

"10 most influential Hispanic Canadians" 2007

Tuesday, November 20, 2007, Toronto. Last night, Len Crispino, president of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Diego Ramos, president of AUDI Canada presented awards to the "10 most influential Hispanic Canadians". The event was organized by Factor Hispano magazine with the logistical support from the Toronto Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Forty-one people representing fourteen Spanish-speaking countries were nominated from across the country. The nominees included researchers, corporate executives, judges and lawyers, entrepreneurs, musicians, artists, politicians, community leaders, directors of Canadian corporations and not-for-profits, university professors and philanthropists. Many of the nominees have received multiple awards, including the Order of Ontario, Top 40 under 40, the Volunteer Award from the Province of Ontario and the Thomas W. Eadie Medal.

Nominees were judged based on five criteria: influence in the Canadian mainstream; support of the Hispanic community; volunteerism; education and achievements and awards. The original pool of 41 nominees was narrowed to twenty finalists by the following journalists and executives from mainstream media: Nicholas Keung from The Toronto Star, Marina Jiménez from The Globe & Mail, Teddy Katz from CBC, Norman Morris from Canadian Business, Jenny Celly from OMNI TV and Carlo Dade from Ottawa-based think tank FOCAL.

Each judge independently ranked the twenty finalists. On November 20, the 440 event attendees also ranked the twenty finalists after reviewing their profiles. The attendees' ranking and the judges' ranking each counted for 50 per cent in determining the "10 most influential Hispanic Canadians".

The "10 most influential Hispanic Canadians" 2007 are:

- Dr. Alex Jadad, researcher (Colombia)
- Elvira Sanchez de Malicki, community advocate (Ecuador)
- Esteban Lasso, not for profit work (Ecuador)
- Dr. Federico Allodi, mental health activist (Chile)
- Dr. Juan Carlos Zúñiga, researcher (Perú)
- Juan Carranza, Lawyer and community activist (El Salvador)
- Lita Gonzalez Dickey, education advocate (Perú)
- Luz Bazcunan, education activist (Chile)
- Dr. Mary Carmen Romero, teacher and community activist (España)
- Dr. Marco A. Guzmán, not for profit work (Bolivia)

Sunlife Financial's Jaime Gutman and mortgage broker Jaime Natareno are the primary sponsors of the "10 Most Influential Hispanic Canadians" awards. Scotiabank and Rogers are presenting sponsors.

Community sponsors include travel company Andes Travel, real estate agents Emerson Vivas & Frank Casanova from Royal LePage, shipping company Rios Envios and telecom firm Sumacorp.

Media partners include Hispano.ca (presenting organization), El Correo Canadiense (primary newspaper sponsor), El Popular newspaper, Abanico magazine and internet portal TorontoHispano.com

Profiles follow.

DR. ALEX JADAD (Colombia) Dr. Jadad's mission is to help improve health for all, through Information Technology. Born and educated in Colombia, he obtained his medical degree in 1986. At 20 and still a student, he became a leading medical expert on cocaine. In 1990 he joined Oxford University and obtained a doctorate in pain management (one of few doctors in the world with a PhD in knowledge synthesis). In 1995, he moved to Canada holding several research tasks at McMaster University. In 2000, Alex joined the University of Toronto and the University Health Network where he created the Centre for Global eHealth Innovation, and became the Rose Family Chair in Supportive Care and the Canada Research Chair in eHealth Innovation. The Centre is a simulator of the future, acting as a movie set-like space to optimize the use of IT before its introduction into the health system. Dr. Jadad has received numerous awards, including a 'National Health Research Scholars Award', by Health Canada (1997), one of 'Canada's Top 40 Under 40' awards (1998), a 'Premier's Research Excellence Award' (1999), the New Pioneers Award (2002). In 2001 and 2002, he was featured by Time Magazine as one of the new Canadians who will shape Canada in the 21st century, and as one of the leading researchers in the country. In 2004, he received the Latin American Achievement Award.

ELVIRA SANCHEZ DE MALICKI, MBA (Ecuador) In Canada since 1966. Business Administrator: Malicki & Malicki Law, 1973-Present. Elvira's community work is recognized as pioneering, altruistic and visionary by Canadian-Hispanic, Ethnocultural and mainstream communities of Canada. Highlights include Community/Political: Elvira founded the Canadian Hispanic Congress in 1983 uniting, throughout Canada, Hispanics from 22 different countries. Within 4 years, 250+ member organizations were constituted in local districts and provincial chapters to lobby government on issues relevant to Hispanic-Canadians. i.e.: persuading Statistics Canada to amend census gathering data to better reflect Hispanics' true numbers. Served on Boards of: Telefilm Canada: created Telefilm's Linguistic and Cultural Diversity Committee, Chaired Audit Committee 'Ontario's and Canada's Councils on Multiculturalism and Citizenship', Canadian Ethnocultural Council, National Organization Immigrant and Visible Minority Women Canada, Harbourfront Centre Arts: 1979-1992 staged award-winning theatre productions. Produced "Los Hispanos Pavilion" at Caravan. Media/Communications: 1973-74 host City-TV, 1979-1987 anchored nightly newscast CFMT-TV, 1993-2004 independent producer/host of "Hispanos en Canada" (national TV program that dealt with social, economic, political and cultural issues relevant to the lives of Hispanics in Canada). Awarded CRTC licence to launch all-Spanish TV network. She has received numerous awards and recognitions from the Government of Canada and the community.

ESTEBAN LASSO (Ecuador) Ecuadorian-born Esteban Lasso has worked with Transforming Faces Worldwide (TFW) since 2001. Transforming Faces Worldwide is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the availability and quality of medical treatment and care of children and adults with left lip and palate and related cranio-facial disorders. An international development professional with 14 years experience in social development projects, Esteban has worked extensively in the rural and child development sector with organizations such as Christian Children's Fund and Catholic Relief Services. He has also worked with UNICEF as Private Sector Fundraiser Officer.

DR. FEDERICO ALLODI (Spain) Born in Spain, Dr. Allodi studied medicine at the Universities of Granada and Madrid. He specialized in psychiatry in London, England and at the University of Toronto where he was professor of psychiatry for more than 30 years until his retirement in 2000. Dr. Allodi is recognized in Canada and internationally as a pioneer, expert and activist in the field of mental health for immigrants, refugees, and torture victims. He founded the first specialized centre for the treatment of torture survivors and has participated in numerous international campaigns (many in Latin America) to advocate for health coverage for poor people. He has been a guest on the BBC, CBC and Teletatino promoting mental health education and he is a frequent speaker at international conferences. Many of his articles, research proposals and essays have been published in specialized medical journals. In 2004, he published a poetry book in English, entitled "In my sadness there is freedom". Currently, he is working on his memoirs and doing historical research work related to mental health and culture. He is also heavily involved internationally with organizations such as Doctors Without Borders and Médicos del Mundo.

DR. JUAN CARLOS ZUNIGA-PFLÜCKER (Peru) For the thousands of people who face trying to recover from the immunity-depleting effects of cancer treatments or who will suffer from AIDS in the future, the research of Dr. Juan Carlos Zúñiga-Pflücker offers a measure of hope. Peruvian-born Dr. Zúñiga-Pflücker recently discovered how to grow T cells – the building blocks of our immune systems – in a laboratory, using embryonic stem cells. These T cells, which routinely deal with the infected or cancerous cells in our bodies, are destroyed by the HIV virus and by chemotherapy and radiation therapy. The hope is that, one day, T cells grown from human embryonic stem cells will be able to boost the immune systems of patients whose own supplies of T cells have been destroyed. As the Canada Research Chair in Developmental Immunology, Dr. Zúñiga-Pflücker uses the most sophisticated technology available to learn more about the molecular characteristics of the stem cells that give rise to T cells and to answer one of the fundamental questions in the field: How certain cells respond to key molecular signals, making them develop into disease-fighting T cells.

JUAN CARRANZA, LLB (El Salvador) Born in El Salvador, he is the first Central American called to the Law Society of Upper Canada. Carranza arrived in Canada at 16 and obtained his law degree in 1992 from York's Osgoode Hall, plus an MBA from Queen's. He is the founder and principal of Carranza Barristers & Solicitors, Toronto's largest ethnic law firm. In

just 15 years, he built a team of 42 staff, including 9 lawyers, serving clients in ten+ languages. His firm supports several community groups. In the last five years, it contributed over \$600,000 to various not-for-profits. Carranza is a past president and past chairperson of the Board of Directors of Salvaide, as well as a past member of the Latin American Community Centre, and Salvadorean Settlement Services. He has volunteered with CLASP, the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples and CSCDES; and was instrumental in obtaining from the CRTC Canada's first Spanish-language radio station in 2003. His efforts for the community are contagious: Virtually all lawyers and staff at his firm engage in pro-bono legal work and are active in community not-for-profits. In 2000, Juan received the "Somos Capaces" award of the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples. That same year, he received a prestigious Community Service award from the Law Society of Upper Canada.

LITA GONZALEZ-DICKEY (Ecuador) For almost 30 years, Lita Gonzalez-Dickey has been the Spanish Community Relations Officer of the Toronto Catholic District School Board. During these years she has been instrumental in the admission of thousands of children of Hispanic origin into Toronto's Catholic schools. Her support has been mostly appreciated by the many undocumented and refugee families for whom she has always advocated and encouraged to achieve greater academic success. Lita has co-written the curriculum, the songs and stories that complement the teaching of Spanish in the Catholic schools. With the Hispanic families in mind, she created Centro Bienvenidos -TCDSB Spanish Resource Centre from where she assists children with their homework and provides opportunities for foreign trained teachers to get familiarized with the school system (and obtain Canadian experience). She has acted as a guest reporter in Hispanos en Canada (former TLN program) and currently hosts Consultorio Escolar that airs in CHHA 1610, writes for Torontohispano.com, Factor Hispano and other publications. Her spirit of volunteering with innumerable organizations, worth while causes and celebrations have earned her many awards.

LUZ BASCUÑÁN (Chile) Luz Bascuñán graduated as teacher from University of Chile; she received a Master of Arts and pursued doctoral studies in education at the University of Toronto. During the 35 years education career, Luz taught in Chile and in Canada; developed educational programs and conducted education research. Her works have been published in professional and academic publications. Between 1990 and 1997 Luz was elected - for three consecutive periods- public school trustee for the Toronto Board of Education becoming the first Latin American elected to public office in Canada. Since 1998, Luz is the Education Advocate of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto; she is responsible for the Society's education strategy and an advocate for children's rights to education. Luz served in volunteer boards of directors at Center for Social Justice, the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto; she was president of the Toronto Chilean Society, and Escuela Salvador Allende. Luz created Escuela Pioneros de la Paz - a multidisciplinary program aimed at teaching conflict resolution and social skills to children from 3.5 to 14 years old within the context of the Latin American culture. Luz received the 2006 Peace Medallion from YMCA - International for her work promoting peace.

DR. M. CARMEN ROMERO (Spain)

Spain-born Dr. Maria Carmen Romero studied at the University Complutense in Madrid, majoring in Psychology and Educational Sciences. She was granted a fellowship by the Canada Council for Arts and Humanities to pursue a Ph.D. at the University of Toronto, and continued her postdoctoral research at York analyzing the positive effects of bilingualism in the early development of literacy. A teacher and principal for 28 years, Dr. Romero worked in the Canadian Centre for the Prevention and Treatment of Torture with refugees from all over the world. She was selected three times by the Canadian Teachers Federation to train teachers in the Caribbean and in Ghana. She has done similar work in Guatemala with the Canadian Central American Relief Effort. She initiated the opening of 17 educational programmes in both the Toronto District and Catholic District School Boards. Her volunteer activities include being a director and founding member of the Canadian Hispanic Congress, and is the founder and current president of the Association of Hispanic-Canadian Teachers, its foundation Schools Assisting Schools, and the Adelante Psychoeducational Centre. She has received numerous awards in Spain and Canada, including awards from the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, the Canadian Hispanic Congress, and the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

DR. MARCO A. GUZMAN (Bolivia) Dr. Marco A. Guzman has served as Executive Director of Frontiers Foundation Inc. for ten years, having previously served as Program Coordinator. Prior to attendance to St. Francis Xavier University which subsequently awarded him an LL.D., he created Voluntarios en Accion (VEA) in his native Bolivia. VEA has a 36 year record of productive activity relating to the Altiplano's most urgent needs, e.g. thousands of school desks for Aymara children. Having already received the Grand Cross of Bolivia, he had a new high school named after him. During Marco's 14 years as Program Coordinator and Executive Director, he played a key role in placing thousands of national and international volunteers into partnership with aboriginal Canadian hosts and co-workers in hands-on affordable housing and education projects. In 2004, as Vice-President of New Frontiers Aboriginal Residential Corporation, Marco received the "Best Affordable Housing Projects" trophy for NFARC's Project Amik. Project Amik is a 75 -unit facility in east Toronto, with half the one, two and three – bedroom suites designated for aboriginal residence and 14 of the total space for handicapped. Community Toronto Living, Frontiers Foundation and Project Amik have their offices in the new complex, which also includes a French-immersion daycare centre "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge" serving 69 toddlers.