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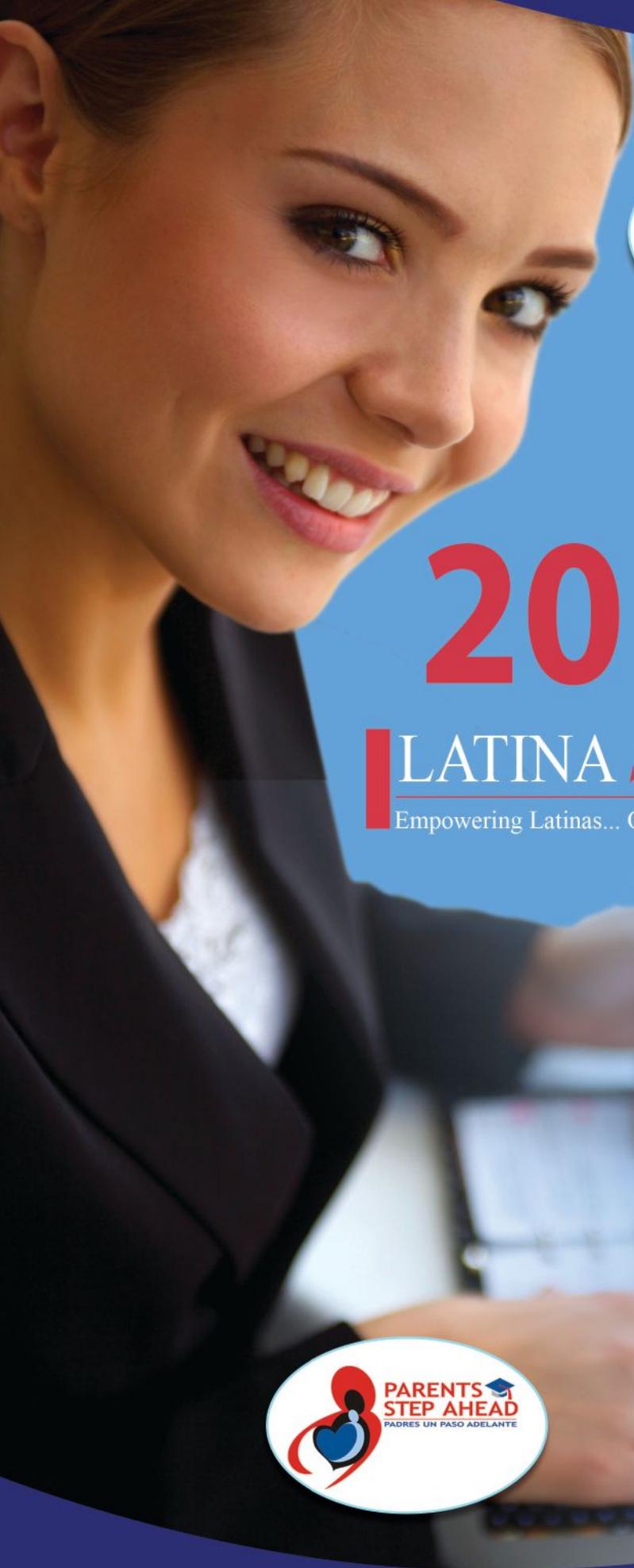
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A National Magazine for the Contemporary Hispanic Woman



Trailblazers in STEM
Latinas Leading the Charge





LATINA *Style*
Magazine

LATINA *Style* 50
Awards and Diversity Leaders Conference

2017

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LATINA *Style*®

Vol. 23, No. 1, 2017 January/February

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Is it time for you to look for a new auto? If so, identify your top needs and desires. Research your top picks online, read car reviews to see what the experts think, and then test drive some different vehicles for the right fit. Take a look at the four vehicles we selected; they represent the hot-again category of hatchbacks, still-simmering SUVs, and the increasingly-popular plug-in hybrid segment.

By Sue Mead

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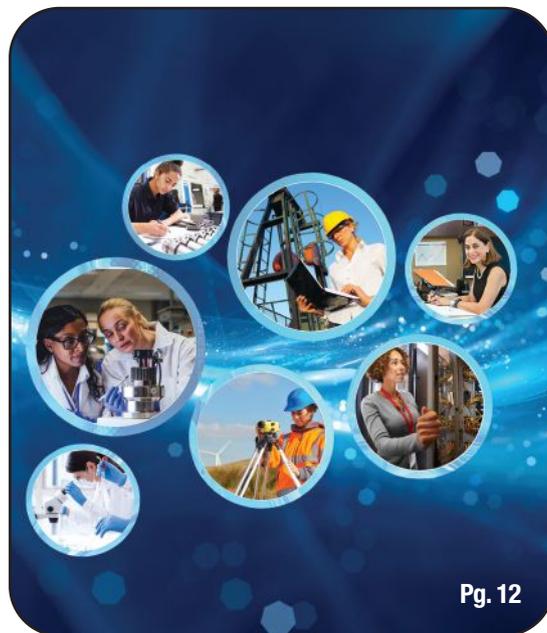
Latinas are among the fastest growing demographic in the United States. STEM, careers are among the most sought after. Meet eight Latinas who are making waves in some of the country's and world's leading companies, furthering the impact of Latinas in STEM, and paving the way for the next generation of innovative minds who will change the world.

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Carlos Soto at a *LATINA Style* Conference with former LS employee Ines Lucio.

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How times have changed. It was definitely a very different environment when we launched our magazine in 1993. It goes without saying that the whole world is experiencing a time of turmoil. Even here, in our own country, I never thought that our differences would ever threaten to tear us apart.

Today, our country is so angrily divided that it is hard to see how we can come together again. Even among our friends we begin to see a sense of “my way or the highway” kind of mentality. The fact is that we had an election, it did not turn out the way many wanted, but now “it is what it is.”

We need to learn to live and succeed in this America. In two years there will be another election, and if the country really does not want the direction things have taken, they can vote for change. That does not mean that we abrogate our responsibilities to our communities, but that we find a constructive way to challenge the issues that we do not agree with and champion the issues that we want to move forward. We are going to have to learn to listen to each other without anger and try to understand each other’s points of view. We cannot continue to live in a state of permanent confrontation. We are a country of nearly 326 million people, we can’t be expected to agree on everything and with everybody, but we must remember why our country was founded and how people from all over the world have made us the wonderful nation that we are.

At *LATINA Style* we began our year by celebrating our *LATINA Style* 50 Awards and Diversity Leaders Conference. It was our most successful conference since we began in 1998. We were honored to have Senator Catherine Cortez Masto, the first Latina to serve in the U.S. Senate join us at the Welcoming Reception. You will be able to learn all about the conference and the Senator in our next issue of the magazine.

For our Latina entrepreneurs we are commencing our *LATINA Style* Business Series in Dallas this year followed by Charlotte, Chicago and San Diego. We are delighted to welcome back our longtime partner, Nationwide Insurance, as our returning Title Sponsor for the Series. We are looking forward to a great year.

Finally, it is with great sadness and a profound sense of loss that we learned about the passing of our friend Carlos Soto. Carlos was a gentle man with a great heart who was loved by everyone who knew him. I met Carlos over 25 years ago and throughout all this time, I never heard a single person ever say a bad thing about him. He was a consummate corporate leader, a community champion, a sponsor and mentor to so many of us. Our world is a better place because he was here. We extend to his family our deepest condolences. Carlitos, we are going to miss you.

Robert E. Bard

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ANNA VALENCIA NAMED CHICAGO CITY CLERK

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel appointed Anna Valencia, a longtime public servant, as City Clerk. Valencia replaced Susana Mendoza, who took over as Illinois state comptroller after defeating Republican Leslie Geissler Munger in the November election.

“Anna has proven herself as the next generation of leadership. For parents of immigrants, in Chicago and around the country, Anna is proof the struggle and sacrifice is worth it,” said Mayor Emanuel. “She brings an energy, a focus, and a sense of passion for public service to the City Clerk’s office, and I know she will serve the people of Chicago well.”

Valencia served as the Mayor’s Director of Legislative Counsel and Government Affairs (LCGA), a key office that serves as liaison with elected officials, government agencies and community organizations at the local, state and federal levels.

“It is an absolute honor and privilege to serve the residents of the City of Chicago, and I want to thank the Mayor for again placing his trust in me,” said Valencia. “I look forward to continuing to work with Mayor Emanuel and his administration to simplify Chicagoans’ interactions with city government and build on the commonsense reforms that Comptroller Mendoza began. Just as importantly, I look forward to launching the Municipal ID program as a national model for helping vulnerable populations access City services and programs.”

Valencia began her career with the City of Chicago as an Assistant to Mayor Emanuel as a part of the Legislative Counsel and Government Affairs team. Since then, Valencia has built an impressive career as a seasoned Illinois political professional, serving as Campaign Manager for U.S. Senator Dick Durbin’s re-election campaign, Senior Advisor for Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s re-election campaign, Deputy Director of the Illinois Senate Democratic Victory Fund, a Communications Staffer for State Senate President John Cullerton, and Field Director for both Mike Quigley for Congress (IL-05) and Gary Peters for Congress (MI-09).

CONGRESSWOMAN NANETTE DIAZ BARRAGÁN, CALIFORNIA’S 44TH DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

Nanette Diaz Barragán represents California’s 44th Congressional District, which includes the cities of and communities of Carson, Compton, Lynwood, North Long Beach, Rancho Dominguez, San Pedro, South Gate, Walnut Park, Watts/Willowbrook, and Wilmington.

Rep. Barragán was born in Harbor City, California and grew up in Carson and the surrounding area. As the youngest of 11 children raised by immigrants from Mexico, she beat the odds and put herself through UCLA and USC Law School.

In 2003, Rep. Barragán served as an extern to Justice Carlos Moreno at the California Supreme Court. The next year, she served at the Los Angeles Legal Aid Foundation, a law firm for low-income people in Los Angeles.

Rep. Barragán has worked as a community advocate in Los Angeles as well as in Washington. She worked in the White House in the late 90’s and then at the NAACP – focusing on racial and social justice issues.

Rep. Barragán began her congressional career in January of 2017, where she is a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Progressive Caucus. She lives in San Pedro, CA.



Nanette Diaz Barragán.



COMED APPOINTS VERÓNICA GÓMEZ AS SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL COUNSEL

Verónica Gómez serves as ComEd’s primary legal advisor and oversees the company’s regulatory policy, strategy and rates function. She replaces Thomas S. O’Neill, who was recently appointed as the senior vice president and general counsel of Exelon. Gómez will report to Anne Pramaggiore, ComEd president & CEO.

“I am delighted to have Veronica join my senior team. She is a proven leader and exceptional thinker whose experience and knowledge in regulatory policy will provide continued focus in our strategic efforts,” said Anne Pramaggiore, president and CEO of ComEd. “Her knowledge of our company and insight into the direction we’re trying to move in as a 21st century utility will be an invaluable asset to us achieving our goals.”

Gómez previously served as the vice president and deputy general counsel for litigation at Exelon, ComEd’s parent company. In that role, Gómez was responsible for litigation cases on behalf of all Exelon companies, including ComEd. This litigation included third-party disputes and litigation in support of multi-billion dollar transactions. Prior to joining Exelon, Gómez was a litigation partner at Neal, Gerber & Eisenberg and before that at Schopf & Weiss (now Honigman Miller), where she served on the Executive Committee.

Gómez grew up in Darien, Ill., and graduated from Hinsdale South High School. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Economics with departmental honors in Political Science from Stanford University and her law degree from the University of Chicago Law School. Gómez serves on several boards including Illinois Legal Aid Online, the Chicago Bar Foundation, and Friends of Jones College Prep. She also is a Governing Member Ambassador for the Chicago Zoological Society. 



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Latinas, Start your Engines for

2017!

By Sue Mead

After another record-breaking year for new car sales in 2016, it gives car buyers something to think about this year. It means the market is healthy and that translates to more models to choose from - and even better prices in the face of increased competition for the automakers.

Is it time for you to look for a new auto? If so, identify your top needs and desires:

Is it the ability to carry your family and other precious cargo? The latest in safety and technology? A luxury-laden interior and a highly-regarded audio system? Fuel economy? A fun ride?

Next, do your homework. Research your top picks online, read car reviews to see what the experts think, and then test drive some different vehicles for the right fit. Take a look at the four vehicles we selected; they represent the hot-again category of hatchbacks, still-simmering SUVs, and the increasingly-popular plug-in hybrid segment. Now, that's something to crow about!



2017 Toyota Prius Prime

This all-new, four-seat hybrid joins the Prius family, adding an updated plug-in version with distinctive styling, a bigger battery, increased electric range and better fuel economy. It has laudable safety, comfort and convenience features.

Trims include Plus (\$27,965), Premium (\$29,665) and Advanced (\$33,965). Prime is all about "the numbers". It gets slightly better fuel economy than the Prius, with an EPA-estimated 25 miles of electric range, 640 miles of driving range (including gas-powered driving), 55/53/54 mpg city/highway/combined, after the original charge is depleted and it's running in hybrid mode. It charges on a 120-volt household outlet in under 5.5 hours and in just over two hours, with 240-volt or at most public charging stations.

Of note, home charges can be programmed through the car or a smartphone app to take advantage of off-peak electric rates. Longer than the Prius, Prius Prime has longer overhangs and "dual-wave" rear glass design that splits the rear window in half; LED taillights sit horizontally and run the width of the tailgate. A 1.8-liter four-cylinder engine combines with two electric motor-generators to produce 121 horsepower. A new 11.6-inch multimedia touchscreen has pages for info, destination/navigation, app suite and phone and integrates climate and audio.

Safety Sense P is standard with forward collision warning with pedestrian detection and automatic emergency braking; lane departure warning with steering assist; automatic high beams; and adaptive cruise control. Optional is "intelligent parking" that steers the Prime into a parallel parking space or backs it into a perpendicular spot.

For more information visit: <http://www.toyota.com/priusprime/>

2017 Chevy Cruze Hatchback

This all-new, five-door, five-passenger 2017 Chevy Cruze Hatchback sits in a compact footprint, wears mid-size dimensions and has fun ways to



reconfigure the interior; the extra door brings more utility, despite the fact that it is shorter than the sedan.

The sporty hatch is enhanced by an upgraded six-speaker audio system, with Sirius XM satellite radio plus steering-wheel-mounted audio and phone controls; daytime running lamps and foglamps; special wraparound taillamps and a rear spoiler in the back. It is powered by a 153-horsepower 1.4-liter turbocharged four-cylinder with 117 lb.-ft. of torque mated to a six-speed manual or automatic transmission, with a top fuel economy of 29 mpg city/38 highway.

A diesel version will go on sale in the Spring. Standard are Chevrolet MyLink with a 7-inch diagonal color touch-screen; a rear-vision camera; Apple CarPlay and Android Auto via the MyLink radio systems; and available 4G LTE with Wi-Fi hotspot, plus Chevrolet's Teen Driver safety system that allows parents to set controls, review driving habits and encourage safe driving.

Available features include a heated steering wheel, front and rear seats; Athens leather-appointed seating surfaces with true French seams; and halogen projector-beam headlamps with LED signature lighting. Trims are an all-black interior, black/grey or black/brown. Standard is a rear-view camera and 10 airbags, and wireless charging. A host of available advanced safety technologies help prevent, protect, and respond in the event of a collision; these include front collision alert, rear cross traffic alert, rear park assist, lane-keeping assistance, and side blind zone alerts. Starting price is \$22,115.

For more information visit: <http://www.chevrolet.com/cruze-compact-car.html>



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2017 Honda Civic Hatchback

The all-new 10th generation Honda Civic adds a sleek and stylish Euro-styled hatchback body with the practicality of a rear door. It is available in five trims -- LX, Sport, EX, EX-L Navi, plus new line-topping Sport Touring -- all bring Honda's appealing combination of sporty design, fun-to-drive performance, thrifty fuel economy, interior utility, safety, and premium features.

The expressive front hood shape resembles the sedan, but the hatchback is shorter; a smaller rear overhang makes the rear wheels look closer to the back end. Black honeycomb inserts adorn the front and rear bumpers.

A turbocharged 1.5-liter 4-cylinder four-engine gets 174 or 180 horsepower, depending on the trim. Transmissions include a sporty CVT or a six-speed manual; Sport Touring CVTs get steering-wheel-mounted shift paddles. Top EPA fuel economy is rated at 31 mpg city/40 mpg highway/ and 34 mpg. Inside is class-leading volume and cargo capacity. White ambient lighting and multi-angle rearview camera are standard. LX and Sport trim levels have keyed ignitions; all others have push-button and, when equipped with CVT, remote start.

Notable are Honda Display Audio with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto; heated seats; power driver and front-passenger seats; remote engine start; and other premium features. Standard on Sport Touring models is the comprehensive Honda Sensing tech package to add collision mitigation braking, forward collision warning, lane-keeping assist, road departure mitigation, lane departure warning, and adaptive cruise control.

Pricing starts at \$19,700 for the LX with six-speed manual transmission, and tops out at \$25,300 for the EX-L Navi.

For more information visit: <http://shop.honda.com/civic-hatchback.aspx?Group=civics>

2017 Kia Sportage

Drawing inspiration from modern fighter jets, the fourth-generation Kia Sportage has been redesigned with a striking, contemporary style that brings premium materials, a more robust suspension, performance-tuned engines, and advanced convenience, driver assistance, and safety technologies.

The compact SUV gets all new body panels with juxtaposing smooth curves that meld with sharp creases. Its chrome trim, sloping roofline, sharply raked rear window, longer and more aerodynamic spoiler, and bolder wheel arches make it look more

dynamic and aggressive. The top-of-the-line SX Turbo adds new "ice cube" LED fog lamps, HID headlamps, LED tail lights, satin exterior trim, metal-look skid plates, and 19-inch alloy wheels. It's powered by a 181-horsepower, 2.4-liter four-cylinder with 175 lb.-ft. of torque or an optional turbocharged 2.0-liter that boasts 247/ 260; both are matched to a six-speed automatic transmission, with Normal, Eco, and Sport modes.

A choice of front-wheel- or all-wheel-drive brings inclement weather-handling confidence; it will tow up to 2000 pounds and has a top fuel economy rating of up to 22 mpg city/ 29 highway/ 25 combined. Inside is less wind noise, high-quality soft-touch materials, and impressive comfort and convenience features, like three-level heated and ventilated front seats, dual-zone climate, leather upholstery.

Connectivity technology includes Bluetooth; streaming audio, SiriusXM satellite radio, and rear-camera display. Kia's third-gen UVO3 telematics and infotainment system offers Android Auto, Apple CarPlay, up to 8 GB of music storage, and access to Pandora, though the touch screen. A dual-level cargo floor and widened luggage area bring increased cargo capacity. Sportage starts at \$23,200.

For more information visit:
<http://www.kia.com/us/en/vehicle/sportage/2017> 

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Trailblazers in STEM

Latinas Leading the Charge

By Christine Bolaños

Latinas are among the fastest growing demographic in the United States. Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics (STEM) careers are among the most sought after. It makes sense, then, that more and more Latinas are pursuing STEM fields and joining the ranks of scientists, technicians, engineers, professors, financial advisors, business analysts, researchers, program officers, data strategy consultants and more. Below are the stories of eight Latinas who are making waves in some of the country's and world's leading companies, furthering the impact of Latinas in STEM, and paving the way for the next generation of innovative minds who will change the world.



Laura Dee

Senior Research Scientist
Global Analytical Science Department
Colgate-Palmolive

Dominican Republic native Laura Dee immigrated to New Jersey with her family when she was 11 years old. She did not know any English and attended a school with few Latinos so she focused on her love of the universal language of math.

When Dee reached high school age, her family moved to the ethnically diverse town of Union City, but by then she had mastered the English language. She says her science teachers noticed her gift in math and pushed her to take more advanced science classes.

In senior year, her Advanced Placement biology teacher organized a field trip to Stevens Institute of Technology in the nearby town of Hoboken to see a tech talk about genetics and DNA analysis.

"I fell in love with the topic and I fell in love with the school," Dee says. "I said that same day, 'This is where I'm going to go, this is what I want to study and I want to know how to get involved in this genetics and DNA world.'"

Today, Dee is a Senior Research Scientist at Colgate-Palmolive in the Global Analytical Science Department. Through her 15 years at the company, she has become a gas chromatography and low-resolution nuclear magnetic resonance expert.

In her position, she makes an impact by ensuring the products the company puts into the market are what the company says they are, contain the ingredients the company says the products contain and are safe for consumers. The department also ensures all guidelines are followed and the integrity of products put on the market are "good and safe."



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She wrote numerous standard operating procedures for active ingredient analysis and training to Colgate personnel around the world.

Dee leads the Hispanic Action Network, or HAN, the local Latino business group at Colgate-Palmolive. HAN celebrates diversity by sharing Latino culture, offering a professional development program geared toward Latinos advancing at the company and taking part in community service such as hosting high school tours at the company's technology center with the purpose of attracting students to STEM fields.

This aligns with her commitment to Latins in STEM.

"Women make up only about 24 percent of people in STEM and a very small percentage of that are Latinas," Dee explains. "There is a lot of work to be done but I think we're moving toward closing that gap by going back to communities and encouraging kids to not be afraid of math and science."

Andrea Ximena Cortés Beltrán
Metrology and Test Asset Management
(MATES)
Industrial Engineer
The Boeing Company



Andrea Ximena
Cortés Beltrán

“ Supporting flight tests for the company I work for in a Hispanic country, and representing women in STEM at panels and special events are a few examples of how my Hispanic roots have influenced the person I am today. ”

– Andrea Ximena Cortés Beltrán

Andrea Ximena Cortés Beltrán says her bilingualism, strong work ethic and loyalty to her Hispanic roots have opened doors to experiences she could have never imagined. The Austin, Texas born, and Guadalajara, Mexico, raised, industrial engineer always felt a pull to math which was like learning a new language. Career path tests in high school suggested she study a career in STEM, and despite dreaming of following in her father's footsteps as a teacher, she realized her destiny lied elsewhere.

"Supporting flight tests for the company I work for in a Hispanic country, and representing women in STEM at panels and special events are a few examples of how my Hispanic roots have influenced the person I am today," she shares.

Cortés Beltrán earned her Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering from Universidad del Valle de Atemajac (UNIVA) in Guadalajara. After graduation, she worked for a mechanical-electrical company and taught English. After a year, she moved to Seattle, Washington.

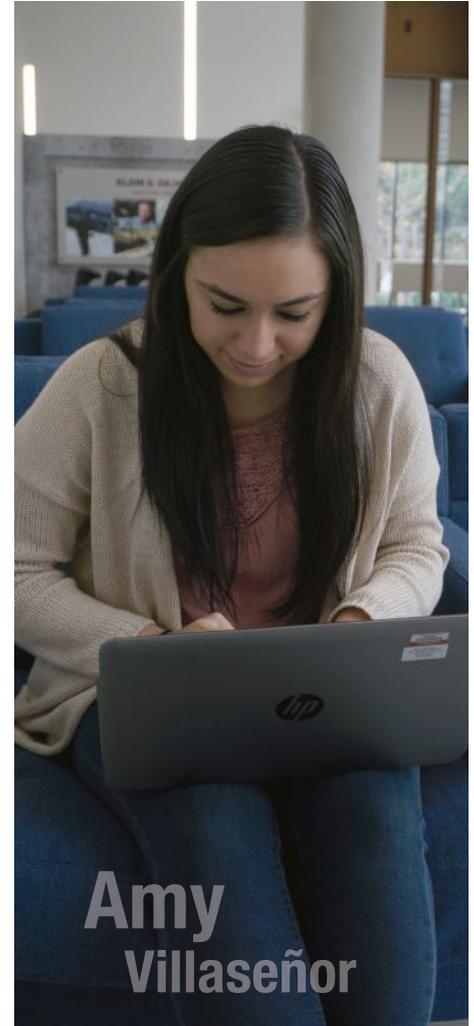
She went on to earn her master's degree in industrial engineering in 2012 from the University of Washington. As an Executive Development Institute alumna, Cortés Beltrán sat as co-chair for the 2014 and 2015 Hispanic classes.

Her passion for achieving her goals and helping her community is evidenced in all she does.

As Industrial Engineer supporting the metrology organization at The Boeing Company, Cortés Beltrán works on special projects at an enterprise level to improve processes and reduce costs. She leads most of the projects but is also a co-lead or collaborator on some.

"Every day is different," she explains, "I have to make time to work in the eight to ten projects I support every day so time management, leadership and organization skills are key!"

She considers her team's greatest accomplishment and impact within the company to be solving problems that lead



Amy
Villaseñor

to cost savings. For example, safety is a number one priority at Boeing, but there were concerns about metrology technicians having to carry more than 300 pounds of equipment by hand.

Cortés Beltrán led a team to identify the solution by going through a lean process that would lighten the load for the technicians, as well as save time. A process that would take technicians one-and-a-half days now takes only two hours. Cortés Beltrán and her team earned a safety and quality award at the enterprise level for their problem-solving innovation.

She gives back to the community as president of the Institute of Industrial and System Engineers of the professional chapter in the Puget Sound area. The group supports STEM events and works closely with the University of Washington students to improve their professional skills.

Cortés Beltrán also supports the activities of Society of Women Engineers and Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers.

“If you are considering ‘giving back to the community,’ keep in mind inspiring not only communities in the USA,” she says, “Think about reaching out to younger generations in Latin America that have lots of potential and need just a little bit of your time to get inspired.”

Amy Villaseñor
Engineer
Modern Software Division
Qualcomm Technology

To say Amy Villaseñor’s pride in her roots is profound is an understatement. Her philosophy as a professional and human being directly connect to her Latina background and passion for helping others reach their dreams and potential.

Villaseñor’s family is originally from Mexico and she was born in Thousand Oaks, California. The family moved to Atlanta, Georgia when she was six and she remained there until she moved to San Diego, California to take a job as software engineer at Qualcomm Technologies after college.

Besides working a demanding job, Villaseñor pulls triple duty through her volunteerism and her pursuit of a Master’s in Computer Science through Georgia Tech’s online program. Through it all, Villaseñor has never forgotten where she came from.

“My Hispanic roots, my parents and my family impacted me in the sense they taught me how to get what I want,” she says. “That if I want something I have to work for it.”

While she may have come from a low-income background and had less resources starting off to reach her dreams, Villaseñor never viewed her reality as obstacles. Instead, she used her background as an asset.

A typical day as software engineer in the modern software division consists of coding, reading through technical specifications and code reviews with the team.

“Our work gets to impact a large amount of the population who uses a cell phone,” Villaseñor explains. “I work on the SIM card team, where we are responsible for working on the software that allows that phone to utilize the SIM card’s data allowing for connectivity.”

To Villaseñor, having the opportunity to work on cutting edge technology is her greatest professional accomplishment thus far.

Villaseñor sits on the board of two employee networks including one

dedicated to spreading awareness of Latino culture and outreach in the Latino community. She recently became a TECHNOchica as part of the National Center for Women in Information Technology’s TECHNOchicas program in partnership with Televisa Foundation.

She is also involved with Latina Giving Circle where she was part of the first grant-making committee. Grant recipients included an organization dedicated to providing low-income Latinos with resources for higher education and the other provides computer literacy classes to Latina-working janitors.

Villaseñor fondly remembers sitting at a round-table with the committee and the recipients. Committee members were all in their 20s. She said they were in tears when the women said they were living proof their sacrifices were worth it.

Teresa Estrada
Senior Applications Engineer
Canon Nanotechnology, Inc.



Teresa Estrada grew up in a predominantly Hispanic South Texas town. When she moved hours away to study engineering at Texas A&M University in College Station she experienced culture shock.

“I discovered the best way to keep myself from feeling homesick was to get involved and stay busy with organizations on campus,” Estrada says.

She considers herself a hands-on person, who always wanted to learn how and why things worked the way they did. Her family instilled in her the value of hard work and dedication. Her parents’ background as educators taught her to ask questions and utilize resources.

“*My Hispanic roots, my parents and my family impacted me in the sense they taught me how to get what I want, that if I want something I have to work for it.*”

– Amy Villaseñor

Drawn to the field, Estrada participated in a summer engineering program to prepare potential engineering students for the rigors of university study.

“We would ride a bus for maybe eight or six weeks out of the summer to Laredo which was an hour away, and take classes at the university,” she shares. “That’s where we did a lot of the engineering type classes. I knew choosing the right major was going to be the right thing for me.”

Looking back, she is surprised that as a 15-year-old she was content spending her summers this way but she views it as an investment.

Adapting to a university setting vastly different from the town she grew up in equipped her with the tools necessary to thrive in a field with few women and even fewer Latinas.

“I always knew who I was competing against and made sure I was taken seriously,” she shares. “I was mindful of the way I dressed, when someone asked me a question I was prepared to answer it and it all made me work harder.”

She also applied that mindset to the technical aspect of her field.

“When starting a career in the semiconductor field some engineers are more process-oriented and some are more equipment-oriented,” she explains. “I became a process engineer but I made sure I spent extra time learning and understanding how the equipment and machines worked.”

This formed her into an able process engineer. Today, she is a Senior Applications Engineer at Canon Nanotechnology, Inc., where she focuses on defect reduction to prepare the technology for high-volume manufacturing. She helps develop innovative ideas to advance nano-imprint lithography technology.

Estrada is a senior experience level in her specialty and the company sends her overseas to countries such as Japan to work with customers and offer her expertise to reduce defectivity related to the nano-imprinting process.

Jane Larriva Rojas
Senior Vice President-Financial Advisor
Morgan Stanley Wealth Management

When Jane Larriva Rojas graduated with her Master in Business Administration degree in 1982 she did not know what the future held in store. She was 25 years old, recently married and just starting her career.



“I thought, ‘Here I am. The world is waiting for me,’” she recalls. “I had all the confidence in the world.”

But in retrospect, Rojas realizes there weren’t people like her in her profession back then. She was Latina, bi-cultural and bi-lingual, all assets that made her stand out in the workplace.

“In the early 1980s it was a very male-oriented, good old white boy male profession,” she remembers.

Suddenly, she was scared and alone. But her male boss and other seasoned professionals took her under their wing.

“But there were also some people who were awful and tried very hard to get me out,” Rojas shares.

Despite her MBA, Rojas’ first job was as an assistant and backup receptionist. One day, she suggested to the financial advisor he might want to answer his phone as it was his largest client on the phone, but instead of offering his gratitude he yelled at her for daring to use her voice.

“You are only a secretary and you will always be only a secretary, so don’t ever tell me what to do,” she recalls him shouting.

That was the determining factor that inspired her to pursue bigger and better things.

Today, Rojas is Senior Vice President-Financial Advisor at Morgan Stanley

Wealth Management in Tucson, Arizona. Rojas has numerous accolades including the 2016 Investment News Top 20 Women to Watch and Morgan Stanley’s 2016 MAKERS class.

She is on the advisory board of The Norton School of Family and Consumer Sciences at the University of Arizona and has spent nearly 11 years serving as president of the Association of Latino Professional for America Tucson Professional Chapter.

Rojas served as chair of the National Diversity Council for Morgan Stanley Wealth Management for three years.

“I think of myself as a local kid; nothing special and nothing outstanding,” she says. She has used her skills and background to bring Wall Street to Main Street and help high net worth clients, their families and businesses make sound financial decisions.

“I would like to say if I can do it then you can do it.”

Mariana Preciado
Program Officer
Measurement, Learning, and Evaluation
team in K-12 Education Strategy
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Growing up in El Paso, Texas, a majority Latino community, Mariana Preciado was used to everyone around her sharing similar appearances, family lives and experiences. But when she went to college she was in culture shock. As a successful professional in STEM, she realizes there are young women who may have similar experiences when they move away from home so she mentors women, particularly those of color.

Today, Preciado is Program Officer at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on the Measurement, Learning, and Evaluation team in the K-12 Education Strategy. She and the rest of the team help the K-12 team “measure progress against its goals, evaluate its hypothesis using rigorous evidence, and incorporate learnings from the measurement and evaluation results to improve the strategy over time.”

Preciado feels immense pride and responsibility as part of the foundation which gives money to organizations that are trying to make a positive difference in the world. Within her team, she is proud of “the collection of tools and training she has been a part of to make it easier for staff to measure impact.”

the world. Within her team, she is proud of “the collection of tools and training she has been a part of to make it easier for staff to measure impact.”

Preciado was founding director of Research & Evaluation at CollegeSpring, a college access nonprofit serving underrepresented students in Southern California, the Bay Area and New York.

CollegeSpring’s data systems were named best-in-class by IdealWare and the National College Access Network. Preciado also provided consultation services to National College Access Network, the Chase Foundation, the Microenterprise Program at Pepperdine University and the Office of Family Assistance Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education program.

Preciado’s pull to furthering quality education may be hereditary as she is a daughter of an elementary school teacher who instilled in her a love of learning and respect for the teaching profession.

Preciado began making her mark before even entering the workplace. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Yale University, where she was a Gates



Dr. Krystel Castillo
GreenStar Endowed Assistant Professor
in Mechanical Engineering
University of Texas at San Antonio

As GreenStar Endowed Assistant Professor in Mechanical Engineering at University of Texas at San Antonio, every day is different and presents a new challenge for Dr. Krystel Castillo.

“I love my job because it offers the flexibility to advance my research, and keep up with cutting-edge technologies in emerging energy field and development in the new green economy,” she explains. “I love the interaction with my students and am happy to see them succeed.”

As a small-town girl, Dr. Castillo quickly learned persistence is the key to achieving one’s dreams.

“Becoming the first Ph.D. in my entire family was my dream and I achieved it by overcoming unintentional stereotypical comments,” she says. “You have to believe that there is no ceiling and strive to excel in every aspect of your professional life. ‘Continue to move onward!’ has become my motto.”

She knew from a very young age where her future would take her.

“When asked, ‘What do you want to be when you grow up?’ I would immediately answer: an engineer,” Dr. Castillo recalls. “However, during my middle school years, I faced unintentional stereotypical comments that made me think about other career opportunities.”

The support from her parents and her exposure to trailblazers in STEM helped her to carry on. One trailblazer who stood



Millennium Scholar, and her Ph. D. in Social Psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles where she was funded by the National Science Foundation and focused on quantitative methods and statistical analysis.

“When more Latinas are involved in STEM they can ensure it reflects the needs and strengths of Latinas and the needs of their communities,” Preciado shares. “Latinas who enter STEM can help apply it in new ways. There is a big need for really smart people in STEM who have not only an interest in science and technology, but to important social issues.”

“When more Latinas are involved in STEM they can ensure it reflects the needs and strengths of Latinas and the needs of their communities, latinas who enter STEM can help apply it in new ways. There is a big need for really smart people in STEM who have not only an interest in science and technology, but to important social issues.”

– Mariana Preciado

out was a dean of the college of engineering who visited her high school class.

“By meeting a successful female leader in an engineering and technology-heavy field, I decided I wanted to become a professor and researcher,” she says. “Since then, I earned two doctorates in engineering at the age of 27.”

Once at UTSA, she found great mentors who inspired her to advance her research.

“This inspiration allowed me to establish a strong research group, secure externally-funded grants and become the recipient of the GreenStar Endowed Professorship in Energy,” Dr. Castillo shares. “I strongly believe that finding a champion is essential for your success and one role model can change the course of a life because if she made it, you can make it too! I feel that many Latina girls are curious and interested in STEM but sometimes are not paired with a role model that exemplify the STEM career path.”

Dr. Castillo puts her beliefs into practice by recruiting students who are underrepresented in STEM fields for her research team.

“I aim to attract, recruit and provide superior mentorship for students under my direction, including female and Hispanic students,” she says.

Kathya Chiluiza
Supply Chain Business Analyst
General Mills

Originally from Ecuador, Kathya Chiluiza and her family moved to New York City when she was about two years old. Her parents didn't know any English



but worked hard to keep food on the table and find greater opportunities for their children.

“As I continue to move forward I want to take advantage of the opportunities I have so their efforts don't go in vain,” Chiluiza explains.

A graduate from Cornell University with a Bachelor's of Science in Operations Research & Industrial Engineering and a Master's of Engineering in Engineering Management, Chiluiza is Supply Chain Analyst for General Mills where she works

with manufacturing plants and distribution centers on warehousing process improvement to better material flow. She uses her keen problem-solving and communication skills, cross-functional collaboration and technical knowledge to deliver business results.

Her path to STEM began at an early age when she first developed an interest in math and science. Her skills in these areas, coupled with the values she learned at St. Catharine Academy, an all-girls private high school in the Bronx, prepared her for a bright future.

“St. Catharine Academy really empowered us as women that we could do and be whatever we wanted to be,” Chiluiza explains. “I wasn't limited.”

That mindset led her to find out more about engineering and eventually break down barriers in her higher education and profession.

Chiluiza also keeps busy through her involvement with community service and outreach organizations, including as consultant to Partners in Food Solutions, a nonprofit that connects the business expertise of volunteer General Mills employees with small and growing food companies in the developing world. She sits on the executive board of the Cornell Latino Alumni Association where she helps promote the needs and interests of Latino students and alumni through networking, recruitment and retention strategies.

She is a volunteer audiobook reader for Learning Ally, an organization providing blind, visually impaired and dyslexic students tools essential to academic success. Chiluiza is also member of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers and the Gates Millennium Scholars Alumni Association.

“I've been involved in community service since elementary school; working with various organizations, mainly with those that support education,” Chiluiza explains. “They offer others an opportunity to succeed and sometimes an opportunity is all one person needs in order to be able to move forward and be successful.”

Want to comment or have any questions on this article? Email us at info@latinastyle.com

“*I've been involved in community service since elementary school; working with various organizations, mainly with those that support education, they offer others an opportunity to succeed and sometimes an opportunity is all one person needs in order to be able to move forward and be successful.*”

– Kathya Chiluiza



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Success in Human Resources

Q&A with Christine Bastian, Vice President of Human Resources for Engineering, Cisco

By Gloria Romano-Barrera

LS: What motivated or inspired you to pursue a career in HR?

CB: In my family, the value of education and hard work was instilled in all of us, and I carried that with me as a teenager working for a family farming operation. I learned about payroll responsibilities and saw firsthand how the discipline of risk management, workers' compensation and human resources were core to the farming business. I was even more fortunate that they saw my potential and asked me to help build their training, health, and safety practices, applying my Spanish writing and speaking skills. My learnings from that experience continued to serve me well, first at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and later when I transitioned from the agriculture industry to high tech. I have had an incredible path, evolving my generalist HR capabilities to become a more strategic HR Partner. While HR continues to evolve, the core focus is on people. This is my passion and why I chose the path of HR. What drives me every day is the opportunity to have significant impact in helping individuals realize their own potential.

LS: Did you overcome any obstacles or barriers as a result of being a woman or Latina? If so, what were they, and how did you overcome them?

CB: I think there are always going to be times along our journey where we experience self-doubt, and sometimes feel like we are a victim of circumstances. I was very fortunate to have mentors who encouraged me to achieve my dreams and goals, gave me constructive feedback and insight, and told me how important it was to push myself out of my comfort zone and be OK with change. By mentoring others I can share my own learnings and inspire others. I am a strong believer in taking risks and being willing to

Christine Bastian, Vice President of Human Resources for Engineering at Cisco, is a visionary leader with more than 20 years of experience. Bastian leads HR for the 28,000-person Engineering Organization, supporting Senior Vice President David Goeckeler. Responsible for all HR business consulting, partnering and service delivery for the function, Bastian is known for her expertise in organizational design, leadership development, consulting, and for driving high performance in teams across large organizations. She brings strong thought leadership and experience to transformational business engagements across numerous technologies. In addition to her role, Bastian is the Executive Sponsor for the Connected Women Employee Resource Organization and Co-Executive, Cisco Sponsor for the Grace Hopper Conference. Bastian provides unique insights as well as valuable advice that comes only from experience.

put yourself out there, regardless of your upbringing or background. Find your own mentors and ask questions. If you choose to learn from your experiences and use them to lift and teach, a barrier is never a disadvantage unless you allow it to be.

LS: What attracts candidates to the culture at Cisco?

CB: If you want to be challenged, if you want to think out of the box, if you want to have impact, Cisco provides that culture. When I meet candidates, I ask them if they have the desire to go outside of their comfort zone, to learn, explore and try new things, and to influence and create a following. These are key characteristics in this dynamic world we all live and work in today. At our core is Our People Deal, which is reflected through Cisco's belief that innovation and changing the world through what we do with technology is only accomplished through our people. We drive outcomes and solutions through teams— where people collaborate to get things done. With so much change, we need to not only do the hard work and have the desire to win, but we also want to innovate, every day and everywhere. In HR, we are helping drive that change by breaking,

innovating and reinventing ourselves in new ways.

LS: What advice would you give to anyone seeking opportunities at Cisco?

CB: What I appreciate so much about Cisco is our commitment to inclusion and collaboration. Every voice is heard and every perspective is important. Convey your passions: for technology, for serving the greater good, and having the willingness to be agile while bringing your best self. Always be open to constant learning, to sharing both positive and negative experiences, and to reinventing yourself. Most of all, while you are working hard, always remember to have fun too. Your journey is your journey. **L**

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Atlanta

By Tania G. Davila

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LATINA Style, Inc., hosted the 18th Annual LATINA Style Business Series tour on Thursday, October 20, 2016, in Atlanta, GA, at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis hotel located at 265 Peachtree Center Ave. Marking its 124th stop, the award-winning program for Latina entrepreneurs kicked-off with welcoming remarks by Mistress of ceremonies, entrepreneur, and Miss Georgia 2016, Thalia Contreras. She enthusiastically introduced and welcomed Maria Woods, senior consultant, personal and commercial field operations of Nationwide on stage to provide opening remarks. In addition, Angela Morris, senior vice president, diversity and inclusion, and national partnerships at Bank of America was also welcomed to the stage.

The business series workshops focus on solving some of the most critical business challenges faced by Latina entrepreneurs as they start their business or plan for expansion. Participating in the *Accessing Capital: Building Strong Businesses* workshop sponsored by Bank of America was Al Moreno, senior vice president, market sales manager at Bank of America. Panelists included: Dean Bird, senior vice president, small business banking manager, Bank of America; Liccette Shumake, senior stakeholder liaison, communication stakeholder outreach, IRS SB/SE; Nakia Melecio, chairman of SCORE Atlanta Chapter.

“Continue to keep re-branding, innovating, and pursuing business excellence because this will lead to sustainable and healthy business growth.” shared Melecio. As founder of NKM Consulting Group, LLC, Melecio is dedicated to organizational development, leadership, human capital and executive coaching.

“Obtaining financing to start and operate a business is an important, yet very misunderstood process,” said Terri Denison, Georgia District Director of U.S. Small Business Administration. “The Access to Capital panel was a great opportunity to educate the audience on how commercial lending really works and about



(L-R): Dean Bird, SVP – Small Business Banking Manager, Bank of America; Terri Denison, District Director, Atlanta, U.S. Small Business Administration; Nakia Melecio, Chairman, SCORE Atlanta Chapter; Liccette Shumake, Sr. Stakeholder Liaison, IRS SB/SE; and Al Moreno, SVP, Market Sales Manager, Bank of America.



Mistress of Ceremonies Thalia Contreras, Miss Georgia 2016, host, actress, entrepreneur.



(L-R): Rocio D. Woody, NCAC-II, MAC, CCS, LCSW, president and CEO, The Road to Recovery, Inc.; Janyra Perez Blanco, Partner, Operations, Fulcro Insurance; Mercedes Guzman, Owner, Expert Coach, Inner Child; and Lisa Guadalupe Clarke, President, ALPFA Atlanta Chapter.



Keynote speaker Alba Colon, Chevrolet Racing Program Manager, NASCAR Sprint Cup Series; and Robert E. Bard, president and CEO, LATINA Style, Inc.

the free resources available to prepare and assist borrowers.”

The *Enhancing Women Empowerment through Technology & Social Media* panel was moderated by Emmy award-winner, news anchor, director and social entrepreneur, Judith Martinez. Martinez is the managing partner and co-founder of YoSoyMujer and ExpoMujer. Panelists included: Andrea Rivera, CEO & founder of H3Media; Carmen Luisa Coya, president of Effective Media, and Havi Goffan, president of Target Latino.

The *Protecting Your Business and Planning for the Future* panel was conducted by Janyra Perez Blanco, partner, operations, Fulcro Insurance. Speakers included: Roland Wilson, retirement specialist, Nationwide; Claudia Rosales, associate agent, Gabriel Gomez Agency; and Gabe Gomez, principal, agent owner, Gabriel Gomez Agency.

The flagship panel, *LATINA Style Entrepreneurs Roundtable* was presented by Lisa Guadalupe Clarke, president of ALPFA Atlanta chapter. Panelists included: Mercedes Guzman, owner, expert coach of Inner Child. Guzman is an inspirational speaker, coach and published author. Janyra Perez Blanco, partner in charge of operations at Fulcro Insurance agency, and Rocio D. Woody, a licensed master social worker and a National Certified Addictions counselor. She is the founder and president of The Road to Recovery, Inc. based in Atlanta, Georgia.

During the luncheon, speaking to nearly 200 attendees, president & CEO, LATINA Style, Inc., Robert E. Bard, interviewed Alba Colon, Chevrolet racing program manager for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series. As one of today's

most powerful women in sports and racing, Colon shared her business experiences and how education helped her succeed and the lessons learned along the way. Mariela Romero, director, and On-Air Talent for Univision 34 Atlanta, served as mistress of ceremonies.

LATINA Style recognized Mercedes Guzman with the “Entrepreneur of the Year” award for Atlanta.

“One of the desires of a human being is to feel appreciated,” she shared. “I believe LATINA Style, amazingly embodies the concept of helping Latinas to feel empower to keep going, inspiring our younger generation to feel & to belong. Receiving this special recognition as the Entrepreneur of the Year for Atlanta has truly transform my life.” In addition, LATINA Style honored Rocio

Woody with the “Advocate of the Year” award. This coveted award is presented to individuals who are champions of leadership and community service.

“I am honored to be among such a distinguished group of people,” said Woody. “As I reflect on the meaning of this distinction, I realize this is a great opportunity to inspire and encourage Latinas, immigrant women, who like me came to United States thinking that the American dream had no gender and no race. That we could do it because we simply can, because we are women and because we are Latinas. We are not one woman. We are every woman. We are who they will follow, so we have a responsibility to them to lead the way.”

Want to comment or have any questions on this article? Email us at info@latinastyle.com



(L-R): Judith Martinez, Managing Partner, co-founder, YoSoyM, LLC / ExpoMujer; Andrea Rivera, CEO & founder, H3Media; Carmen L. Coya, president, Effective Media; and Havi Goffan, president, Target Latino, keynote speaker, Online Marketing & Hispanic Culture.

Atlanta



A Growing Latina Entrepreneur Base

By Christine Bolaños

Georgia, fondly called the ‘Peach State,’ is home to much more than the delicious, plump fruit. It boasts a growing number of Latina entrepreneurs who have left the traditional corporate environment in favor of self-owned businesses, helping grow their economy and employ others, while doing so. From restaurants to retail to law practices and medical clinics to public relations and trucking companies, there is a Latina business owner in virtually every industry, most prominently in the capitol city of Atlanta.



Terri L. Denison

District Director of the U.S. Small Business Administration Georgia District Office.

“I see this being a continued trend,” says Terri L. Denison, District Director of the U.S. Small Business Administration Georgia District Office. “But what’s also interesting is the variety in terms of the types of businesses. You have your traditional businesses, personal care-related business, childcare, etc., but what I also see is the emergence of non-traditional businesses such as construction, engineering, trucking, scientific and technical.”

From 2008 to 2016, thus far, the Georgia-based SBA office has offered 100 loans worth \$27.1 million to Latina-owned businesses. This means a Latina owns at least a 50 percent share of the firm.

“They’re pursuing it for more control over their own destiny, wealth for themselves, and to benefit their communities,” she

believes. “Business ownership is a way to do what would not be as readily available working for someone else.”

She advises entrepreneurs to have a business plan in place, research how their market would be expected to respond to their type of business and to be bold in marketing and promoting their business.

“We are to stay, to grow and to show the way to future generations,” shares Rocio D. Woody, a licensed psychotherapist, and president and CEO of The Road to Recovery, Inc.

The *LATINA Style* Advocate of the Year began her practice to fill a void.

“There were hardly any mental health professional services who were truly bicultural and bilingual,” Woody explains. “The legal and judicial community took notice of what I did and I received their support.”



Rocio Woody

President & CEO, The Road to Recovery, Inc.

Woody remains one of the few Latinas in her field she knows.

“...The ones I know have most, nearly every one of them, come after me,” Woody says, “except for the few experts from Florida, Texas and California who are years ahead of us in Georgia in terms of nurturing professionals in our field.”



Andrea Rivera

CEO & Founder H3Media.

Andrea Rivera, CEO and founder H3Media, believes the rise in Latina entrepreneurs produces a domino effect, wherein other women follow suit.

“They’re a voice for Latina business women in the economy and the public eye,” she says.

Rivera pursued entrepreneurship after she realized that the outlook in corporate America had changed and there was no longer company loyalty.

“The only way to ensure stability for myself, economic growth for my family and development and leadership, was to venture out on my own and call my own shots,” she explains.

Her media company is heading to four years, but after 20 years in the business, and a self-defined pioneer in social media science, it is a prime example of a success story.

“I think the biggest hurdle to making the transition from an employee to business owner is really overcoming the fear of not being successful,” she shares. “You just have to get out there and do it.”



Carmen L. Coya

President, Effective Media.

Carmen L. Coya, president of Effective Media, believes Latinas are taking Atlanta by storm.

To her knowledge, her colleague has the first Latina-owned-and-operated print firm in Atlanta, while she runs the first Latina-owned-and-operated public relations firm.

“More and more Latinas are taking their financial wealth and financial savvy to the next level,” Coya says. “I think it’s a phenomenal opportunity because in a lot of ways it’s uncharted territory.”

She believes sharp business acumen coupled with Latinas’ focus on customer service is a recipe for success. Coya says Latinas are destined for success because resilience is in their DNA.

“The fact that most of us come from immigrant families, we don’t look at it as an obstacle, but motivation to do even better,” she shares.

After well over 10 years in the business, Coya has given other women the chance to be entrepreneurs by working for her and then moving on to pursue their own paths.

“I think it’s important that we understand we can impact the world,” she says, “no matter how small we think we are.”



Mercedes Guzman

Speaker, coach and author.

Latina-owned businesses are not only powerful but creative, says Mercedes Guzman, speaker, coach and author. Originally from El Salvador, Guzman created the Inner Child Love Process, or ICLP, a powerful technique that teaches people to love themselves unconditionally.

She’s been in the business since 2004 but has had a formal company, Inner Child Wellness, since 2014.

Guzman believes the most critical step toward success is for the individual, particularly Latinas, to believe whole-heartedly that they deserve the best.

“Don’t compromise,” she advises. “You are enough to be a successful woman. You are enough to be a winner. Many times, we don’t think we’re enough to have a successful company but you have to discover your talents, connect with yourself, love yourself, and the rest will take place.”



Want to comment or have any questions on this article? Email us at info@latinastyle.com



Veronica Kuyoth, Underwriting Territory Manager, Excess & Surplus, Nationwide.



Platinum sponsor remarks by Claudia Bodan, Business Banking Group, Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

LATINA *Style* **Business Series**

Los Angeles

By Tania G. Davila
Photos by Bill Rich Photography

Los Angeles, California became the 125th city to host the 18th Annual LATINA *Style* Business Series tour on November 16th, 2016. The day kicked-off with welcoming remarks by Rose Ann Djelmane, senior vice president, Business, Development Manager, Neighborhood Lending Enterprise HOLA Business Strategy, Bank of America; Veronica Kuyoth, Underwriting Territory manager - Excess & Surplus, Nationwide, and Reyna Hernandez, president of HPR A Los Angeles, Owner, Creative Branding Co., who served as Mistress of Ceremonies.

Attendees networked and learned about business ownership. The *Accessing Capital: Building Strong Businesses* panel was moderated by Ruth Zeronian Edwards, senior vice president, Credit Risk Executive, Global Commercial Banking, Bank of America. Panelists included: Anna Movsesyan Sonati, senior vice president, Credit Products Manager, Bank of America; Beatriz Devis, Economic Development specialist, Los Angeles District Office U.S. Small Business Administration; and Kristen K. Deazeley, Stakeholder liaison, Internal Revenue Service.

Nationwide experts shared ways to insure a business and plan for retirement at the *Protecting Your Business and Planning for*

the Future panel. Presenters included: Jack Aduna, Associate agent, Aduna Insurance Agency; Ed Herrera, principal, Ed Herrera Insurance Agency; and Loren Farfan, Senior Retirement specialist, Nationwide.

The *Enhancing Women Businesses through Technology & Social Media* panel included Angelica Urquijo, principal, Chief Strategist, The Imagen Group Yolanda Machado, founder, Veracruz Media; Ginger Zumaeta, CEO, Zumaeta Group; and Lala Castro, co-founder & Social Media consultant, LatinasGeek.

The *LATINA Style Entrepreneurs Roundtable: Lessons Learned*, moderated by Josefa Salinas, CEO, Salinas Media &

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Communications, On Air Personality, Old School 104.7 and the Power of Voices included speaker Martha de la Torre, founder, El Clasificado; Ana Caban, president, Ana Cabán, Inc.; Veronica Corona, owner & managing partner, CM Cleaning Solutions, Inc.; and Patricia Pacheco, owner, Patricia Pacheco Insurance Agency.

The highlight of the day was the awards luncheon; amazing Latinas shared their stories of success and inspired the audience. Among presenters were: Claudia Bodan, Business Banking Group, Bank of America Merrill Lynch; former news anchor, Principal, Chief Strategist, The Imagen Group, Angelica Urquijo delivered remarks as featured speaker; and the keynote message was addressed by Michele Ruiz, president & CEO of Ruiz Strategies.

During the luncheon ceremony, Salinas was recognized with the “Advocate of the Year” award chosen because of her lifetime achievements and her distinguishability as a role model. Salinas is CEO of Salinas Media & Communications, On Air Personality, Old School 104.7 and the Power of *Voices.com*. As an on-air personality, Salinas’ commanding voice has delighted listeners throughout California for 30 years, including 14 years on L.A.’s popular old-school station, HOT 92.3, where she also held the off-air position of “Community Affairs Director” and led the station to win two of the highly-coveted “NAB Crystal Awards.”

In addition, *LATINA Style* presented Bertha Aguirre with the “Entrepreneur of the Year” award for Los Angeles. Aguirre is the president and Chief Operating Officer of Empire Transportation, Inc. Aguirre is



(L-R) *Accessing Capital: Building Strong Businesses* panel: Ruth Zeronian Edwards, Senior Vice President, Credit Risk Executive, Global Commercial Banking, Bank of America; Beatriz Devis, Economic Development Specialist, Los Angeles District Office U.S. Small Business Administration; Anna Movsesyan Sonati, SVP, Credit Products Manager, Bank of America; and, Kristen K. Deazeley, Stakeholder Liaison, Internal Revenue Service.

responsible for the service quality and safety performance that has allowed Empire to consistently deliver on its commitments to clients. “Pleased and honored describes how I feel about having been recognized by *LATINA Style* but, most importantly I am uplifted, inspired and encouraged by the purposeful work being carried out by *LATINA Style* for the past 22 years,” said Aguirre. “Three things to keep in mind on turning 22 years old in business: 1. it’s ok to not have it all figured out; 2. you can dream big without any inhibitions; and the greatest asset of all: 3. Your metabolism is at its peak. I look forward to many more years of focused work combined with a solid commitment to the community.” **ls**

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Robert Bard, president & CEO, *LATINA Style* Inc. presents Bertha Aguirre with the “Entrepreneur of the Year” award for Los Angeles.



Keynote speaker Michele Ruiz, president & CEO of Ruiz Strategies.



Enhancing Women Empowerment through Technology & Social Media panel: Angelica Urquijo, Principal, Chief Strategist, The Imagen Group; Ginger Zumaeta, CEO, Zumaeta Group; Lala Castro, Co-Founder & Social Media Consultant, LatinasGeek; and Yolanda Machado, Founder, Veracruz Media.

Latina Entrepreneurs are Powerhouses in Los Angeles

By Christine Bolaños

Latinas are venturing into entrepreneurship and small business ownership at a rapid rate. This coupled with the fact that Los Angeles county has the highest concentration of Hispanics in the country supports experts' belief that it may be home to the greatest number of Latina entrepreneurs as well. According to the Census Bureau report, as of 2014 there are more Latinos in California than there are Caucasians.



“There are more women stepping up and realizing we can work for ourselves and pursue our own dreams,” says Ana Caban, president of Ana Caban Inc, who



Ana Caban

President of Ana Caban Inc.

helps clients transform their bodies, businesses and life for the better.

Her Hispanic roots ingrained in her the value of family and community which she transitioned to her business. Caban helped people reach their fitness goals for more than 20 years but decided on a holistic approach to health through her own business, which has proven a success in Los Angeles and beyond, and in English and Spanish.

“Being Latina has always taught me to work hard and dream big,” shares Lala Castro, co-founder and social media consultant of LatinaGeeks. “My father was an entrepreneur, whether that meant selling things or having his own little *tiendita* (store front).”

LatinaGeeks is a media resource platform that encourages Latinas to embrace their inner geek and acquire technology skills girls can use in school, in entrepreneurship endeavors such as a digital marketing startup, social media or in the workplace.

Castro also runs her social media marketing consulting company Lala Castro Media in Los Angeles.

“(LatinaGeeks) reach is national, from Los Angeles to New York to Chicago and



Lala Castro

Co-founder and social media consultant of LatinaGeeks.

even Atlanta,” Castro adds. “Because we are in Los Angeles, we tend to have more involvement from one Latina to another here. It can be anything from workshops to university to Latinas talking about embracing

their inner geek and proper branding as they pursue their career.”

Castro hopes the organization inspires other media outlets to create content geared at Latinas which can in turn inspire more to pursue technology.

“I think we have an openness and willingness to become entrepreneurs and a willingness to work really hard and sacrifice a lot to achieve our business goals,” says Michele Ruiz, president of Ruiz Strategies. “I think that’s very attributable to my upbringing and certainly, my culture.”

Ruiz Strategies is a communications firm that helps corporations, government entities and large privately-owned companies tell their story, reach and influence their target audiences and stand out in the marketplace. The former NBC anchor launched the firm after noticing a lack of bilingual media geared to Hispanics.

“Statistically we know that women who own businesses tend to have smaller networks than men,” she shares. “When our networks are smaller, that puts us at a disadvantage. Our networks have a direct influence of how we think of ourselves as business owners.”

She says a supportive network is key to entrepreneurial success.



Michele Ruiz

President of Ruiz Strategies.

“There will be times when you wonder how you will make it,” says Josefa Salinas, an on-air personality, *LATINA Style* Advocate of the Year and CEO of Salinas Media & Communications. “I took a chance to start my own radio stations, while keeping another job. To make it all work, I had to take a third job to help fund the dream.”

Salinas believes it’s a matter of how much a person wants to make their dream a reality.

“Closed mouths don’t get fed,” Salinas advises. “Ask for help. Keep asking until you find someone so enamored by your enthusiasm and dedication to your dream that they say yes and help you. Most of all, be willing to get out there and do it yourself. You have to want it as bad as you want to breathe.”

Salinas started her company more than 20 years ago, and runs *hot923thebeat.com* and *thepowerofvoices.com*. Salinas will launch an online radio station for active military, their family and veterans.

Her most cherished job is putting on the *How to Be a Girl* program every summer. It’s a five-day free camp for tweens to teach them everything from personal finance to hair, makeup, and personal growth.

“Being a first-generation immigrant has taught me to be tenacious, resilient



Josefa Salinas

CEO of Salinas Media & Communications.



Claudia Bodan

Market Manager, Senior Vice President,
Bank of America.

and truly understand and appreciate the importance of my community involvement,” says Claudia Bodan, who worked her way up from teller in college to her current post as senior vice president and market manager of Bank of America in Los Angeles.

“As your business continues to grow, take inventory of your human capital resources,” she suggests. “Hiring key employees or professionals, such as controllers, CFOs or CPAs, is extremely beneficial as the business develops and maintains its strategic growth.”

She also strongly advises entrepreneurs understand their company’s financial statements.

“It’s crucial for the success of your business to strategize and make sure your business story matches up against the story of your financial statement,” Bodan says. 

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...every moment is an adventure here, and every day is full of surprise. I never want to sleep in Cuba. And even after I have returned home—and the place has disappeared entirely from view—I find that it haunts me like a distant rumba.

—Pico Iyer

Connecting in Cuba



By Cindy Centeno

To think that at the age of 21 I was going to the island-nation of Cuba—a place that for so long seemed like a faraway place—was surreal. Yet, I found myself boarding a small charter flight from Miami International with a destination of Holguín, Cuba.

Cuba, a country just 90 miles off the coast of Florida; a nation with rich history and culture, a place that I only dreamed of someday setting foot on. Stereotypical words to describe Cuba: Fidel Castro, communism, isolation, cigars, and vintage cars. Others more familiar with Latino culture may add: Celia Cruz and mojitos. For many years, the relationship between Cuba and the United States has been seemingly nonexistent. If it weren't for the fact that I identify as a Latina and am familiar with Latin cultures and traditions, I would probably have a different view of the island-nation. It is because of this that we traveled to Cuba — to understand the country's history and people better.

Completely off the grid (no cell phone service) for a week felt AMAZING. The only purpose my iPhone served was for taking pictures and as an alarm.

Almost every night a group of us would get together and talk about life for hours. Every night I looked forward to those moments of laughter and sharing stories. Today, I think back to those late-night memories and feel lucky to have had them considering we live in a world where technology sometimes leads to not be able to disconnect.

Up until the day I got off the plane onto the ground of Cuba, I had not been in a Latin American country in almost seven years. Since 2009, my family and I had not traveled to our native country of El Salvador. With relatives living in El Salvador, I sometimes longed to return and be surrounded by my culture, my Latin roots, and feel that part of my identity. So, traveling to Cuba was a little more meaningful.

Getting off the charter plane and taking in the natural scent of Cuba instantly made me feel welcomed. What I encountered was all too familiar—the heat, humidity, the acres of lands with cows, horses, and cornfields, and the smell of all the surroundings. From that very



On the bus, soon after arriving at Holguín, Cuba on the first day.
Photo by Cindy Centeno.



My friends and I, as we walked across a river in San Pablo de Yao. Photo by Nathaniel Clemens.

moment—although I have no roots in Cuba—I felt at home. Little did I know, that Cuba would welcome me with open arms and take me in, making me feel like I belonged.

On the first day, we were surprised with horse-drawn carriage rides to a small restaurant. There, we were welcomed by an incredible group of musicians who got us all out of our seats to dance to Cuba’s most popular music. It didn’t take long for a few of us, including myself, to be taken by the hand to the front of the performance area.

I am so grateful to everyone who made this trip possible - especially Ann Marie Stock and Troy Davis, two brilliant faculty members at my alma mater, The College of William and Mary - and the numerous generous supporters. It will forever be one of the most valuable experiences that I have ever had. I feel honored that I was a part of the first to visit Cuba during this time of transition and change in relations with the U.S.

I’m incredibly grateful for the generosity and friendship I encountered while in Cuba. I’ve made a family and home there (thanks to my adoptive uncles, Juan Karlos and José, our bus driver and one of the hotel’s baristas, respectively).

From time to time, I take out my “Cuba box” – a Cuban cigar box filled with memories from the trip: leftover currency, a cigar, my travel itinerary, a journal with written accounts, and a large Cuban flag that I bought at the airport minutes before we took off to return. My family will jokingly ask: So, what? You’re Cuban now? My connection to the country may not be in my family roots, but it is deep—a part of my soul is forever connected to Cuba. 

**Want to comment or have any questions on this article?
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Basilica del Cobre, Cuba.



Filming an interview with student filmmakers. Photo by Cindy Centeno.

Best Apps to Keep You Connected

By Rebecca Aguilar

Running a business is a job 24/7. Today with your smart phone or any other mobile device, you can remain connected at all times. Mobile apps are easy to download, convenient and often free.

Here is a list of apps that will give you access to your business files, accounts, contact names, financial data, and budgets. We've also included apps that will help you dress up your blog, secure your passwords and get you to a business meeting on time. Most of the apps are free, but some offer extra benefits for a fee.

Workplace Productivity Apps

Dropbox

Access your information (photos, videos, files, documents) from anywhere and on any device with this free cloud storage app. You'll need Wifi to use.

Google Drive

Backup your files and folders for free with Google Drive. You can view them from any device as long as you have Wifi. You can also have access to your photos and videos on Google Photos.

Pearltrees

Organize your images, PDFs, web pages, and notes with the free file manager Pearltrees. Access your information from other devices and share it with others.



This is a great tool if you have a team working on a project but members are in different locations. Pearltrees saves your information to a cloud. Pay a fee to make your information private. The free version is not a private storage.

Budget Apps

Mint

Create budgets and keeps track on your spending with Mint. Mint allows you to keep your accounts in one place: credit cards, banks, investments and loans. This free app sends a reminder when your bills are due.

EveryDollar

Excellent tool to keep your business budget at hand. Create a monthly budget with this user friendly free app. Keep track of your income and spending habits.

Square Point of Sale

Need an app that allows you to accept payments and run your business? The Square Reader with a magstripe accepts debit and credit cards. The funds are deposited in your bank account in one to two business days. This app keeps track of sales and inventory in real time.

Other Apps

1Password

Don't write your business account passwords on a notebook or on a piece of paper. 1Password remembers all your passwords and keeps them organized. You still need to remember your password to this app.

Uber

If you are travelling and want to stay away from taxis, Uber is the free app you'll need to request a ride. The app

connects you with a nearby driver, gives you a cost estimate and accepts payment for a ride.

Waze

Avoid traffic jams with Waze. This free app alerts you about road construction and accidents along your way.

Prisma

Bring your photos alive with Prisma. A photo filter app that turns your photo into a look of pop art, gothic, disco, or old fashion. This is a fun app that can make your photos shine on your business social media posts or blogs.

Periscope

Live video stream a grand opening of a new franchise or show-and-tell a new product you may have to offer with this free app. During your live stream your followers can ask you questions and provide comments. 



Rebecca Aguilar is a multiple award-winning journalist and social media leader. Aguilar is also the founder of the largest Latina virtual networking group "Wise Latinas Linked" on Facebook and LinkedIn. Follow her on twitter @RebeccaAguilar

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STYLE AND SUBSTANCE

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By Cpl. Sheila Solis
 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit,
 I Marine Expeditionary Force,
 Camp Pendleton, California.

My name is Sheila Solis and I have had the honor and privilege of being a United States Marine for the past two years. I am a first-generation American, born and raised in Newark, New Jersey from a family that emigrated from the beautiful country of Ecuador.



U.S. Marine Corporal Sheila Solis stands in front of an AH-1Z Cobra Helicopter aboard the amphibious transport dock ship USS Somerset (LPD 25), Feb. 1, 2017. Cpl. Solis is serving with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and is currently deployed to the Middle East. Just as Marines have historically been the "first to fight," the Marine Expeditionary Unit carries this tradition as the United States' premier rapid-response force.

Being a Marine has provided me with so many opportunities I never thought I would have while giving me the strength and courage to confront any obstacle that comes my way. Being a Latina and a Marine makes me feel invincible. Like I'm a new breed of super woman who can dance bachata, make the best *empanadas*, and shoot at an expert level with my M16A4 service rifle.

Before joining the Marine Corps, I attended Seton Hall University as a nursing student and worked part-time as an assistant in the pre-school department at Marion P. Thomas Charter School. I enjoyed the many things life had to offer but what I enjoyed doing the most was spending time with my family and closest friends.

Living in the tristate area, I never had a dull moment enjoying the night life, shopping for the newest fashions, and trying all the amazing foods. Now I have to bring up food because as a true Latina, we all know we were raised right if we know how to cook like our *abuelita!* Which I love to do. I love to cook and give food to the families in the area. It is how I spread love, the Latina way!

I decided to join the Marine Corps after a semester of school when my family and I realized that affording a private university was too difficult. Although at the moment it was financially difficult, everything happened for a reason. And that reason led me to make one of the best decisions I have made in my life.

With my family's support, I decided to become a U.S. Marine. I knew it wasn't going to be easy and something I would have to work hard for, however, I also knew it would help me continue my educational dreams and ultimately help me become a stronger person.

After I became a Marine, I became conscious of how many fears I overcame. For the first time in my life, I was away from my family and everything I was ever used to. I have traveled all over the world and I've become an independent Latina representing both my family and country. It is one of the best feelings to know that everything I have achieved has been through all of the hard work I have put in.

I dreamt of visiting California and the Marine Corps not only gave me the opportunity to visit California, but to actually live there. It has given me an opportunity to visit different countries, experience new cultures and enroll in school once again. The Marine Corps has truly helped me accomplish all of my goals in ways I never expected. Being a Marine has not only helped me realize how much potential I have within myself, but it has also made me realize the influence my decisions have on the people around me.

Aside from all the positive impacts this decision has had in my life, it has also been a positive force to the people that look up to me. Having a big family that has many young Latinas seeking positive mentorship, my decisions are watched very closely and admired. Being someone our future generations look up to has become a sentiment I hold very dear to my heart. With my head held high and standing at attention, I have never felt as proud as I do this moment, as a Latina serving in the United States Marine Corps. OOH-RAH! **ls**

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Marine Corps Boot Camp Family Day (Mom: Ana Munoz; Cpl. Sheila Solis; Dad: Victor Solis; Brother: Joseph Solis). Parris Island, SC. March, 2014.

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Planning Ahead for a Successful Transition

By Major Kevin S. Cortes, USMC (Ret.)

I served in the Marine Corps for 20 years and loved every minute of it. I was a CH-53E Super Stallion Naval Aviator and served at multiple Marine Corps bases. I loved flying too, but there is one thing that I know for sure – there is an expiration date attached to being in the military. I know that now because my EAS (End of Active Service) was on January 31st, 2015 and it felt like a looming deadline that couldn't be avoided. I might have had it a little easier than most transitioning veterans because my PLAN was to retire at 20 years. That was my goal when I was a young officer so I already knew that my military career wasn't going to last forever. This is my humble story of my transition.

My last (fifth) deployment ended in December 2011 and I knew that when I got home, I would have one more set of orders to fill until I retired. I started my "exit" PLAN for my retirement on January 2012. In my mind, I had three full years of figuring out what I wanted to do, where to go, and how to get there. Well, let me let you know this – I was scared to death. The Marine Corps had structure, it had good pay, it had a close circle of friends, it had my profession of flying... so how do I navigate the scary civilian world that I know NOTHING about? I asked myself – do I want to fly? Um, no. I already knew that flying was my profession and I CHOSE to want to do something else. I realized that my skill set as a leader had more to offer a civilian company than being an aviator. I knew that the ONLY way I was going to be successful was to first and foremost know that I wanted to stay in San Diego (where my last duty station was). That was step one in my PLAN (picking up the hint, here). Then my transition started to take form.

My next idea was how would I start to meet civilians that lived in San Diego to "break out" of my uniformed network? Well, I used a website called Meetup. Meetup (www.meetup.com) is a GREAT site that is nationwide and allows random people to "meet up" and conduct whatever activity you are interested in. Since I love golf, I found a golf meetup group. Since I'm a New Yorker, I found a New York Yankees meetup group. Since I love to ride my road bike, I found a cycling meetup group. This was my BEST and FIRST introduction to meeting various San Diegans who enjoyed doing the same things that I did. How did this work out for me? It allowed me to meet my current boss whom I met at golf meetup group and we played in the

same foursome. He was a new CEO of a military credit union and he was looking for a business development manager. I contacted him three months before I retired and I was offered the job and accepted it six weeks prior to retirement.

This is my biggest lesson for all who are reading this – your transition is only as successful as you want it to be. I had a PLAN three years prior to my retirement, I started networking through several meetup groups over a few years, and I made the CHOICE of where I wanted to live, and I broke out of my comfort zone to meet strangers. Planning ahead WILL work for you too! 

Want to comment or have any questions on this article? Email us at info@latinastyle.com



Kevin Cortes is a 20 year retired Marine Corps officer where he served as a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter Naval Aviator. He resides in San Diego, CA following his retirement in January 2015 from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, San Diego, CA. He currently works at Miramar Federal Credit Union as the Chief Military Officer serving as the bridge between the 750,000 families, service members, retirees, reservists and veterans in the San Diego County community and the Credit Union products and services that support the military. Cortes is also involved in seven military Boards and Committees in the San Diego area.

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Swearing-in ceremony of the 115th Congress.



The Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) named Congressman Joaquin Castro (TX-20) Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI). Former CHCI chair Linda Sanchez passes the baton to Rep. Castro.

2017 CHCI Swearing-in Ceremony

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) honored the newly elected and re-elected Hispanic members of Congress with a swearing-in ceremony and reception in Washington D.C. The incoming 115th Congress highlights 34 Hispanic members serving in the House and four in the Senate, including Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada, who is the first Latina to serve in the United States Senate.

Latinos Leading Network

The Latino Leaders Network convened a Tribute to Mayors Inaugural Unity Dinner at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. to honor mayors, newly elected Latino members of the United States Congress and senior Latino appointees of the new administration. The networking opportunity for guests and sponsors featured remarks by senior elected and appointed officials serving our country and cities. *ls*

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Senator Catherine Cortez Masto, a Democrat from Nevada and the first Latina to serve in the Senate, receives the Chairman's Award.



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Life is Precious and Fragile

“How the Shooting in Fort Lauderdale Airport Creates a Lesson in Living in the NOW”

By Marisa Rivera

It was January 6, 2017, and I happened to be at the Fort Lauderdale Airport during the shooting that killed five people and wounded eight. Fortunately, I was on a different terminal of the airport, but the whole experience was life changing. It reminded me of how precious and fragile life is and how important it is to live in the NOW.

Myself and several passengers could see police and fire fighter’s racing from the window. We did not know what was going on until the TV screens shared the news. I was concerned and extremely saddened by the news of the innocent victims, but I felt relieved because we heard that they had captured the shooter. The airport was unusually quiet, and became paralyzed for about half an hour until they allowed passengers to go through TSA again and on to the gates.

I decided to sit at the nearby restaurant and wait for the next flight. Just a few minutes passed when a stampede of people ran and screamed “run, run, run”. Everyone seeked cover and hiding. I ran into the restaurant kitchen where I was eating with many others and ducked for a few minutes.

Chaos was everywhere. People were scared, screaming, crying and running. Someone yelled, “There is another shooter!” In the rush of running, I realized that I had left my belongings at the restaurant and so did everyone else. The “responsible me” decided to go back to the restaurant to get my belongings. As I walked back into an empty restaurant I

heard several loud noises which I assumed where more shots. I panicked.

I grabbed my things and ran back into the crowded kitchen and asked one of the restaurant workers if there was an exit door nearby. There was, but it led to the runway. I quickly said, “let’s get out of here, even if it is into the runway.” My heart was pounding. I thought in a flash about my children and grandchildren, my brothers and sister, all my beloved friends and about the thought of maybe not making it after today. In a second, your life flashes and you realize, how fragile life is.

As soon as the employee opened the door to the runway, we all raced out. As I walked into the runway I saw all the airplanes, luggage carts, people, some crying, some completely stunned, people in wheel chairs, student groups, families with children, construction workers, and employees. We were all trying to figure out what the next move might be.

I decided to walk as far away from the terminals towards the middle of the runway in case we all had to run from another shooter. Fully armed Police where stopping us from leaving the premises and asked us to raise our hands up, walk in



single line and touched us to make sure none of us were carrying a weapon. I realized that we were not only victims of a violent crime, but at that chaotic moment, we were all suspects as well.

The further I walked away from the terminal building, the calmer I felt. In my thoughts and in my heart, I was carrying all my beloved family and all my good friends who immediately texted me to check if I was OK. It took six hours before we were allowed to leave.

Let’s remember to change our attitude and live each day as it was our last. Express your love to your loved ones every day even more, don’t sweat the small stuff and be kind to others. Make sure you live life in the urgency of the NOW and make every moment count because life is precious and fragile! 

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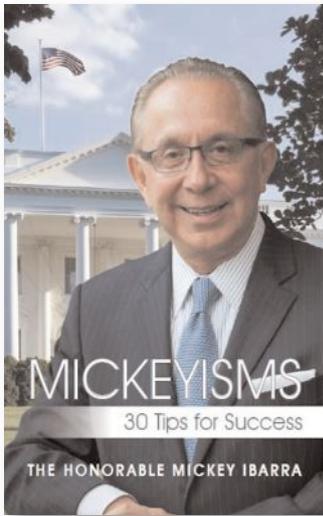
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Lessons From Washington D.C.

– Mickeyisms: 30 Tips for Success

By Mickey Ibarra

After over 30 years in Washington D.C., it is my turn to give back. I feel a strong responsibility to share the most valuable lessons learned during my professional career to help others as they strive for success.

I am grateful for 13 years at the National Education Association (NEA), nearly four years at the White House with former President Bill Clinton, and 15 more years at the Ibarra Strategy Group. Because so many good people took the time to guide and teach me along the way, I authored *Mickeyisms: 30 Tips for Success* to share the simple but powerful beliefs that made all the difference in my career.

These tips were shared with my business team so often that one coined the term “Mickeyisms” and suggested this little book. Among the 30 tips, I have selected three to consider here: Ask (#1), Never Enough (#9) and Friendship (#27).

Ask (#1): The most powerful word in the English language only has three letters: a-s-k. I’m astonished by how many people don’t know it. You have to be willing to ask for what you need. You can’t expect others to guess what you want or need. While it will not guarantee success, it will greatly enhance your chances.

Never Enough (#9): I have learned that it’s never enough to be right. Life is more complicated than simply having the facts on your side. Advocacy is a requirement. The right message delivered to the right people at exactly the right time with the right amount of repetition is required. It’s never enough to be right.

Friendship (#27): Issues come and go but friendships should remain in place for a lifetime. Friends enrich our lives. Continue to develop friendships, nurture them. You can never have too many friends.

While my tips are not new or original to be sure, they have helped me overcome a tough start – a Mexican kid who spent most of his first 15 years in Utah foster care – to grow up to work with the nation’s top leaders, including the leader of the free world in the West Wing of the White House. I live by these beliefs and use them in my daily life.

It is my aim to share these lessons learned with others by speaking, writing and teaching more – the older I get, the more urgency I feel to do so. My obligation is to give back to make sure others benefit from my experience.

In addition to sharing my personal story and offering advice for others to consider, I am passionate about highlighting the success

of others who have made invaluable contributions to the Latino community and our great nation. We have Latino heroes and role models and their stories must be told. While others may try to tear us down, we must build each other up. In 2004, I founded the Latino Leaders Network for this purpose and invite you to learn more at LatinoLeadersNetwork.org.

My second book, *Latino Leaders Speak: Personal Stories of Struggle and Triumph*, will highlight stories of many leaders in our community and will be published May 31, 2017 by Arte Público Press at the University of Houston. It is my hope that it will inspire all readers to dream big, get prepared and get ready to lead. **ls**

Mickeyisms: 30 Tips for Success is available at Lulu.com. And for anyone in need, a free paperback copy is available by requesting one at Mickey.Ibarra@IbarraStrategy.com.

After serving as Assistant to the President and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs at the White House for former President Clinton, Mickey Ibarra established the Ibarra Strategy Group. Prior to his White House appointment, he was the Political Manager for the National Education Association. He is the Founder and Chairman of the Latino Leaders Network. He is a graduate of the University of Utah, with a Master’s degree and an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters.

Want to comment or have any questions on this article? Email us at info@latinastyle.com



"To my grandchildren, Gabriel and Lily Jane, who I hope will benefit most from these tips for success."



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Opportunities Abound at the U.S. Air Force Academy

By C1C Cinthya Elizondo Gamez
B Flight Commander
CS-36 "Proud Pink Panthers"
United States Air Force Academy

When I was 12 years old, I visited Joint-Base San Antonio, Texas, to attend my brother's graduation from Basic Military Training. Watching my brother march onto the parade field with the rest of the young graduates made a great impression. My brother has always been one of my biggest role models and I always wanted to be like him. The first thing I did when I got home after his graduation was to research joining the military. I discovered the service academies, but I only had my eyes set on one -- the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. Since then, I wanted to attend the Academy and become a pilot.

My parents always supported me in my decisions, so when I told them in seventh grade that I wanted to apply to the Academy, they were ecstatic. Ever since, I tried much harder in school: I joined the cross country and track teams in high school and took honors and advanced placement classes to make myself a better candidate for the Academy. The application process for the Academy is very rigorous, so I never gave up and gave my all to get the best grades possible. I am proud to say that I am now a cadet first class, a college senior, getting ready to graduate next year.

Getting to this point was not easy. I was born in Tampico, Tamaulipas, Mexico, and lived there until I was eight years old. Due to my father's work, we moved to Cerritos, California. The move was rough. I didn't speak English and my extended

family stayed in Mexico. As I began third grade in California, I did not really know what was going on; I would copy the school work of the boy sitting next to me. This language barrier inhibited me from doing well in most school subjects for the first few months except for one: math. Luckily for me, math is a universal language. Considering how math deals with numbers rather than words, there were no language barriers in my math classes, and thus began my love for math. Here I am now, about to graduate as an applied math major. I never really thought that I would get to this point -- I mean, I did not even speak English for the first eight years of my life, but yet here I am.

The Academy offers so many great learning experiences; I traveled to Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait, for a month and



Learning about security forces for deployed operations in Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait. June 2015.



Meeting the Ambassador to Spain while studying at the Spanish Air Force Academy. November 2015.



C1C Cinthya Elizondo Gamez after completing the powered flight program. July 2016.

learned how Airmen live and work while deployed and the sacrifices they make for the United States; I traveled to Spain to attend the Spanish Air Force Academy for a semester, met with Spanish cadets and learned more about the Spanish language and culture.

Recently, I led training for new cadets need for them to become part of the cadet wing. The Academy has offered me a vast amount of leadership opportunities that have helped me grow as a person and leader. Thanks to these opportunities, I feel ready to start the next chapter of my life as a pilot trainee. I am very grateful for these opportunities and to protect all what this country stands for. 

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Young Latinos are Ready for Global Leadership

By CHCI Chair, Congressman Joaquin Castro

For nearly 40 years, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) has set young Latinos on the path to become American leaders. Through fellowship and networking opportunities in the nation's capital, CHCI prepares our participants for lifetimes of personal and professional achievement.

Much has changed since CHCI's founding in 1978. Today, we find ourselves in a rapidly changing world that is increasingly globalized, interconnected, and culturally and ethnically diverse. This exciting time holds exceptional promise and opportunity for our young people, but they must be prepared to compete with peers from around the world to succeed in the global economy. Organizations like CHCI must embrace these new challenges and equip the next generation of Latino leaders with the skills they need to excel on the international stage.

As the Hispanic population in our country continues to grow, the mission set forth by CHCI's founders – to create an organization that cultivates Latino leadership – is critical now more than ever for our nation's advancement. For the United States to prosper in this fast-paced, competitive age, we must provide Latino youth with the necessary experience to be 21st century, global leaders.

I am excited to chair CHCI at this pivotal moment alongside a dedicated board of directors, advisory council, staff, supporters, and alumni. Through decades of work, CHCI has proven that we can drive change by developing bold, effective leaders who represent our community in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

It is our goal to build on the last four decades by revamping our programs, updating our vision, and strategically planning for the future. In the coming years, CHCI will work diligently to increase opportunities for leadership development, enhance our programming, and prepare our participants to be modern leaders.



Young Latinos are uniquely positioned to excel on the global stage. They have important skills and experiences that can help them thrive in international affairs, diplomacy, and business. Many Latinos are multilingual, making them ideal communicators in a globalized world. Nurturing these talents helps our young people find success and strengthens our nation as a whole.

Because many young Latinos are connected to the immigrant experience – whether they are immigrants themselves or have friends and relatives who are – they have first-hand appreciation of how nations and communities are interconnected. They use technology to maintain friendships and relationships abroad, understand ethnic and national nuances, and have a remarkable ability to move seamlessly through different cultures and settings. It is our vision at CHCI to build on these skills and abilities, connect our participants to even greater networks, and position them to meet their full potential

at a time when their talents are most needed.

Throughout the last 40 years, CHCI has brought to life a vision of America where Latinos access equal opportunity, are more active in civic life, and have the confidence and ability to be leaders in all sectors of society. As the new CHCI Chair, I am proud to join this long tradition of service and excellence.

Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) named Congressman Joaquin Castro (TX-20) Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI). In this role, Congressman Castro will help foster the next generation of Hispanic leadership in the United States.



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A Nation Built on Dreams

By Domenika Lynch, president and CEO
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI)

In 1776, our immigrant nation declared itself free from England and avowed on parchment that all Americans have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Nearly 100 years later, the Statue of Liberty arrived in the Hudson River, a gift of the admiring French, and this physical representation of our welcoming immigrant nation stood sentry to gloriously greet millions of dreamers to Ellis Island.



Domenika Lynch is president and CEO of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, a nonpartisan nonprofit based in Washington, D.C.

In 2017, our nation threatens to build a great wall to keep out immigrants from the south and many Dreamers already on our shores are told that they may no longer have a right to pursue the privileges etched into the very foundations of our country.

The United States is at an inflection point. For most of us, this is a startling moment. A moment when our fabled institutions may not protect our citizens. A moment when immigrants are viewed with a hostility not seen since the 1930s. A moment when many Americans are at odds with each other, in disagreement over what it means to be an American.

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus institute (CHCI) will double down on our efforts to help young Latinos get internships and fellowships in Washington, D.C., so that our next generation can rise up to become leaders in Washington and around the country. This has always been our mission. A mission that is absolutely vital to the well-being of our community and of our country.

Our leadership must reflect America's diverse range of thought, experience and ideas. This is how a nation of immigrants succeeds and has succeeded for 243 years. And Latinos are our largest minority group, over 55 million strong, yet today, vastly underrepresented in leadership roles. If Latinos are going to be heard, we need to protest with our vote, our purchasing power, AND we need to be in conference rooms, board rooms, and the Situation Room. We need to influence and make the decisions. We cannot afford to sit silently on the sidelines.

As an incubator for emerging Latino leaders, CHCI's participants offer a range of interests and opinions as broad as the Latino community itself. Our leadership development curriculum and paid congressional internships and fellowships help build confidence, strategic thinking and the vital skills that translate to any profession or institution.

Throughout the years, CHCI has developed robust leadership pipelines across industries, including energy, technology, the financial industry and government. We connect our program participants to local and national leaders from various professions and industries as well as to thought leaders from different political parties and philosophical inclinations. Our goal is to ensure that CHCI alumni are well positioned to seize opportunities in the most competitive industries.

This year, CHCI approaches its 40th anniversary. Through four decades of work, we have earned distinction as a pillar of strength in Latino civic and political life. Our 40th anniversary milestone coincides with this pivotal moment in our nation's history. As our country enters a disruptive era, CHCI must respond to the demands of our current reality.

This is a time for action. CHCI will expand its capabilities to serve more, to collaborate more, and challenge more. It is our greatest desire that CHCI will evolve into an institution that develops global leaders who espouse the ideals of a free, just and compassionate society. Game changers who unite us through their inspiring actions. Indeed, it is a privilege to lead this organization during these critical and defining times.

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