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LULAC's Mary Campos to receive service award

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DES MOINES – Mary Campos, a longtime Des Moines community activist and charter member of the League of United Latin American Citizens in Des Moines, will be recognized for her service work at the annual Zeta Kappa Lambda Educational Foundation Black & Gold Ball this weekend.

The Alpha Award of Merit is presented to an individual who has shown exemplary effort in helping others and works to make sure the community continues to thrive, said Felix Gallagher, a member of the educational foundation.

"She's a wonderful individual who's very deserving of this award for all of her community service in the past and the present," he said.

Campos will receive the award at the annual event on Saturday. She is a charter member of LULAC Council 307 in Des Moines, and was an original member of Council 308 when LULAC first formed in Des Moines. She also has served on dozens of boards and commissions in Iowa.

Campos has a long history of being involved with and protecting the rights of Latinos, Latino youth and women in Iowa. The United States Hispanic Leadership Institute awarded her with its Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006. She has been inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame and was the first co-chairwoman of the Iowa Brown-Black Presidential Forum, the only presidential forum in the country that addresses issues that affect the black and Hispanic communities in Iowa.

The Mexican government presented her with the Ohtli Award for her work in assisting Mexican immigrants. It is the highest honor given to an individual outside of Mexico.

Gallagher said the educational foundation was very impressed with Campos' work and volunteer efforts in the community, and by the fact that the Mexican government has recognized her efforts.

Campos' grandparents came to the United States from Mexico. Her parents were coal miners in Oklahoma who had to find new employment when the mines closed. Her family moved to northern Iowa. They were migrant workers who sometimes lived in the chicken coops of the families for whom they worked.

Founded in 1929, the League of United Latin American Citizens is the oldest Latino civil rights organization in the United States. There are more than 880 local LULAC councils, which hold voter registration drives, provide awareness to residents about language and immigration issues, sponsor programs and advocate for Latinos.

For more information, contact Joe Enriquez Henry at 515.208.7312; or Melissa Walker at 515.681.7731 or <u>media@iowalatinos.org</u>, or visit www.lulaciowa.org.

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