareness. He was the first Hispanic to receive the *Star Award* from the Texas Association of Financial Aid Administrators, only the second Hispanic recipient of the *John J. Koldus Award* at Texas A&M University, and was the first Hispanic invited to participate in a U.S. Naval Academy seminar with 70 educators and national community leaders. He was also the first to receive TAMU's *Hispanic Heritage Staff Award*, which was presented by civil rights activist and legend, Dolores Huerta.

Lopez is passionate about the *Fiestas Patrias Mexicanas*, a nonprofit organization he founded in 1990, and for which he has served as administrator and organizer the last 27 years. Proceeds from the annual *Fiestas Patrias Mexicanas* have funded over \$300,000.00 in scholarships to Brazos Valley students for higher education, and Lopez has dedicated countless hours to the event's success. The downtown Bryan *Fiestas Patrias Mexicanas* now hosts over 25,000 in attendance, and provides for a community-inclusive celebration of heritage, history, and diversity.

Lopez has provided seven (7) years of service as Vice Chair of the Brazos Valley *Worldfest*, and has fundraised annually for Bryan Little League Baseball, the Bryan Boys and Girls Club, the Knights of Columbus, and Youth Ministry at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Parish. He is a board member of the B/CS *Mexican American Latino Museum*, and has written numerous articles in a local widely-read Spanish newspaper, "*La Voz*," on topics about how to obtain a post-secondary education. He is an Ambassador of the non-profit group "Camp Kesem," which helps children of a parent suffering from cancer, and assists with the local *AVID* Program (*Advancement Via Individual Determination*), which prepares students for success in high school, college, and a career – including and especially students traditionally underrepresented in *higher education*. Lopez supports Daniel Hernandez's *Read by 3rd* initiative, which seeks to have students reading at grade level by the 3rd grade in Bryan ISD, and he was even featured in the September, 2013 PBS documentary, "*Latino Americans - The American Dream that Came True*."

Lopez's rise above adversity is an engaging call to students he helps. His perspective calls him to advocate beyond traditional difficulties of "at-risk" students, and he is relentless in efforts to help them overcome tough circumstances. He has encouraged thousands of students to attend universities, junior colleges or trade schools, thereby improving countless lives. Lopez's efforts garnered the attention of the local Jefferson Award, and this past Spring, he was awarded the distinguished 2017 Jefferson Award in Washington D.C. For his impact and passionate role to help students reach higher education, the Hispanic Forum of B/CS honors Roy Lopez with the 2017 *Person of the Year* award.

Business of the Year Award: *Capital Custom Tile (Roger & Rosa Villanueva)*



family, to one's community and being a person of one's word.

Roger's father, Robert Villanueva Jr., taught Roger the craft of cutting and installing tile. By his teens, industrious Roger had already begun to work odd jobs for friends with the used wet saw he had purchased and tooted to sites in the back of his used, blue work truck.

In 1996, Roger formed Capital Custom Tile ("CCT"). Determined to create opportunity for himself and his family, he moved to Austin to take advantage of the construction boom in that area. In 1998, Roger married Rosa Villanueva, and in 1999, the couple's eldest son, Ross, was born. And as Roger continued to hone his craft, with unique custom stone and tile designs often selected by Roger himself, CCT quickly earned the respect of Austin homebuilders and commercial contractors alike.

By the early 2000s, CCT was working on residential custom homebuilders in the \$500,000+ range, and CCT's workmanship was featured in the Austin *Parade of Homes* for three (3) consecutive years. Not long thereafter, CCT again experienced incredible growth when it began working all over the U.S. doing remodels for the Wal-Mart Corporation. This required CCT to hire, train and deploy crews nationally while the young Villanueva family grew with the addition of the couple's youngest child—a little girl, Reese.

By 2007, Roger and Rosa had been away from family long enough, and moved back to Bryan/College Station. Here, without much advertising or fanfare, CCT began to take jobs, quietly performing, true to form, with dependability and quality workmanship. CCT has now earned the confidence of many custom homebuilders, performing custom residential work for Marriott, CGM, Keys & Walsh, Lero and Shaeffer Custom Homes. It has also taken on countless commercial jobs, including most recently being named the exclusive tile contractor for soon-to-open luxury *Hotel George*, and for the Calvary Court complex on University Drive. CCT also recently relocated its offices from Hwy 30 location to downtown Bryan, where it purchased and remodeled a building that serves as CCT's showroom. There, homeowners can meet with Roger and/or their builder to make selections for their custom homes.

The Villanueva's are pleased to be part the growth of this area. As a registered nurse, Rosa Villanueva enjoys caring for community in the hospitals and private physician offices where she's worked, and now, at Anson Jones School, where she serves as the school nurse. As for the Villanueva children, Reese is now 11 years old, and participates in local equestrian sports. Ross, who took a strong liking to home & commercial design, just graduated from Consolidated High School, and will enter TAMU this Fall in the College of Architecture.

The Forum recognizes Capital Custom Tile as the 2017 *Business of the Year* for its contribution to the vitality and economic growth of our community, and proudly highlights the Villanueva family as an example of the impact Hispanic businesses continue to contribute.

Educator of the Year Award: Gloria García-Rhodes



Gloria García-Rhodes is the eldest daughter of Lionel and Alice García, and graduated from Bryan High School in 1985. After obtaining a B.S. in Curriculum and Instruction from Texas A&M University in 1990, her 27-year career in education began with a teaching position at Johnson Elementary.

For 15 years, García-Rhodes has served as a bilingual educator in the 1st to 3rd grades. Even while teaching early on, she continued her own studies at TAMU as the recipient of a grant offered to bilingual teachers, and was part of a team that completed qualitative research on factors that influence successful early English literacy. She co-authored a published research article on the subject, and her team also participated in the Quality Research Exchange at Texas

A&M, where they won first place for quality research and beneficial implications that practitioners use to serve bilingual students and the community. In December 2002, García-Rhodes completed her Master's degree in Educational Psychology with an emphasis in Bilingual/ESL Studies, and later that same year, she was awarded Johnson Elementary School's "Teacher of the Year". In 2003, García-Rhodes became a member of the first group of Bryan educators to receive a Master's degree in Educational Administration with Sam Houston State University. And by May of 2005, she had completed a 2nd Master's Degree from Sam Houston State University, where she graduated with the recognition of "Outstanding Student in the Educational Administrator's Program," and SHSU's College of Education "Distinguished Educator of the Year."

In Fall of 2005, García-Rhodes was an honoree of the TAMU College of Education and Human Development *Dean's Roundtable* at Texas A&M University. She was also honored with the "Outstanding Service in the Field of Education" designation. That same year, she left the classroom and became the district's *Bilingual Master Teacher*, where she served for one year before becoming *Dean of Instruction* at Jones Elementary. She was nominated *Professional Learning Specialist of the Year* in 2010, 2011 and 2013, and based on over a decade's service as a summer school principal, she was nominated for Bryan ISD's *Administrator of the Year* in 2014 and 2015. During this same time, García-Rhodes served as *Master Teacher* for the Texas Advancement Program for Jones and Henderson Elementary Schools for 4 years, *Dean of Instruction* at Jones Elementary for 3 years, *Assistant Principal* at Henderson Elementary for 3 years. Most recently, she had served as *Assistant Principal* at Bonham Elementary for the last year.

García-Rhodes has impacted other teachers by leading workshops at the district, regional and state levels. She has served on numerous Bryan ISD committees seeking innovation, improvement and leadership while continuing community outreach in countless capacities, where she has improved our community and state, and all while raising 3 sons along with husband and educator Dennis Rhodes, who teaches at College Station High School. The Rhodes' are proud of their children's accomplishments, which include Dennis Jr., the couples' eldest son, a 2016 Texas A&M graduate, and is enrolled in his 1st year of a Master's program in Public Health and is applying to Medical Schools. Marc, García-Rhodes' middle son, is a junior at TAMU studying Sports Management. And Nicholas, the couples' youngest, will begin Bryan High School in the Fall of 2017.

García-Rhodes' poise, passion and community and professional proficiency have driven her success. She will assume her new role as Principal of Bonham Elementary in September 2017, where she will assuredly continue to lead others to achievement. The Hispanic Forum of B/CS salutes García-Rhodes as the 2017 Educator of the Year for her efforts and contributions to improve this community.

Presidential Excellence Award: Manuel & Theresa Rodriguez



Manuel & Theresa Rodriguez are a husband and wife team and long-time business. They are the parents of Crystal and Maida Rodriguez, and are grandparents to Anthony and Bianca.

Manuel Rodriguez is the son of Ramona Rodriguez Torres and of the late Manuel Rodriguez, Sr. As the oldest of five (5) siblings, Manuel lost his father at the age of 15. He learned the skills of determination and hard work early on, yet used day-to-day struggles and successes alike to fuel big dreams and create and maintain a strong work ethic.

Despite early difficulties to secure loans to start and to create their hair-styling salon business, Manuel and Theresa now own three (3) nationally-accredited hair styling schools. The main/central school is in downtown Bryan, Texas, which provided success so strong that two other schools now operate in Victoria and in Brenham, Texas – and the couple continues to try to meet demand to open two (2) additional schools for barbers in the state. Hair styling instruction and training is taught by Theresa Rodriguez, who has owned/operated hair salons for over twenty (20) years. Meanwhile, Manuel Rodriguez Jr's education includes an Associate's Degree from Blinn College, an Associate's Degree from the American College of Real Estate, and a B.A. from Texas A&M University – allowing students of the varying schools to learn from the couple and team members led by proven salon and business management success.

In addition to their business ventures, Manuel and Theresa have helped their community through volunteerism and with support of organizations like the former *Black and White Scholarship Ball* and the Hispanic Forum of B/CS's *Scholarship Gala*. They provide that their objective as “husband and wife CEO's” is to train students in excellence, and their generosity, efforts and activism demonstrate their commitment to the improvement of communities.

During the 35 years that *Manuel and Theresa's* hair salons and schools have operated, thousands of students have graduated with the skills, encouragement and confidence to lead their own businesses. Manuel and Theresa's passion for their industry and for their students has provided opportunity for persons of all backgrounds to support themselves, others and to better their communities. As energetic and humble community leaders, Manuel and Theresa continue to serve as role models.

For their gifts of self and sponsorship, diligent hard work and integrity, Manuel and Theresa Rodriguez are honored as recipients of the 2017 *Presidential Excellence Award*.

Lifetime Achievement Award: *Helen Chavarria*



Ms. Helen Chavarria was born October 1, 1936, and is a member of the Stephen F. Austin High School Class of 1956. She has also been member of Santa Theresa Catholic Church since 1945, where she still attends mass with her husband of 62 years, Oscar Chavarria, Sr. Mr. & Mrs. Chavarria have two children. Olga, who is married to husband Tommy Ramirez, and Oscar Chavarria, Jr., who is married to Sandra, and she is blessed to have five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Just following her 1956 high school graduation, Chavarria began a career with J. Weingarten, Inc. as a sales clerk and trainer until 1984. In that year, she began working for Freckles Broadcasting Company as an account executive, and for the Brazos County Justice of The Peace, Precinct 4 as a clerk and interpreter, and from 1986 to 1990, Chavarria also joined HEB as a bookkeeper. Her passion for education and student achievement called her in 1989 to begin work for the Region VI Education Service Center - a support center for students and educators in *Amnesty* and *English as a Second Language* fields, and as if she was not working in enough capacities, she also served as an *Information and Housing Management Specialist* for the Brazos Valley Council of Governments (BVCoG) from 1992 to 2001 – rounding out an impressive, forty-five year career. Yet Chavarria’s contributions did not end with her work history.

In 1983, Chavarria became the first Hispanic woman to serve on Bryan City Council, where she served three (3) terms. She also served as Commissioner on the City of Bryan P&Z (Planning and Zoning) Commission, and served in numerous other community volunteer capacities, including the Brazos Valley Development Council, American Heart Association, *Reading Is Fundamental* group, Salvation Army and *El Club Social*. She was Chairman of the Brazos Valley Community Action Agency (BVCAA) and The Brazos County Citizen’s Crime Commissions’ Criminal Justice Committee, served on the Board of Directors of First Federal Savings, and on the Executive Boards of the B/CS Business and Professional Women and LULAC Oakhill organizations. She is also presently serving as *Special Commissioner* for Brazos County.

Ms. Chavarria has also donated countless hours to awareness of issues impacting Hispanics and to the advancement of underrepresented minorities. In addition to years of service as an Interpreter and to advance bilingual education, in 1983, Mrs. Chavarria delivered the nominating speech at the *League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)* convention in Galveston, TX that brought the LULAC State Convention to Bryan/College Station. In 1988, Chavarria was invited by *The Committee for the Awareness of Mexican American Culture (CAMAC)* Conference at Texas A&M University to participate in a panel to discuss Hispanic women in politics, and examined the impact of the Hispanic vote. She was also invited to Texas Tech University by University President Lauro Cavazos to participate in a symposium that concentrated on improving high school graduation rate of Hispanics called, “*The Quest for Excellence in Hispanic Education.*” She has served as a columnist to *The Eagle*, having authored several articles – including one for *The Eagle’s Centennial (1889 to 1989)* on the History of Hispanics in Brazos County.

Helen Chavarria has been recognized as a key Hispanic leader by the *Business and Professional Women of Houston*, and was awarded a bronze medal by Houston Mayor, Kathy Whitmire for her service. The Prenatal Clinic of B/CS also honored Chavarria in 1999 at their annual “*You’re The Top’s*” luncheon.

For a lifetime of service and dedication, the Forum recognizes the achievements of Helen Chavarria.



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Michael M.

Student of the Year Nominee: Nancy Saldivar



Nancy Saldivar's lifelong dream has been to become a first generation college graduate. She plans to earn her Bachelor's degree of Science in Nursing and continue her education by seeking a Master's degree with a minor in Political Science. With this education, Nancy aspires to become a well-respected Registered Nurse and impact individuals in a positive way.

Throughout all four years of high school, Nancy was actively involved in numerous organizations that helped her school, the community or both. She was Vice President of the Junior and Senior Class Council, a Student Ambassador promoting school spirit and providing encouragement through peer mentoring, a member of the National Honor Society and the Student Advisory Committee, and a member of the Mexican American Seniors. She also participated in the Bryan Citizen's Police Academy which included a 10-week course and performed various scenarios with the Bryan police officers, and she served as a jury member of Teen Court. She volunteered for a variety of organizations and events and received multiple awards, such as Queen of the Fiestas Patrias, Homecoming Queen of the Senior class, Blinn President's Scholars Award and Texas State Finalist for National American Miss.

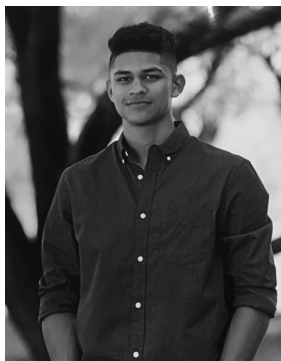
With a 4.3 GPA at Bryan Collegiate High School, while also attending Blinn Junior College, Nancy has demonstrated her ability to master the rigorous academic curriculum. According to several teachers, Nancy was a standout student since her freshman year. Her positive attitude was contagious and always set the tone for the class.

One of Nancy's most notable characteristics is her compassion for others. One teacher wrote in a reference letter, "I first noticed Nancy in the cafeteria during lunch as this beautiful, bright, young lady would spend her entire lunch with our students who are in a special program for severe disabilities. Regardless of color, gender, or disability she befriended each of them. Soon after she started eating lunch with these special students, her friends followed suit. Through her leadership these students became well accepted members of our campus and now it is the norm for all students to make friends and engage with these special students."

The Hispanic Forum is pleased to be part of Nancy's future. We congratulate her for her leadership, compassion, and ambition and look forward to the impact of her many future successes.

Student of the Year Nominee:

Juan Tomas



Juan Tomas wants to receive a Bachelor's degree in business which will help enable him to open his own business and contribute to making a difference in his local community and ultimately the world.

Throughout Juan's years at Bryan High School, he performed on the baseball field and in the classroom. His 4.51 GPA demonstrates his positive attitude for learning and ability to excel academically in his difficult, fast paced advanced placement (AP) and dual credit courses.

Although baseball is just a game, it conveys a lot about a person's character, work ethic and leadership qualities. During the off season, Juan dedicated himself physically through training and practice. His hard work paid off and he received numerous awards over the years, such as Newcomer of the Year Award, 2nd Team All District as a 3rd baseman, Defensive Player of the Year Award, and 2nd Team All-District as a 2nd baseman. He also earned academic team awards for exceeding the GPA requirements as a student athlete and he broke a program record in the 400-meter race.

As a leader on and off the field, Juan was a great role model for his team, students at Bryan High, and the youth of the community. He was an active member of the Mexican American Seniors, volunteered for community projects and within his church, while working part-time. He consistently demonstrated his ability to maintain focus, keep his composure under pressure situations, and bounce back from disappointments.

Some words his teachers and peers used to describe Juan are caring, compassionate, role model, mature, responsible, hard-working, dependable, and diligent. These attributes will help him be successful with his future endeavors.

The Hispanic Forum is honored to help Juan as he furthers his education and begins a new chapter of his life and look forward to his future contributions to our community.

Student of the Year Nominee: *Pablo Villalobos*



Pablo Villalobos has a passion for learning and has demonstrated that he actively seeks new opportunities to understand unfamiliar concepts and learn new skills. He wants to attend a university with excellent research opportunities and resources and has been accepted at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), one of the world's most prestigious universities.

In addition to achieving a 4.33 GPA in his rigorous academic course load at College Station High School, Pablo has been instrumental in interactive applications and video game design. Before starting high school, Pablo attended a week-long camp that taught him how to make video games. This, along with spending time googling and sprinting through tutorials, Pablo and his team won the SkillsUSA National championship as a Freshman! The following fall, Pablo assembled a new team and they advanced to nationals again and won a second championship with Pablo as the team's anchor.

With these significant victories, the school recognized the interest in and importance of game design. Pablo introduced his teachers to the video game industry, the process of game design and worked with his teacher and the leaders of the LIVE Lab at Texas A&M University to help design a curriculum for a new game design course. Pablo inspired his teachers and paved the way for future students to follow in his path.

Pablo pushed himself to learn as much as possible in several different disciplines and was enrolled in all advanced level courses. He expanded his skills in the game design pipeline by enrolling in an Animation class. He also competed in other events for SkillsUSA, Academic UIL, and Robotics. He tutors other students, is a member of the National Honor Society and has received numerous UIL Programming, Science, and Math awards. He also volunteered countless hours as a College Station Soccer Coach.

Pablo's greatest attributes are his thirst for knowledge, problem-solving skills, work ethic and the ability to push himself and others to pursue excellence. These qualities are the foundation to be an influential college student and leader.

The Hispanic Forum is proud of Pablo's leadership, inquisitive nature, and the impact he has already had on others. We look forward to seeing the results of his future creativity!



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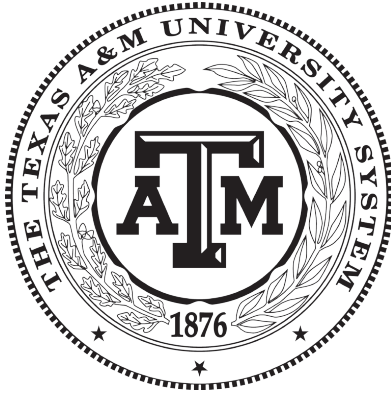
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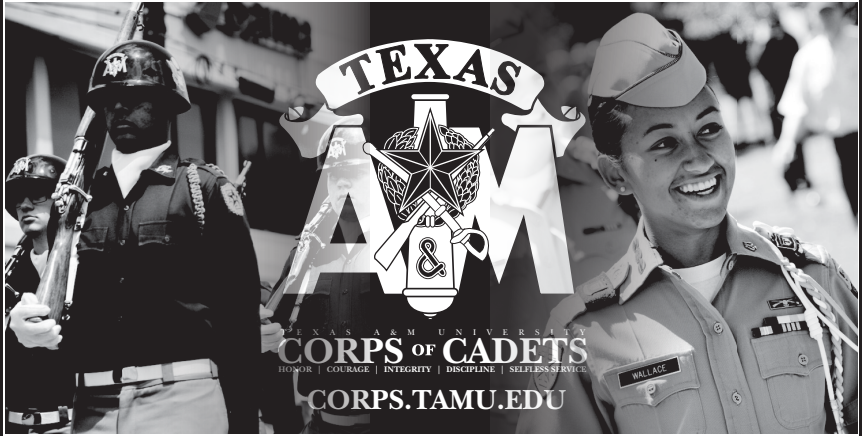
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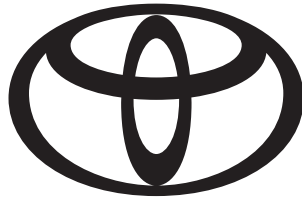


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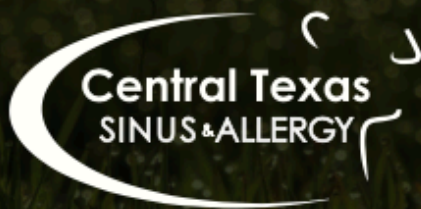
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