

# TLN 10 most influential Hispanic Canadians 2023

Keynotes by Ontario Government and business leaders

*ILAC Education Group and Copa Airlines sponsored the program*

Toronto, December 1, 2023 – TLN 10 most influential Hispanic Canadians were announced last night. Corie McDougall, Assistant Deputy Minister, Export Growth and International Representation at the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, along with Daniel Tisch Echavarría, the recently appointed President & CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, provided remarks. The event is managed by TLN Media Group in partnership with the Canadian Hispanic Business Alliance – program creators, with support from ILAC Education Group and Copa Airlines. The awardees, by first name they are listed below - bios and group picture follow.

- Dr. Aidan Gomez (Spa/ON) Artificial intelligence expert & co-founder, Cohere
- Andres Gomez (Chi/ON) Vicepresident, CARA and JUNO Awards
- Carlos Rojas-Arbulu (Per/ON) Head of Trade & Investment, Global Affairs Canada-Chile
- Dr. Evelyn Encalada (Chi/BC) Migrant activist & professor, Simon Fraser University
- Dr. Jaime Escallon (Col/ON) Surgeon & Coordinator, Breast Center of Excellence at Mount Sinai
- MP Julie Dzerowicz (Mex/ON) MP and Chair, Canada-NATO Parliamentary Asst'n
- Dr. Luis Cisneros (Mex/QC) Professor, HEC Montreal and Head of Entrepreneurism
- Martha Chaves (Nic/ON) Comedian, human rights advocate, University instructor
- Mauricio Ruiz (Col/ON) Music manager, founder of 8 Til Faint artist management agency
- Cap. Rey Garcia-Salas (Gua/ON) Historian/Captain, Canadian Armed Forces
  - Maria Del Mar (Spa/ON) Actress, ACTRA and Gemini awardee – Courage award

John DeFranco, CEO at **ILAC Education Group** said “The Spanish-speaking community in Canada and around the world has always been a big part of the ILAC family. Many of our students from across Latin America have made Canada their home and we are proud to support the achievements of Hispanic Canadians at this annual event”. Laura Marin, Sales Manager Canada for **Copa Airlines** boosted the support: “Copa Airlines celebrates 75 years of providing service as one of the leading airlines in the Americas. This remarkable growth is a testament to the continuous support of the Canadian Hispanic community. We take great pride in being the airline that connects Hispanics in Toronto and Montreal to more than 55 destinations in Latin America and the Caribbean.”

Aldo Di Felice, President of **TLN Media Group** and Mauricio Ospina from the **Canadian Hispanic Business Alliance** congratulated all awardees.

TLN 10 most influential Hispanic Canadians boasts 150 awardees from 18 countries in 6 provinces. The program has been personally recognized by the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, Prime and Cabinet Ministers, and the Parliament of Canada – among others. The program raised the profile and secured \$230,000 in scholarships for the community and locked in business and housing opportunities during the 2015 Pan American Games. For more information, please visit [www.tln.ca/top10/](http://www.tln.ca/top10/) and/or [www.HispanicBusiness.ca](http://www.HispanicBusiness.ca)

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# 10 hispano-canadienses más influyentes de TLN 2023

Líderes empresariales y gubernamentales presentes

*Grupo Educativo ILAC y Copa Airlines patrocinaron el programa*

Toronto, 1 de diciembre de 2023 – Anoche se anunciaron los 10 hispano-canadienses más influyentes de 2023. Corie McDougall, viceministra adjunta de Crecimiento de las Exportaciones y Representación Internacional del Ministerio de Desarrollo Económico, Creación de Empleo y Comercio, junto con Daniel Tisch Echavarría, presidente de la Cámara de Comercio de Ontario, fueron los invitados especiales. El evento es maneado por TLN Media Group junto a la Alianza Canadiense de Negocios Hispanos – creadores del programa, con el apoyo de ILAC Education Group y Copa Airlines. Los galardonados, por nombre, se enumeran a continuación - biografías y foto del grupo a continuación.

- Dr. Aidan Gomez (Spa/ON) Experto en inteligencia artificial, cofundador de Cohere
- Andres Gomez (Chi/ON) Vicepresidente de Premios CARA y JUNO
- Carlos Rojas-Arbulu (Per/ON) Jefe de Comercio e Inversiones, Global Affairs Canada-Chile
- Dr. Evelyn Encalada (Chi/BC) Activista de migrantes y profesora, Simon Fraser University
- Dr. Jaime Escallón (Col/ON) Cirujano y coordinador, Breast Center of Excellence en Mount Sinai
- MP Julie Dzerowicz (Mex/ON) Miembro del Parlamento y líder de asociaciones parlamentarias
- Dr. Luis Cisneros (Mex/QC) Profesor, HEC Montreal y Jefe de Entreprism
- Martha Chaves (Nic/ON) Comediante, defensora de derechos humanos, instructora universitaria
- Mauricio Ruiz (Col/ON) Gerente artístico, fundador de agencia 8 Til Faint
- Cap. Rey Garcia-Salas (Gua/ON) Historiador y capitán, Fuerzas Armadas de Canada
  - Maria Del Mar (Spa/ON) Actriz, Ganadora de premios ACTRA y Gemini– Premio a la fortaleza

John DeFranco, director ejecutivo de **ILAC Education Group**, dijo: “La comunidad hispanohablante en Canadá y en todo el mundo siempre ha sido una gran parte de la familia ILAC. Muchos de nuestros estudiantes de toda América Latina han hecho de Canadá su hogar y estamos orgullosos de apoyar los logros de los canadienses hispanos en este evento anual”. Laura Marín, Gerente de Ventas para Canadá de **Copa Airlines** reforzó el apoyo: “Copa Airlines celebra 75 años brindando servicio como una de las aerolíneas líderes en América. Este notable crecimiento es un testimonio del apoyo continuo de la comunidad hispana canadiense. Estamos muy orgullosos de ser la aerolínea que conecta a los hispanos en Toronto y Montreal con más de 55 destinos en América Latina y el Caribe”.

Aldo Di Felice, presidente de **TLN Media Group** y Mauricio Ospina de la **Alianza Empresarial Hispana** Canadiense felicitaron a todos los premiados.

Los ‘10 hispanos de mayor influencia en Canadá’ cuenta a la fecha con 150 galardonados de 18 países de origen en 6 provincias. El programa ha sido reconocido personalmente por miembros influyentes de la sociedad como el secretario general de la Organización de los Estados Americanos, primeros ministros, ministros del gabinete, alcaldes y el Parlamento de Canadá. Este programa ha recaudado \$230,000 en becas para la comunidad, elevando al tiempo el perfil de la comunidad, y asegurando oportunidades comerciales y de vivienda durante los Juegos Panamericanos de 2015. Mas información en [www.tln.ca/top10/](http://www.tln.ca/top10/) y [www.HispanicBusiness.ca](http://www.HispanicBusiness.ca).

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# 10 Hispaniques les plus influents au Canada TLN 2023

Allocutions prononcées par le gouvernement de l'Ontario et des chefs d'entreprise  
*Le groupe éducatif ILAC et Copa Airlines ont parrainé le programme*

Toronto, le 1er décembre 2023 – Hier soir, les 10 Canadiens d'origine espagnole les plus influents de 2023 ont été dévoilés. Corie McDougall, sous-ministre adjointe de la Croissance des exportations et de la représentation internationale au ministère du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce, en compagnie de Daniel Tisch Echavarría, président de la Chambre de commerce de l'Ontario, étaient les invités spéciaux. L'événement est géré par TLN Media Group en collaboration avec la Canadian Hispanic Business Alliance – créateurs du programme, avec le soutien du groupe éducatif ILAC et Copa Airlines. Les lauréats, par leur nom, sont répertoriés ci-dessous - biographie et photo de groupe ci-dessous.

- Dr Aidan Gomez (Spa/ON) Expert en intelligence artificielle, co-fondateur de Cohere
- Andres Gomez (Chi/ON) Vice-président des Prix CARA et JUNO
- Carlos Rojas-Arbulu (Per/ON) Chef du commerce, Affaires mondiales Canada-Chili
- Dre Evelyn Encalada (Chi/BC), militante pour les migrants et professeure, Université Simon Fraser
- Dr Jaime Escallón (Col/ON) Chirurgien et coordonnateur, Centre d'excellence du sein du Mont Sinai
- Députée Julie Dzerowicz (Mex/ON) Députée et leader des associations parlementaires
- Dr Luis Cisneros (Mex/QC) Professeur, HEC Montréal et responsable de l'entrepreneuriat
- Martha Chaves (Nic/ON) Comédienne, défenseure des droits humains, professeure d'université
- Mauricio Ruiz (Col/ON) Responsable artistique, fondateur de l'agence 8 Til Faint
- Chap. Rey Garcia-Salas (Gua/ON) Historien et capitaine, Forces armées canadiennes
- Maria Del Mar (Spa/ON) Actrice, lauréate de l'ACTRA et du prix Gémeaux – Prix Courage

John DeFranco, PDG d'**ILAC Education Group**, a déclaré : « La communauté hispanophone au Canada et dans le monde a toujours été une partie importante de la famille ILAC. Beaucoup de nos étudiants de toute l'Amérique latine ont élu domicile au Canada et nous sommes fiers de soutenir les réalisations des Canadiens d'origine hispanique lors de cet événement annuel ». Laura Marin, directrice des ventes Canada pour **Copa Airlines**, a renforcé le soutien : « Copa Airlines célèbre 75 ans de prestation de services en tant que l'une des principales compagnies aériennes des Amériques. Cette croissance remarquable témoigne du soutien continu de la communauté hispanique canadienne. Nous sommes très fiers d'être la compagnie aérienne qui relie les Hispaniques de Toronto et de Montréal à plus de 55 destinations en Amérique latine et dans les Caraïbes ».

Aldo Di Felice, président de TLN Media Group et Mauricio Ospina de la Canadian Hispanic Business Alliance ont félicité tous les lauréats.

Le TLN 10 Canadiens hispaniques les plus influents compte 150 lauréats de 18 pays dans 6 provinces. Le programme a été personnellement reconnu par des dirigeants de la société, notamment le secrétaire général de l'Organisation des États américains, les premiers ministres et le Cabinet et le Parlement du Canada. De plus, le programme a obtenu 230 000 \$ en bourses d'études pour la communauté, rehaussé le profil de la communauté et verrouillé des opportunités d'affaires et de logement pendant les Jeux panaméricains de 2015. Plus d'informations sur [www.HispanicBusiness.ca](http://www.HispanicBusiness.ca) et [www.tln.ca/top10/](http://www.tln.ca/top10/).

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## BIOS and GROUP PICTURE

### **DR. AIDAN GOMEZ, Spa/ON: Artificial intelligence expert & Co-founder, Cohere**

Of Spaniard descent, Aidan Gomez is a model for all Canadians. Through hard work and education, he became a global leader in Artificial Intelligence (AI) – and still gives back to those in need. At age 26, he co-founded of Toronto-based Cohere, which according to the New York Times could be worth a whopping \$2 Billion dollars. Founded in 2019, Cohere has raised \$420 million dollars from global investors Nvidia, Salesforce, Inovia Capital, Silicon Valley firm Index Futures, and respected AI researchers Geoffrey Hinton (“the godfather of deep learning”), Fei-Fei Li and Pieter Abbeel. U.S. media conglomerate CNBC named Cohere among the top 50 tech disruptors. Gomez’ research paper “Attention is All You Need” was a global breakthrough moment in AI and chatbots. The paper was cited over 18,000 times helping him establish Cohere as an AI leader. Cohere produces chatbots by using natural language processing, an AI field focused on how computers communicate. The technology uses large neural networks - like the human brain - to teach chatbots how to communicate in a human way. Cohere is considered one of the few companies capable of competing with ChatGPT - a chatbot developed by OpenAI with the backing of billionaire Elon Musk. Dr. Gomez was doctoral student at the University of Oxford with a degree in Computer Sciences from the University of Toronto. Prior to co-founding Cohere, Gomez worked in AI research at Google. On his free time, he volunteers at the Good Shepard to give back to those in need.

### **ANDRES MENDOZA Chi/ON: VP, Canadian Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences & JUNO Awards**

A music industry leader for three decades, Andrés Mendoza is Vice-President of The Canadian Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (CARAS), responsible for marketing, communications, creative, digital/social and partnerships for The JUNO Awards, The Canadian Music Hall of Fame and year-round CARAS initiatives. His career began in Montréal in 1991 with Antara Productions, a Latin Music management and promotion company he co-founded with Edgardo Linares. They worked with artists like Papo Ross, Paulo Ramos, Sikus, Lhasa de Sela, Tito Puente, Mercedes Sosa and programmed events like Oyé! and the AfroCubanismo! Festival at the Banff Centre for the Arts. He moved to Toronto in 1997 and after a short stint at Harbourfront Centre, was hired by major label Virgin/EMI Music. There, Mendoza marketed artists like Manu Chao, Coldplay, Orishas, Corinne Bailey Rae, Thalía, Ben Harper, Lenny Kravitz, Jesse Cook, The Rolling Stones, Sarah Brightman and labels like Realworld, Luaka Bop and EMI Latin. In 2007, he founded music strategy firm, Cuto, working with clients like GRAMMY-winner Alex Cuba, Gold-selling artist Adam Cohen, Universal Music and Canada’s Walk of Fame. He’s been on juries at The Canada Council for the Arts, FACTOR, Ontario Creates, a counselor at Indigenous Music Camp, and recently became a co-founding board member of Speaking Non-English (SNE), an accelerator that identifies, develops and exports Latin Canadian music creators and entrepreneurs. Born in Concepcion, Chile, Mendoza grew up in East Vancouver, speaks four languages and despite years in the industry, is still a beginner at salsa dancing.

### **CARLOS ROJAS-ARBULU Per/ON: Head of Trade & Investment, Global Affairs Canada - Chile**

Since his arrival in Canada in 1989 from Peru, Carlos has built a history of community engagement, leadership and professional growth leading him to represent Canada as a diplomat across 4 continents. As a member of the federal public service in Ottawa he was Senior Departmental Advisor, Office of the Minister of International Cooperation (2015-2017); Director, Environment (2014-2015); Deputy Director, Corporate Social Responsibility (2007-2010); and advisor within the Americas and Asia branches. As a Canadian diplomat, he serves as Counsellor and Head of Trade, Canadian Embassy, Chile (2021); Consul and Head of Trade, Canadian Consulate General, India (2019-2020); Counsellor and Head of the International Assistance, Canadian Embassy, Haiti (2017-2019); Regional Head of Trade, Canadian Embassy, Senegal (2010-2014); First Secretary and Head of Trade, Canadian Embassy, Guatemala (2005-2007). As change agent and community leader, at GAC he serves as Chair of the Latin American Group (2021) and Vice Chair of the Visible Minorities Network (2022) fostering opportunities for racialized Canadians within Canada’s diplomatic service. He has mentored dozens of young officers and has regularly volunteered and supported local business and development initiatives in Canada, Senegal, Guatemala and Haiti. As a student leader he served as President of Quebec’s Federation of Latin American Students (1997–1998) and Concordia University’s Latin American Student Organization (1996–1997) to career opportunities. Carlos holds degrees from Montreal’s Concordia and McGill universities and is fluent in French, English and Spanish. He is the recipient of multiple awards and recognitions from GAC, foreign governments and private sector organizations.

### **DR. EVELYN ENCALADA GREZ, Chi/BC: Migrant activist & Assistant Professor, Simon Fraser U**

Born in Chile, Dr. Evelyn Encalada Grez is an accomplished scholar, global educator, and changemaker. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology and in Labour Studies at Simon Fraser University. She is a first-generation university student and academic among her family working her way into a PhD in Social Justice Education at the University of Toronto. For over 20 years she has been

advocating for the rights of migrant farmworker from Mexico, Guatemala, and the Caribbean and cofounded an award-winning collective, Justice for Migrant Workers, that is at the forefront of the migrant justice movement in Canada. Recently she led a project on the exclusion of Internationally Trained Physicians from the medical profession in British Columbia and won the CERi Emerging Community-Engaged Researcher Award at SFU. As a Public Sociologist, Dr. Encalada Grez has mobilized her research in documentaries and given talks in venues such as Parliament Hill, the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and at the United Nations in New York. She has also worked transnationally with maquila workers in Mexico and Central America and as Lead Travelling Faculty teaching U.S. university students in over six countries throughout the globe. For three semesters before the pandemic, she was also the Academic Director of an intensive social justice study abroad program in her city of birth, Valparaiso. Dr. Encalada Grez is driven by her own family's immigrant working class struggles to effect change and impact through community-oriented research, transformative pedagogy, organizing across borders.

**DR. JAIME ESCALLON, Col/ON: Coordinator, Breast Center of Excellence, Mount Sinai Hospital**

A graduate of the University of El Rosario in Bogota, Colombia, he came to Canada and completed the Gallie Program in General Surgery getting his Fellowship from the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons in 1981. Dr. Escallon went back to Colombia and practiced there for 20 years achieving important positions: Chair of the Department of Surgery and Chief of Staff at the University Hospital, Foundation Santa Fe de Bogota; President of the Colombian Association of General Surgeons; President of the Colombian Association of Clinical Nutrition and the Latin American Federation of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition; Chair of the Committee on Education and Surgical Infection of the Latin American Federation of Surgical Societies. In 2002 he was named Head of the Division of General Surgery at the Toronto Western Hospital. Currently, he is the Coordinator of Breast Surgery and the Breast Center of Excellence at the Mount Sinai Hospital. His practice is now concentrated on treating Breast Cancer Patients, and he works between Mount Sinai Hospital, Princess Margaret Hospital and Women's College Hospital. He participates in several Clinical Trials related to Breast Cancer and is interested in Surgical Education. He is very involved in educating medical students, residents and fellows from all over the world. For the last 16 years, he has directed a General Surgery review course to prepare graduating residents for their Royal College Exam. It is fair to say that most of the practicing surgeons in Canada have taken this course. This course is also offered internationally.

**MP JULIE DZEROWICZ, Mex/ON: MP and Chair, Canada-NATO Parliamentary Association**

Elected in 2015, MP Julie Dzerowicz is the first female Member of Parliament to represent the federal riding of Davenport, re-elected in 2019 and 2021. She serves on the House of Commons Parliamentary Finance Committee and as the Chair of the Canada-NATO Parliamentary Association. Julie is Vice-Chair of ParlAmericas, the Chair of a number of parliamentary-friendship groups, including Canada-Mexico, and has also taken a leadership role on immigration and refugees within the Liberal Caucus team. Her core value is equality, believing that every Canadian should have equal access to opportunity. During the 43rd Parliament, Julie was proud to have introduced the first Guaranteed Basic Income Bill in the House of Commons in Canada—Bill C-273: An Act to Establish a National Strategy for a Guaranteed Basic Income. She continues to strongly believe that Canada's social welfare system needs a new foundation, one that better supports Canadians in the unpredictable economy of the 21st century. As a proud Mexican Canadian, Julie is a champion of the Hispanic and Latin American culture in our country. She initiated Hispanic Day on the Hill in 2016 and has been a strong advocate for better protections and supports for agricultural migrant workers in Canada. As a part of her work with ParlAmericas and in the Canadian Parliament in general, Julie strongly supports closer relations between Canada and Latin America.

**DR. LUIS CISNEROS, Mex/QC: University professor and head of Entreprism incubator**

Luis Cisneros is the first full professor from Mexico at HEC Montreal. In Canada since 2006, he is a pioneer in inclusive entrepreneurship and a key player in the Quebec entrepreneurial ecosystem. His initiatives have sensitized more than 30,000 people and supported the creation of around 500 startups. He founded the Institute for entrepreneurship National-Bank, the Rémi-Marcoux Entrepreneurial Track, Entreprism (Quebec's first inclusive incubator), the Certification in Entrepreneurial Support, the Accelerator Bank-National and the Business families center at HEC Montreal. Those programs combined have received over \$23 million from the private and public sectors funding validating his business acumen. Luis has published extensively on entrepreneurship and family businesses. He co-created and/or co-authored the most important barometers of entrepreneurship and family businesses in Quebec: the Quebec Entrepreneurial Index, the portrait of Montreal Startups, the Report on Immigrant Entrepreneurship, the Entrepreneur's Health Guide and the Family Album (the largest survey of family businesses in Quebec). Luis is a member of the boards of two of Quebec's most important entrepreneurship support NGOs: Evol and Réseau-Mentorat. A renowned international speaker, he has shared the stage with leaders such as Canada's Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Major recent awards: "HEC Montreal's Esdras-Minville Award for contribution to the school's renown"; "Award for teaching excellence", and "Teaching innovation award" - the first Latin-American to receive them. He also received the 2013 Professional

Leadership Award (Latino-American Chamber of Commerce of Quebec). Education: BA and MA (Aguascalientes University), M.Sc. (Université Paris-Dauphine), PhD (HEC Paris).

**MARTHA CHAVES, Nic/ON: Comedian, human rights advocate, and College instructor**

Martha Chaves is an award-winning stand-up comedian, actor, and comedy writer. Daryl Jung from Now Magazine called her “smart, sassy, provocative, and very funny.” She arrived in Canada at 17 years old. First as a student at Concordia University and then as a refugee when her student visa expired - she couldn’t return to Nicaragua because her family had fled the country to find asylum in a country nearby. She started doing stand-up comedy in 1995. Since then, she has become one of Canada’s top comedians. Her infectious, candid style and natural ability to relate to a wide range of audiences make her a popular headliner at clubs, festivals, fundraisers, corporate functions, and keynote speaking engagements. Some of her favourite career credits include entertaining the Canadian Peacekeeping troops in Israel, Egypt, and Afghanistan (2001,2002) and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. (Egale Gala 2018). As a human rights activist, she hosts “When Feminists Rule the World,” a podcast produced by the Nobel Women’s Initiative based in Ottawa. Her TV credits include multiple appearances in the Just For Laughs, the Winnipeg, and the We Are Funny That Way Festivals, to mention a few. She’s also performed in Caminos - Aluna Theatre’s festival. Martha’s often heard on CBC radio’s The Debaters and Laugh Out Loud and is a cast member of CBC’s Because News. She also is a stand-up comedy instructor at Humber College’s comedy writing and performance program and at Toronto Metropolitan University’s Chang School of Continuing Education’s summer workshops.

**MAURICIO RUIZ, Col/ON: Founder, 8 Til Faint artist management agency**

Born in Toronto, Mauricio Ruiz is a Canadian-Colombian award-winning entrepreneur who specializes in music and content with globally renowned clients. Mauricio is the Founder/CEO of 8 Til Faint, an artist management agency with a collective of multi-award winning, multi-platinum selling singer-songwriters and instrumentalists who have amassed a catalogue of over 1 billion global streams and counting. Past and current clients include Marley Bleu, The Halluci Nation, Jessie Reyez, k-os and more. 8 Til Faint artists have received multiple accolades, including GRAMMY nominations and several JUNO Awards. Mauricio was also the recipient of the Music Managers Forum (MMF) Banner Year Award in 2021. Mauricio is also the Founder of Mad Ruk Entertainment, a leading North American creative production agency based in Toronto with its satellite office in Los Angeles. Clients include Calvin Harris, Eminem, The Weeknd, Celine Dion, Future, Daniel Caesar, H.E.R., Nike, Toronto Raptors, Jameson, Roots Canada and several other globally renowned artists & brands. Mad Ruk has gained globally acclaimed nominations and awards including MTV VMA, iHeartRadio MMVA, Prism Prize, JUNO Awards and more. The content agency has amassed over 2 billion views worldwide. He studied Media Arts at Sheridan College in 2002-03 and dropped out after the first semester due to lack of personal funds. He also quickly understood that while a diploma was important, genuine relationship building was the key to success.

**CAPTAIN REY GARCIA-SALAS, Gua/ON: Historian and Captain, Canadian Armed Forces**

Of Guatemalan heritage, Captain Rey Garcia-Salas Vasquez has spearheaded the historical compilation and first-ever awareness campaign for the contributions of the Latin American community in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) during the First and Second World Wars. For the first time and largely due to his efforts, Canadian high schools and universities will have the opportunity to include the Latin American war contributions in the Canadian school curriculum. He has championed the causes of diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness since 2010. His monumental research, featured in media publications from the CBC to CAF/Government of Canada, is included in the 2023 memoir ‘Latin American Soldiers in Canada Remembrance’ Book Vol. 1. Last year and again for the first time in Canada’s history, Garcia-Salas co-organized an exhibit with pictures and historical documents of Latin American Soldiers in the Canadian Armed Forces (“Fields of Sacrifice Graphical Exhibition” at Ottawa’s Gallery 55). He co-organized the first ever Latin American Remembrance Ceremony at Ottawa’s Beechwood National Cemetery and at Toronto’s Hope Catholic Cemetery - both in honour of Private Rafael Rodriguez (1894-1919) – a Mexican who served in the Canadian infantry in the First World War. He has co-led Latin American Heritage activities both in the CAF and externally such as Latin American events and cultural parades in Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto. Captain Garcia-Salas has delivered addresses on topics such as diversity, multiculturalism and Canadian values. Recent awards: Recognitions from the Guatemalan “Cultural Centre Jaguar IX Balam”, the Dominican Human Rights Organization “Escalando Montañas” and LatinCouver.

**\*\*\*COURAGE AWARD\*\*\*: Maria Del Mar(Spa/ON) Actress, ACTRA and Gemini awardee**

Recently, she was diagnosed with stage IV cancer. Then earlier this year, her only son, Gabriele, was killed in a hit & run in Toronto. Maria del Mar has worked in the film, television, voice and theatre industries both north and south of the border for three decades. Her work has been critically-acclaimed by The New York Times and featured in several publications across Canada and the United States. Fuelled by working with such pillars of the

industry as Ed Zwick, David E. Kelley and DreamWorks, Maria's extensive career has included featured roles in *Star Trek: Discovery*, *Monk*, *24*, *Frasier*, *The Practice*, *Lost Girl*, *Hannibal*, *Murdoch Murder Mysteries*, *Call Me Fitz* and *Street Legal* to name a few. As well as being a lead actor in three series, Maria has had films premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival, and in Cannes. Nominated for several awards, Maria del Mar won an ACTRA Award for "Outstanding Female Performance" for *Terminal City*, a Canadian Comedy Award for "Best Performance by a Female in a Film" for *A Touch of Grey* and has been an ensemble member of several Gemini Award-winning series.



**Photo credit:** The Essential channel / Isabel Inclan

L-R: Laura Marin (Copa Airlines), Ilan Cohen (ILAC), *Nicholas Gomez* (for *Dr. Aidan Gomez*), *Dr. Luis Cisneros*, *Dr. Jaime Escallón*, *MP Julie Dzerowicz*, *Cap. Rey Garcia-Salas*, *Andres Gomez*, *Mauricio Ruiz*, *Roxana Escobar* (for *Dr. Evelyn Encalada*), *Carlos Rojas-Arbulu*, *Maria Del Mar* (also for *Martha Chaves*), Corie McDougall (Government of Ontario), Daniel Tisch Echavarría (OCC), Jonathan Kolber (ILAC), Mauricio Ospina (CHBA).