



LEAGUE of UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS COUNCIL 307

Council No. 307

More than 300 gather for Latino leadership awards banquet

Joe Enriquez Henry
President

For immediate release
Nov. 3, 2014

Jorge Valencia
Vice President

DES MOINES – More than 300 individuals came together to celebrate to celebrate the Latino community at the second annual Iowa Latino Leadership Banquet on Saturday.

Mary Campos
President Emeritus

Six individuals were honored at the banquet, including a promising young Latina who was awarded a scholarship.

Brena Corona
*Secretary & Chair
of Education*

“The Latino community once again united to show how strong we have become as a community and as a segment of the Iowa population,” said Joe Enriquez Henry, president of Council 307 and state director of LULAC of Iowa. “Our organization was honored to lead the celebration of the achievements of these individuals who work hard every day on behalf of Latinos and all Iowans.”

Araceli Goode
Treasurer

Nathan Blake
Chaplain

Mitch Henry
*Chair of Memberships
Recruitment*

Attendees include various members of the Latino community, elected leaders, candidates for state office and national Latino leaders – Margaret Moran, the president of National LULAC, and Brent Wilkes, the national executive director.

Daniel Garza
Union Liaison

Speakers highlighted the need for the Latino community to vote and become active members in the political process, both by running for office and ensuring their voices are heard at the polls.

Melissa Walker
*Communication
Liaison*

The following individuals were honored:

- LULAC Builder Award – Sara Monroy Huddleston, president of a new LULAC Council in Storm Lake, Ia. Huddleston, a member of the Storm Lake City Council, has actively worked to increase awareness of the Latino community and has extended the olive branch to individuals and organizations that traditionally have not supported Latinos in order to develop working relationships.
- Latino Business Person of the Year Award – JoAnn Mackey, former director of Latino Resources Inc. and founder of Iowa’s Latino Heritage Festival. Mackey started the statewide event 14 years ago as a way to celebrate the contributions from the more than 22 Latino countries that are represented in Iowa. She retired after this year’s festival. The festival draws thousands each year and serves as the largest cultural event in Iowa.

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- Latino Hero Award – U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin, who will retire after serving Iowans for more than 40 years. Harkin has been an advocate for all Iowans and his work has extended to the Latino community, those with special needs and others. He has supported measures that have improved the lives of Latinos and helped them gain higher paying jobs.
- Iowa Latino Leadership Award – Vanessa C. Marcano-Kelly, a graduate of the inaugural Latina Leadership Initiative of Greater Des Moines, who now works for the Iowa Department of Human Services. Marcano-Kelly has been a community organizer with Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, where she advocated on behalf of the Latino community for issues that include wage theft, immigration reform, voter’s rights, driver’s licenses and raising the minimum wage.
- Emerging Latino Leadership Scholarship Award – Maria Mayorga, 25, is in her final year at Drake University Law School. She has interned for several Des Moines-area attorneys. Mayorga worked at the Drake Law School Legal Clinic and was the legal assistant for the Immigrant Survivors Advancement Legal Program (ISA), where she helped immigrant women who were victims of domestic abuse receive legal assistance and counseling referrals. Mayorga, a graduate of Dowling Catholic High School, is a single parent of a son, and also provides translation services to her alma mater high school.

This year, a new award was introduced. The Law Office of Sonia Parras sponsored the Latino Achievement Award, which was presented to Alba Perez, executive officer of the Office of Latino Affairs for the Iowa Department of Human Rights. Perez was selected as the recipient for the award because of her devotion throughout her entire adult to outreach and involvement of the Latino community, and her inspiration to Latina women.

She created the initial Latino Business Association called Alianza; led a 2000 study that examined the Latino community’s contributions to Central Iowa; and helped get Salsa Iowa and Iowa’s Latino Heritage Festival off of the ground.

In addition, Perez, a survivor of domestic violence, has publicly spoken about her experiences and testified to help change Iowa law to make a domestic abuse assault conviction carry a mandatory two-day jail sentence. Recently, she was involved in the creation of the Latina Leadership Initiative of Greater Des Moines, a special training program created to give young Latina women the skills and access the need to become the next generation of leaders.

“We had another successful banquet and are thankful to our supporters because without them, this celebration would not have been possible,” Enriquez Henry said.

Founded in 1929, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is the nation’s largest and oldest civil rights, volunteer-based organization that empowers Hispanic-Americans and builds strong Latino communities. Its headquarters are in Washington, D.C., and there are 1,000 councils across the United States and Puerto Rico. LULAC’s programs, services and advocacy efforts address the most important issues for Latinos, and meet the critical needs of today and the future.

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