



Latino Affairs  
Commission



Lorain County  
Community College

# 2018 DISTINGUISHED HISPANIC OHIOAN AWARDS GALA

Saturday, October 27, 2018

**UNLOCKING LATINO  
STUDENT SUCCESS**





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WASTE**

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# 2018 AWARDEES

## **Nuestra Familia [Our Family] Awardees**

ABLE– Dayton, Jessica Ramos & Kathleen Kersh,

University of Cincinnati, Bleuzette Marshall, PhD

Mark Curnutte, Cincinnati

Cuyahoga Community College, Magda Gomez, Cleveland

Dr. Charles Hamilton, Columbiana

The Kroger Company, Dan De La Rosa

Edwin Oley, Lorain

University of Toledo, Dr. Sharon Gaber

## **Lorain County Community College Award**

The Lorain County Community College Foundation

## **Distinguished Hispanic Ohioans**

Karla Boldery, Cincinnati

Theresa Castellanos Morris, Toledo

El Centro de Servicios Sociales, Inc., Victor Leandry, Lorain

Maria Goeser, Springfield

Mireika “Marie” Kobayashi, Cincinnati

Bruno Serrano, Struthers

Spanish American Committee, Ramonita Vargas, Cleveland

Warm Hugs, Cecille Figueroa Narvaez & Dasha Peñas-Johnson, Dayton

## **Special Recognition Award**

Ohio State Representative Dan Ramos

## **Latino Military Service of Distinction Awardees**

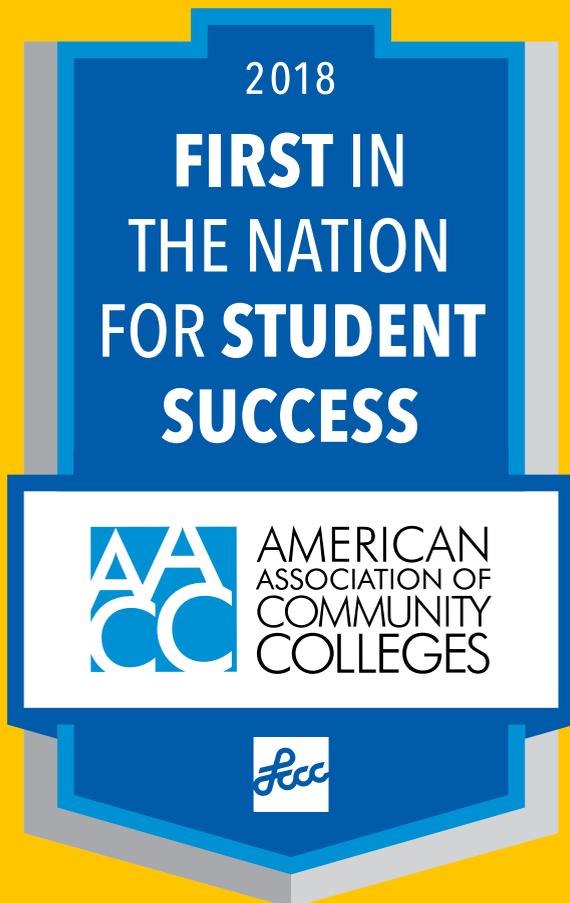
Jason Dominguez, Corporal, US Marine Corps, Columbus

Alfredo Jimenez, Sergeant, US Air Force, Huber Heights

Edwin Romero, Sergeant E-5, US Army, Boardman

Juan Antonio Solíz, Corporal, US Marine Corps, Defiance

# ***Congratulations to the Distinguished Hispanic Ohioan Award Winners!***



## **LCCC in the Community!**

The LCCC Lorain Learning Center at City Center and the LCCC Lorain Community Learning Center at Lorain High School are two great options where you can prepare for the future you want with the education you need!

**[lorainccc.edu/lorain](http://lorainccc.edu/lorain)**

**(440) 233-7240**

*The LCCC Foundation proudly supports LCCC and its partners who uplift and inspire our community.*



***Lorain County  
Community College***

**Your Story  
Starts Here**

# **PROGRAM**

## **Welcome Performance**

Miss Ohio Latinas

## **Color Guard**

Pledge of Allegiance: Commissioner Tony Simms-Howell

National Anthem: Catherine Woskobnick

## **Welcome**

Lisa Brown, Executive Director, Lorain County Community College Foundation

Tony Ortiz, Chair, Ohio Latino Affairs Commission

Lilleana Cavanaugh, Executive Director, Ohio Latino Affairs Commission

## **Invocation**

Rev. William A. Thaden, Sacred Heart Chapel, Lorain, OH

## **Video Messages**

## **Dinner Break & Entertainment**

## **Keynote Address**

Aurea L. Rivera

## **Nuestra Familia Awards**

## **Lorain County Community College Award**

## **Distinguished Hispanic Ohioans Awards**

## **Special Recognition Award**

## **Latino Military Service Awards**

## **Closing**

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AND URBAN AFFAIRS  
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SELECT COMMITTEE  
ON ETHICS  
VETERANS AFFAIRS

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 27, 2018

Dear Friends:

Please allow me to extend my congratulations as the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs (OCHLA) celebrates its 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Distinguished Hispanic Ohioan Awards Gala, in partnership with Lorain County Community College and the Lorain County Community College Foundation.

All of you are a testament how Hispanic American culture has enriched Ohio throughout its history. You are business owners and entrepreneurs, educators and students, workers and advocates, and leaders in the community. You serve our nation honorably in the military.

The awardees tonight serve as role models across Ohio, and help to make our state a more welcoming and inclusive place. At a time when there's too much divisiveness in our politics, your work, and unifying celebrations like this one, are so important.

Thank you to the OCHLA for your leadership in our state, and thanks to each of you for your work in communities across Ohio. I wish you all the best for another successful event, and in the year ahead.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

ROB PORTMAN  
OHIO

COMMITTEES:  
ENERGY AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
FINANCE  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
HOMELAND SECURITY  
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 27, 2018

Ms. Lilleana Cavanaugh  
Executive Director  
Ohio Latino Affairs Commission  
Riffe Center  
77 South High Street, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Ms. Cavanaugh,

I extend my warmest welcome to all gathered at the 2018 Distinguished Hispanic Ohioan Awards Gala presented by the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission and Lorain Community College. I applaud the outstanding dedication of you and your staff to preserving and promoting Hispanic culture in the community and across the state of Ohio

Please accept my best wishes for a memorable celebration.

Sincerely,



Rob Portman  
United States Senator

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PHONE: (614) 469-6774

420 MADISON AVENUE  
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TOLEDO, OH 43604  
PHONE: (419) 259-3895

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# Lorain County Community College

Office of the President

October 18, 2018



Distinguished Guests,

Lorain County Community College is honored to partner with the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission to present the 2018 Distinguished Hispanic Ohioan Awards Gala. Lorain County is home to Ohio's largest Hispanic population and we are proud to come together to celebrate the individuals and organizations who are *Unlocking Latino Student Success* in this community and throughout Ohio.

At Lorain County Community College, every student's dream matters. This simple philosophy is what drives strategy and innovation. This holistic, student-centric approach has helped countless students achieve their dreams through LCCC and is a main reason why LCCC was recognized in 2018 as the national leader for student success by the American Association of Community Colleges.

However great these achievements, students still face great structural barriers impacting their ability to access higher education. Recognizing the Hispanic population as a vital part of the fabric of our community, LCCC is dedicated to the development and support of resources to educate and empower Latinos. We strive to stay connected to our students and remove barriers – keeping them on track to a degree or certificate and eventually a career.

Our commitment to the community is, and always has been, our number one priority. We will always do our best to maintain a diverse campus that is reflective of our county. But we can't do it alone, which makes partnerships with organizations like the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission an essential component in encouraging and supporting anyone with a dream for an education.

I sincerely congratulate everyone involved in and honored at the Distinguished Hispanic Ohioan Awards Gala for their role in supporting Latino students and the achievement of their dreams.

Sincerely,

Marcia J. Ballinger, Ph. D.  
President



# Latino Affairs Commission

John Kasich, Governor  
Lilleana Cavanaugh, MBA, Director

2017-2018  
41st Board of Commissioners

October 27, 2018

Honored Guests,

Welcome! ¡Bienvenidos! On behalf of Governor Kasich and our Board of Commissioners, we welcome you to the Distinguished Hispanic Ohioan Awards celebration.

We are honored to host this event in Lorain, Ohio at the Lorain County Community College. Indeed, this is the first time this celebration is held outside of our capital city and with good reason— Celebrating our communities’ outstanding leaders around the state opens the opportunity to engage Hispanic Ohioans with each other. Today, we welcome visitors from all major cities in Ohio and share with them the best that Lorain has to offer. Thank you for being great hosts!

At a time where there is much change and uncertainty, Hispanic Ohioans are resolute and continue to make strides towards a better future. The road is not easy and the challenges are many; yet, our Distinguished Hispanic Ohioans, Nuestra Familia (Our Family) and the Latino Military Service of Distinction Award recipients remind us that together, we can overcome and shape a stronger state with improvements and opportunities for all. Our community in Ohio will soon hit the 500,000 mark; we will be half a million Hispanic Ohioans in the short term and we have the obligation to continue to forge our place in society and build our future leaders.

We want to thank all our partners for supporting the effort to “Unlock Student Success,” as these young people are our future. We also appreciate your initiative to build the scholarship that will support Latinos including Puerto Rican families many of whom were displaced by hurricane Maria over a year ago.

Congratulations again to all our deserving awardees!

Tony Ortiz  
Chairman of the Board

**Luis “Tony” Ortiz**  
Chair  
Dayton

**Michael Florez**  
Vice Chair  
Cincinnati

**Jose Feliciano, Jr.**  
Secretary  
Aurora

**Beth Guzmán-Bowman**  
Columbus

**Gregory Guzmán, Ph.D.**  
Maumee

**Dan Molina**  
Loveland

**Rev. Juan Rivera**  
Campbell

**Mary Santiago**  
Lorain

**V. Anthony Simms-Howell**  
Cincinnati

**Emanuel Torres**  
Columbus

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**Rick Perales**  
State Representative  
District 73 ~ Greene County

**Dan Ramos**  
State Representative  
District 56 ~ Lorain County

**Gayle Manning**  
Senator  
District 13 ~ Huron & Lorain Counties

**Charleta Tavares**  
Senator  
District 15 ~ Franklin County



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**Congratulations to the 2018 Distinguished Hispanic Ohioan Awardees!**

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# Aurea L. **Rivera** Dayton

Ms. Aurea L. Rivera, an entrepreneur, mentor, and now Lead Associate with Booz Allen Hamilton, Dayton Office, continues to serve our nation in a new contracting role in support of the Department of Defense. Prior to her position at Booz Allen Hamilton she served as Defense Intelligence Senior Leader, Senior Intelligence Engineer, Data Exploitation, National Air and Space Intelligence Center, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

Ms. Rivera is originally from Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, where she graduated with honors from University of Puerto Rico in 1980. She was one of only six females graduating with a degree in

electrical engineering that year. She began her career with NASA as a satellite ground support analyst and has since held a variety of engineering and senior technical management positions within the intelligence community.

Among the awards received by Ms. Rivera in her 34 years of federal civil service, she was selected as the Aeronautical Systems Center Woman of the Year for Science and Engineering in 1988, and received the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's Distinguished Analysis Award in 2008.



# Kathleen “Katie” Kersh

ABLE - Dayton

Kathleen Kersh is a Staff Attorney with Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE) in Dayton, Ohio. She represents low-income immigrants and agricultural workers in immigration, employment and civil rights matters. She specializes in working with refugees and victims of crime, including domestic violence and human trafficking. Kathleen has also worked with the Executive Office

for Immigration Review’s Immigration Court in Detroit, the National Immigrant Justice Center’s Asylum Program, and the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School, where she was a student in the Human Trafficking Clinic. She is a native of Dayton, Ohio.



Congratulations Nuestra Familia Awardees  
Kathleen Kersh and Jessica Ramos!





# Jessica Ramos

ABLE - Dayton

Jessica A. Ramos is an attorney with Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE), a non-profit organization in Ohio that provides legal assistance to help low-income individuals achieve self-reliance, equal justice, and equal economic opportunity. Jessica represents clients in immigration and civil rights cases, and she has been recognized for her extensive experience working with Unaccompanied Immigrant Children, including testifying before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations in April 2018 where she made recommendations regarding protecting this vulnerable population. She played a pivotal role establishing recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals' (DACA) rights to certain state benefits, including driver's licenses and in-state tuition. Jessica is very active in Welcome Dayton, an initiative that seeks to support immigrant access to

services, integration into the community, and job development and entrepreneurship, and was appointed by the Dayton City Commission to the Welcome Dayton Standing Committee. Jessica also serves as the State Director of Civil Rights for the Ohio Chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and was named Ohio LULAC's Woman of the Year in 2017. Jessica is an alumna of The Ohio State University with a bachelor's degree in Spanish and a master's degree in Hispanic Linguistics, and she is a graduate of the University of Toledo College of Law. She reluctantly enjoys long-distance running and while a long-time resident of Ohio, her native state of West Virginia will always be "home."



Congratulations Nuestra Familia Awardees  
Kathleen Kersh and Jessica Ramos!





# Mark Curnutte

Cincinnati

Mark Curnutte is the Race and Social Justice beat reporter for The Cincinnati Enquirer. He was twice selected the top reporter in Ohio, for work produced in 2012 and 2013, and was part of The Enquirer's team for "Seven Days of Heroin," the 2018 Pulitzer Prize winner for Local Reporting. He is the author of "A Promise of Haiti: A Reporter's Notes on Families and Daily Lives" (Vanderbilt University Press), a 2011 social sciences national book-of-the-year honoree by Foreword Reviews. He is an adjunct professor of sociology and journalism at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, his alma mater, and worked in 2015

as the vice president of communications and marketing for the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio, Cincinnati. At The Enquirer, he has written extensively on refugee resettlement and immigration issues, including DACA, the Trump administration's Muslim ban, unaccompanied minors, and the forced separation of immigrant children from their parents at the U.S. southern border.



Cuyahoga  
Community  
College



Cuyahoga  
Community College  
**Magda Gomez**

**Mission**

To provide high quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities and services — including university transfer, technical and lifelong learning programs —that promote individual development and improve the overall quality of life in a multicultural community.

**Vision**

Cuyahoga Community College will be recognized as an exemplary teaching and learning community that fosters service and student success. The College will be a valued resource and leader in academic quality, cultural enrichment, and economic development characterized by continuous improvement, innovation, and community responsiveness.

**Values**

To successfully fulfill the mission and vision, Cuyahoga Community College is consciously committed to diversity, integrity, academic excellence, and achievement of individual and institutional goals. We are dedicated to building trust, respect, and confidence among our colleagues, students, and the community.





# Dr. Charles **Hamilton** Columbiana

Pastor Chuck is the lead pastor of the Upper Room Fellowship in Columbiana, Ohio. Pastor Chuck came to the Upper Room in 1979 and became the lead pastor in 2002. Beginning in the spring of 2014 Chuck began to transition as the president of Harvest Preparation International Ministry.

Pastor Chuck has a BA & Masters of Arts in ministry and a Doctorate of Ministry.

Chuck married his wife Lynn in 1970, they have five children and 12 grandchildren.

Since the early 1990's pastor Chuck has been involved in training leaders around the world with Harvest Preparation International Ministries. Pastor Chuck has ministered, trained, equipped, and encouraged these leaders through seminars and conferences. He has ministered in Mexico, Cuba, Kenya, India, Nepal, Uganda, Nigeria, and Rwanda.

Chuck's passion is mentoring, training, and discipling leaders in the body of Christ as well as networking and building relationships and ministries in the Kingdom of God. Chuck is a certified John Maxwell trainer.





# The Kroger Company Dan De La Rosa

Barney Kroger invested his life savings of \$372 to open a grocery store at 86 Pearl Street in downtown Cincinnati in 1883. Kroger was the son of a merchant and operated his new business with a simple motto: Be particular. Never sell anything you would not want yourself.

This credo has served The Kroger Co. well during the past 135 years. At The Kroger Co., we are dedicated to our purpose: to Feed the Human Spirit™. We are 453,000 associates who serve nearly nine million customers every day in 2,793 retail food stores under a variety of local banner names in 35 states and the District of Columbia. Our Company has been recognized as one of America's most generous companies for our support of more

than 100 Feeding America food bank partners, breast cancer research and awareness, the military and their families, and more than 145,000 community organizations including schools. As a leader in supplier diversity, we are a proud member of the Billion Dollar Roundtable. Kroger also belongs to the National Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

In 2018, The Kroger Co. was named to Fortune Magazine's Change the World list, debuting in the sixth spot. The company was recognized for its bold social impact plan Zero Hunger | Zero Waste, which aims to end hunger in the communities Kroger calls home and eliminate waste across the company by 2025.





# Edwin Oley Lorain

Edwin M. Oley, System Vice President of Mercy Health and CEO of the Lorain Region, has dedicated more than 40 years to improving the health of Lorain County residents as both a clinician and a leader.

Graduating from Ohio Northern University's College of Pharmacy in 1977, Oley soon relocated his family to Lorain County and practiced clinically at St. Joseph Hospital for several years and in 1996, joined the executive team of the newly merged St. Joseph and Lorain Community Hospitals.

Mr. Oley's leadership has been instrumental in bringing impactful health care resources to Lorain County. He oversaw the development of a regional cancer program, with one of the outcomes being a creative relationship with University Hospitals and the construction of the Mercy Cancer Center – resulting in comprehensive cancer care for those in Lorain County.

In 2000, Mr. Oley was made the CEO of Oberlin Medical Center, which only months before had announced its imminent closing. Shortly after, Oley was able to restore services to the community, attract high-caliber physicians and bring financial

stability. Today, his leadership as Chief Executive Officer at Mercy Health – Lorain has allowed him to shape a high-quality, compassionate health care organization that has achieved countless designations and awards for its quality, patient experience and recognition as one of the best places to work in Northeast Ohio, seven times and counting.

Oley has forged lasting relationships with both community, corporate and government-based organizations that has resulted in projects that have had a profound impact on expansion of access to care throughout Lorain County. He also serves on numerous boards and has won leadership accolades from local and national organizations for his service.

He is the father of four boys and one daughter, and resides in Avon with his wife Loretta.





# University of Cincinnati Marshall Bleuzette, Ph.D.

The University of Cincinnati empowers individuals to transform their lives and achieve their highest potential in order to create opportunity and to develop educated and engaged communities throughout our city, state, nation and world.

Our bedrock values – affirmed in our very mission statement and fundamental to our very purpose – commits us to excellence and to an inclusive environment for all students, faculty and staff. Indeed, from our earliest years as a municipal university, UC's campus was home to Latino students. Our first Latino alumnus – Thomas D'Aquino e Castro of Brazil – was one of only seven students in UC's first graduating class of 1878. Three more Latino students graduated the very next year.

This tradition of welcome and success continues today. For instance, the university originated and annually hosts the Ohio Latino Student Summit to connect, empower & build community

while enhancing the Latino student leadership experience in the entire state. UC is privileged to provide time, resources and energy to connect and support the Latino community in other ways – whether via scholarships; student participation in events like the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute Conference; sponsorship of our Latino student, faculty and alumni groups; and ally training among faculty and staff.

Similarly, it is our privilege to partner with numerous groups and organizations in support of important efforts like the Ohio Latino Education Summit, the Ohio Latino Health Summit, the Greater Cincinnati Hispanic Scholarship Fund Gala and the Latino Leaders Collaborative.





# University of Toledo **Dr. Sharon Gaber**

Founded in 1872, The University of Toledo is a public research university where students earn a world-class education. Located in northwest Ohio, UT is one of 14 public research universities in Ohio, and has an enrollment of more than 20,000 students.

The University of Toledo is known as one of America's most comprehensive universities, with over 120 undergraduate and 150 graduate programs. UT includes a teaching hospital—The University of Toledo Medical Center—and 13 colleges that offer degrees such as law, medicine, business, pharmacy, engineering, astronomy, nursing, education and the arts.

The University has been ranked the best four-year college in Ohio for its affordability, flexibility and student services, and is the top-ranked institution in the region – and second in Ohio – for the social mobility of its graduates. Additionally, UT ranks among the highest of Ohio's public universities for its graduates' income mobility.

Within President Sharon L. Gaber's first year at UT, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion was established, which includes Dr. Willie McKether as its vice president, as well as Dr. Michele Soliz, associate vice president of student success and inclusion.

The University of Toledo strives to ensure Latino students have myriad resources to help them succeed, including: Somos UT, Latino-focused recruiting events; Latino faculty, leaders and alumni who serve as mentors; Hispanic student organizations; and many Latino events throughout the year, including numerous celebrations during Hispanic Heritage Month.





# FOUNDATION

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*Supporting the Mission & Vision  
of Lorain County Community College*

## **Mission, Vision, Values & Strategic Priorities**

In September 2015, Lorain County Community College’s Board of Trustees adopted Vision 2020 – a refreshed strategic plan outlining the College’s mission, values, priorities and initiatives – which will guide the College through the year 2020.

“Vision 2020 sets the course for the College looking toward 2020. It builds off of the progress made to date in fulfilling our current strategic plan, Vision 2.0, while responding to a rapidly changing environment,” said LCCC President Dr. Roy A. Church. “Vision 2020 clearly defines our commitment – as the community’s college – as to how we can best serve the needs and aspirations of this community.”

## **Mission Statement**

Lorain County Community College Foundation, a non-profit organization, assembles and utilizes resources in innovative ways to accelerate the mission and vision of Lorain County Community College.

## **Vision Statement**

Enhance our community’s quality of life by investing in key Lorain County Community College priorities that present the greatest impact and growth of opportunities for the people of our community.

## **Foundation Strategic Priorities**

The LCCC Foundation has established initiatives around six strategic priorities to establish the Foundation’s top strategies for accelerating the mission of the College. They are:

- Ensure support of LCCC Ballot Initiatives
- Broaden Leadership Support Base
- Launch Strategic Fundraising Campaigns
- Enhance Innovation Fund for Stability
- Support Alternative Revenue Sources
- Develop LCCC Foundation Capacity.



# Karla Boldery

Cincinnati

Mrs. Boldery is currently a Business Coach for HCDC Business Center – The oldest and largest Incubator in the Southwest region where the most innovative and technology startups in the region see their initial home. She leverages her knowledge, expertise and connections to help startup companies reach their next level of growth. She formerly worked as District Director and Business Advisor for the Ohio SBDC.

Karla has a Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from the “Technological Institute Monterrey” One of the top universities in Mexico and a Master of Science in Business Informatics from Northern Kentucky University (N.K.U.).

She is a Certified Business Advisor by the University of Toledo. She holds a certificate on Business Incubation Management by the International Business Innovation Association.

Founder and host of a live radio show: “Miercoles de Negocios” (Business Wednesdays) at La Mega Cincinnati 97.7FM since

February of 2012 a live radio broadcast speaking on topics of interest for aspiring and current entrepreneurs. She is also founder and facilitator for the first Latina Entrepreneur Academy in Cincinnati.

She is constantly involved with the Hispanic community through either business connections or community volunteer efforts. She is a current member of the Hispanic Chamber Board of Directors, and past President of the LULAC (League of United Latin-Americans Citizens) Cincinnati Chapter a civil right organization for Hispanics.

She is a mother of 3: Carlos, Isaac and Kael, loves to travel, constantly eager to learn and always passionate to help make a positive impact in the community that we live in.





# Theresa Castellanos Morris

Toledo

As a noteworthy Latina in NW Ohio, Theresa's service to the Latino Community is not only statewide, but also national. During her distinguished career, she has now earned her place in her history. Ms. Morris is now the longest serving Latina Congressional Staff Assistant in the history of the United States.

Theresa is a proud graduate of the Toledo Public School system. She possesses her Bachelor of Arts (Alma College, Michigan) and Master of Organizational Leadership (Lourdes University, Sylvania) degree. Her capstone focused on Women's leadership in the Middle East/North Africa region. She recently earned a certificate in Minority Executive Leadership through the Center for Nonprofit Resources and is currently a member of the Toledo Police Citizens Police Academy.

Theresa's efforts and passion extend into our community. Whether it has been supporting farm workers during the Mt. Olive pickle strike; supporting federal grants that benefit local organizations such as the Sofia Quintero Arts and Cultural

Center; or providing information/guidance on changes to DACA, Theresa is always on the front lines of progress and struggle.

Beyond NW Ohio, she has resided in Chicago and Mexico City. While in Chicago, she worked in Public Relations at the Museum of Contemporary Art. She has worked in Development at WGTE Public Broadcasting. In 1994, she joined U.S. Representative Marcy Kaptur's Congressional staff and has served in several capacities including: personal assistant, grants coordinator, projects assistant and currently as Immigration/State Department/Homeland Security specialist for Ms. Kaptur.





# El Centro de Servicios Sociales, Inc.

## **Victor Leandry**

Lorain

Founded in 1974, El Centro is the Latino social services organization whose mission is to enhance the socio-economic status of the greater Lorain County community by providing essential social, educational, cultural, and community development services.

El Centro offers programs in four service areas: Adult Supportive Services, Youth Leadership, Money Management, and Community Development. The Adult Supportive Services serves as the beacon of hope to many Latino families in Lorain. The program provides over 13 specialized services including United Way 211 in Spanish, Diabetes prevention education classes, Mental Health Navigator, citizenship classes, food pantry, English classes, and other services. El Dorado Senior services focuses exclusively on Latino elders, providing transportation, supportive services and socialization gatherings. Since September 2017, El Centro has played a lead role in helping Puerto Rican families displaced by Hurricane Maria resettle in Lorain County; having served over 300 families to date, but also serving as their voice at a National level.

In 2018, El Centro's Board and staff was honored by the Ohio chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (Region 2) for being an agency who upholds the mission of social work; and received National recognition by UnidosUS (formerly known as NCLR) with the Helen Rodriguez-Trias Health Award during their 2018 Annual Conference in Washington, DC. This award recognizes El Centro's contributions to improving the health and well-being of the Latino community in Lorain by providing culturally competent health care access and services, education, and social services to individuals and families in Lorain County.





# Maria Goeser

Springfield

Maria Goeser was born in Delaware, Ohio the daughter to Esteban and Nemesia Cardosa, who traveled to Ohio as farmworkers. Her parents sent her at a young age with family members to work harvesting tomatoes, so that she would understand how physical and demanding the work is and to learn the hardships of being a farmworker. This taught her to stay in school and finish her education.

In 1989, she began her state career as a Migrant Outreach Specialist in Ohio, traveling to locate and assist farmworkers. Her duties included referring workers to jobs, training opportunities, and supportive services. Maria has always advocated for farmworkers rights, and collaborated with other farmworker organizations to assure that all services were made available to farmworkers. She co-started the Latino Coalition in the Dayton area for better networking of agencies who wanted to assist farmworkers.

As the first female State Monitor Advocate for the State of Ohio, she ensures equitable services for farmworkers, and manages Employment Services and the Ohio Complaint System. The Farmworker Outreach Program includes providing farmworkers employment services, facilitating the Agriculture Recruitment System process, and monitoring the provision of services through the Employment Services at the state and local levels, ensuring that all services provided are in accordance with federal regulations.

Through working in various positions within the State, later being promoted to State Monitor Advocate, Maria felt that she had come full circle. She once again had the opportunity to work with farmworkers. She looks forward to retiring soon from state service, but plans to spend time with family, friends and her Latino Community.





# Mireika "Marie" **Kobayashi** Cincinnati

Mireika "Marie" Kobayashi, M.Ed is currently a Student Services Manager in Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) helping to oversee English for Speakers of Other Languages supports and services. Over the past 16 years, she has worked in consultation with administrators, teachers, families, and community leaders, including those representing the Ohio Commission of Hispanic/Latino Affairs, the state and Cincinnati councils of the League of United Latino American Citizens (LULAC), and the Immigrants with Dignity Coalition, and served as board member on local organizations such as the English Language Learning Foundation, Cincinnati COMPASS, and Live-a-Language Foundation in order to ensure that supports are in place to enhance the acquisition of languages, particularly academic English, for diverse learners in the region and across the state of Ohio. Her collaborative efforts with partners have resulted in expanded opportunities for students and recognition of the

district from a national level and state level via multi-million dollar Ohio Department of Education and federal grants pertaining to culturally and linguistically responsive, Multi-Tiered systems of supports. Grant funding allowed for the translation of over 500 documents that districts across the state of Ohio can access via an online document repository ([futureclassdocuments.com](http://futureclassdocuments.com)) as well as licenses for Rosetta Stone software to ALL parents, students, and staff members from CPS and Princeton City School districts in an effort to reduce linguistic barriers for the immigrant community.





# Bruno Serrano Struthers

Bruno Serrano. Born in Lima, Peru on July 31 1979. He moved to the United States in November 2013. On March 2, 2017, he became a newly naturalized American citizen. He has become a proud United States citizen.

He went to law school in his native Peru with the purpose to help others and be a human rights activist.

Life was quite difficult in Peru due in part to the increase in drug trafficking. This had a huge impact on Bruno. He has fought and advocated for social justice issues, and civil and equal rights since his early years in Peru, and continue to do so here in the United States.

Bruno was the President of the YSU Students Latino Organization in 2016-2017. This opportunity made him developed his leadership skills and helped him serve his community by organizing fundraisers, events promoting the Hispanic cultures, and

advocating for civil rights of those that don't have a loud voice to fight for their rights.

He has been heavily involved with YSU's radio station, serving as host and producer of "Rookery en Español."

He still attending YSU, currently working as an IT Administrator and Trainer, while holding the beginning stages of his IT business, and volunteering in within his community and foreign aid.

He has been the recipient of multiple academic achievement awards. As he continues helping his community and creating awareness of his Latin origins, he strives every day to become a better person and reach his career goals.





## Spanish American Committee **Ramonita Vargas** Cleveland

Ramonita Vargas serves as the Executive Director for the Spanish American Committee, Ohio's first and largest Hispanic human services agency. Ramonita began working for the Spanish American Committee over 30 years ago and has dedicated her entire career to serving Cleveland's Hispanic community. She served as the agency's Fiscal Manager for 26 years before being selected to serve as the Executive Director in 2010.

Ms. Vargas earned the trust and respect of the Spanish American Committee Board of Trustees because of her strong character and flawless record in her fiscal management practices. Her knowledge of the agency's internal operations as well as her passion and dedication to the organization's mission of "serving as a gateway for socioeconomic success for the entire Hispanic community" made her a perfect candidate for the Executive Director position.

Ms. Vargas embodies the agency's purpose of moving individuals within the community to grow professionally and to support our community as leaders. Ramonita has always believed that everything in life is possible if you work hard to achieve them. She earned her bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a focus on Nonprofit Management from Devry University in 2014.

Ramonita Vargas is the oldest of seven children and her parents are both from Puerto Rico, she is also a mother of two children a son and daughter and is grandmother of four. She is a lifelong resident of Cleveland's near west-side community where she serves to this day. Her compassion, dedication, hard work and loyalty have converted her in one of the more important Hispanic Leaders in Cleveland.





# Warm Hugs

## **Cecile Figueroa Narvaez**

## **Dasha Peñas-Johnson**

### Dayton

Cecille Figueroa Narváez and Dasha Peñas-Johnson are two 14-year-old high school students, both with a passion of helping those in need, especially children. Cecille was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico and moved to Oakwood, Ohio when she was 6 years old. Dasha was born in Dayton. Two years ago, when they were only 12 years old, they started Warm Hugs with a humble mission: provide a small blanket to Hispanic immigrant children in the area who lack the basic necessities. For them, each blanket is a symbolic warm hug full of love. That not only makes the children feel loved, but also that they are special, welcomed, and loved.

The pair greatly enjoys what they do, and that they can do it together. This winter, they plan to surpass the numbers from the previous two years by increasing the support from schools district and companies willing to do blanket drives to benefit Warm Hugs. They found a cause that we can really connect to and have a heart for seeing the children's faces each time they receive a blanket is priceless. More than just providing blankets, they want them to be a symbol of love, hope, and perseverance.

So far, they have distributed over 1,000 blankets in the Miami Valley area and Cincinnati. Last year, in hopes of helping more people, they decided to send part of the funds to Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley in Texas so they could purchase blankets for children receiving their services.





# State Representative Dan Ramos

Lorain

Dan Ramos was elected State Representative in 2010, taking the oath of office in January 2011. This is his first public office. A Lorain native of Puerto Rican descent, Ramos is a graduate of Lorain Admiral King High School and The Ohio State University. He is the first Hispanic Representative of either caucus in either the House or Senate to serve in a leadership position, serving as Assistant Minority Whip.

Prior to elected office, Ramos began his legislative service as a Legislative Aide to then Representative Joseph F. Koziura and later worked as a Senior Policy and Budget Analyst under Minority Leader Beatty and Speaker Budish. In addition to his work in the Ohio House of Representatives, Ramos has also been a caseworker at the Lorain County Department of Job & Family Services.

While in office, Ramos has worked to help pass comprehensive state pension reform, ensuring the long-term solvency and funding requirements of each of the five pension systems serving more than one million Ohioans. As a member of the House committee that considered Senate Bill 5, Ramos has remained an outspoken proponent of the right to collectively bargain believing that the key to Ohio's future successes is a strong middle class.

Additionally, Ramos has fought against the cuts to Local Government Funding, to overturn the Citizens United Supreme Court ruling, to stop the attacks against women and their personal healthcare choices, and to expand need-based college funding to increase college completion rates in Ohio. Ramos continues to be an advocate of protecting our environment and developing a green energy infrastructure, better funding our schools and addressing the constitutional issues raised in the Ohio Supreme Court's decision more than a decade ago and improving government transparency so that citizens have increased access to the work done in the Statehouse.

In addition to leadership positions on House standing committees, Ramos serves on the Ohio Commission on Hispanic and Latino Affairs, the Ohio School Facilities Commission, the Ohio Retirement Study Council, and as an executive member to the Council of State Government's Great Lakes Legislative Caucus. State Representative Dan Ramos resides in Lorain.



# Honored to care for our community

At Mercy Health,  
we're committed to caring for  
our community –  
mind, body and spirit.

We congratulate those being honored  
this evening and applaud their efforts  
in extending their ministry to all in  
Lorain County.



**MERCYHEALTH**



# Jason Dominguez

Corporal, US Marine Corps.  
Columbus

Jason Dominguez serves as Chief of Staff for Nationwide Funds. In August 2015, he joined Nationwide as a Management Associate with the Financial Services Leadership Rotation Program. Prior to joining Nationwide, Jason served as Assistant Director, and then as Interim Director of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services as a member of Governor John Kasich's Cabinet and was the highest ranking appointed Latino official in the State of Ohio. During his term, he helped create and advocate for reforms, programs and legislation that positively impacted the lives of veterans and their families.

In 2005, Jason deployed to al-Anbar Province, Iraq with Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines where he led his marines through 12 major combat operations and 73 combat and security patrols. During the deployment, 22 Marines and one Navy Corpsman made the ultimate sacrifice, while the company was awarded 59 Purple Hearts. After returning home from Iraq,

Jason served as the Foreign Affairs & Military Legislative Aide for Congressman Patrick Tiberi on Capitol Hill, and then as part of his District Office staff.

Jason has a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the Ohio State University along with a Master of Business Administration from the Fisher College of Business.

He and his wife Raven reside in Columbus, Ohio with their sons, Elijah & Gideon, along with their English bulldog, Hank-The-Tank.





# Alfredo Jimenez

Sergeant, US Air Force  
Huber Heights

Alfredo Jimenez born in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico to proud parents Julia and John Jimenez. In 1965, they migrated to Brooklyn N.Y. then later settled in Manhattans lower eastside. He attended catholic schools and graduated from St. Agnes H.S. It was here that he developed his love and relationship with his Lord. He attended Kingsborough Community College where he majored in "broadcasting and communication". In 1982, he enlisted and served in the United States Air Force. He was honorably discharged and then began his career with Lockheed Support System Inc. (LSSI) at Edwards AFB.

He transferred east to Wright-Patterson A.F.B Gas Turbine Engine shop in Dayton, Ohio.

In 1991, he took and passed my Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) exam and received his Airframe and Power plant license. His hard work and dedication earned the Henry Arnold

Achievement Award for his support to the Arnold Engineering Development center (AEDC).

He now manages the only vacuum pump repair facility at Wright Patterson AFB. In 2011, he started a growing and thriving business "Absolute Vacuum Corporation AVC". He is now a member of the Knights of Columbus, the League of United Latin American Citizen 'LULAC', and he sits on the board of the Puerto Rican, American, and Caribbean Organization known as (PACO) even serving as president for two years.

He has been married to his wife Virginia for 36 years, they have raised three wonderful adults, and now they spoil their one granddaughter.





# Edwin Romero

Sergeant E-5, US Army  
Boardman

Edwin Romero was born on January 22, 1949. Throughout his formative years, he studied hard before joining the United States Army and serving from June 1967 to June 1970. He served as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg, NC, and with the 101st Airborne Division in Viet Nam where he received the 82nd Airborne Division's Trooper of the Year Award with automatic promotion to Sergeant E-5 in May 1969.

After leaving the military, he went to Youngstown State University where he graduated in 1973. He then continued onto Law school at the Ohio State College of Law. During his time in Law School, he served as Director of the Veterans Outreach Program in Cleveland, Ohio, August 1973 to January 1974, and he served as Executive Director of the Spanish American Committee for a Better Community from January 1974 until September 1975. After graduating in 1977, he served as Assistant Law Director, Deputy Law Director and Mayor's Chief of Staff from 1978 to

1985. Then he served as the City of Youngstown's Director of Law from 1985 through 1994.

After leaving the City of Youngstown's employment in January of 1981, he re-established a sole practitioner private practice pursuing the general practice of law focusing on criminal defense, personal injury and family law. Now, he is currently a shareholder and senior partner in the oldest established firm in the Mahoning Valley, Manchester, Bennett, Powers and Ullman, LPA.





# Juan Antonio **Solíz**

Corporal, US Marine Corps.  
Defiance

Juan Antonio Soliz enlisted in the United State Marine Corps upon his graduation from high school in 1967. Shortly thereafter, he deployed to combat service in Vietnam and served in Mike Company 3/3. After two months of serving as Corporal, Juan and members of his battalion were hit with a rocket propelled grenade while riding a tank. Juan was awarded the distinguished Purple Heart for events while under enemy fire as well as the Combat Marksman Badge for his combat service in unsecured areas of Vietnam. Upon his return to the US in mid-1969, Juan taught mapping and compassing to Marine trainees before being honorably discharged in October of 1969.

His service did not end there. Juan was instrumental in forming and supporting many of his hometown's military groups. He is a charter member of the Defiance chapter of the Purple Heart Association, AMVETS, and Vietnam Veterans of America, as

well as the Marine Corps League. In addition to membership in these organization, Juan is also belongs to the Veterans of Foreign Wars post and the Combat Vets Motorcycle Association.

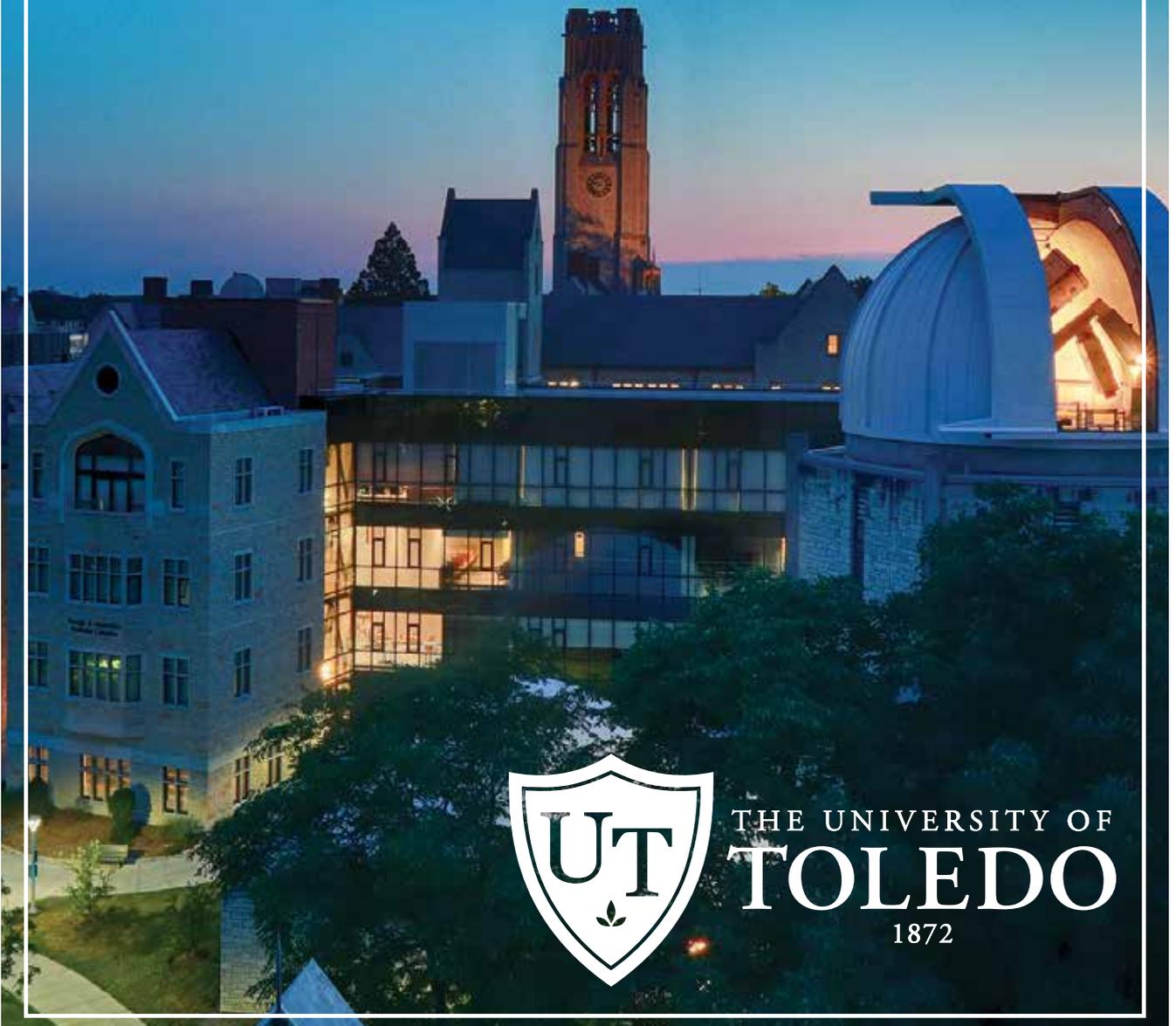
Juan is the son of Rosendo and Estela Soliz. He lives in Defiance, with his wife, Marlene. He enjoys spending time with his four children, his six grandchildren and his great-granddaughter.



THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO IS PROUD TO SUPPORT

# THE GOVERNOR'S DISTINGUISHED HISPANIC OHIOAN AWARDS

*¡Felicidades a todos los homenajeados!  
Congratulations to all honorees.*



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TOLEDO**  
1872



1. Aleishka Marrero, Miss Puerto Rico Image First Runner Up 2018
2. Nayelie Claudio, Miss Puerto Rico Image, 2018
3. Neiza M. Rivera Rodriguez, Miss Puerto Rico Image 2013
4. Paulina Rivera Quiles, Miss Ohio Latina 2017
5. Sthephanie Miranda, Miss Latinoamérica 2019
6. Natalia Cordero, Miss Puerto Rico Image 2014
7. Esperanza Cabrera, Miss Youngstown Latina 2016
8. Angelina Klopp, Miss Teen Ohio Latina 2018
9. Samantha de León, Miss Puerto Rico Image 2016



MOL Executive Director. Yasin Cuevas is the President/CEO of Project Model Institute, which is an event production, modeling, and etiquette company that has been organizing beauty pageants since 2010. Ms. Cuevas holds several pageant awards and recognitions. She was a modeling and etiquette instructor in Fontecha, the largest and one of the most reputable modeling and etiquette institutions in Puerto Rico. Ms. Cuevas has continued her modeling and etiquette teaching in Ohio since 2010. She instructs young girls from ages 7-18 as well as candidates.  
<http://missohiolatina.com/>

# WHAT IS OCHLA?

The Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs (OCHLA) serves as a liaison between government and the Hispanic/Latino community in Ohio. OCHLA advocates for the development and implementation of policies and programs to address the needs of Hispanic/Latino Ohioans, especially in the areas of education, employment, economic development, health and housing.

## OUR PURPOSE



### TO ADVISE

State government on issues affecting Hispanic Ohioans



### TO CONNECT

The diverse Latino communities across the state



### TO BUILD

The capacity of community organizations so they may better serve the fast growing population of Ohio

## WHO ARE OHIO'S HISPANIC AMERICANS?



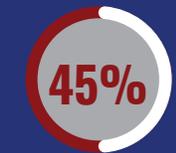
RESIDING IN OHIO



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



INCREASE IN POPULATION SINCE 2000



ARE OF MEXICAN HERITAGE



ENROLLED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



HISPANIC-OWNED BUSINESSES

## WHAT WE CAN DO

OCHLA is eager to help connect you with your Latino constituents. We can assist in your efforts with:



SPANISH-SPEAKING CONSTITUENT INQUIRIES



STRATEGIC LATINO COMMUNITY OUTREACH



PROOFREADING TRANSLATED DOCUMENTS

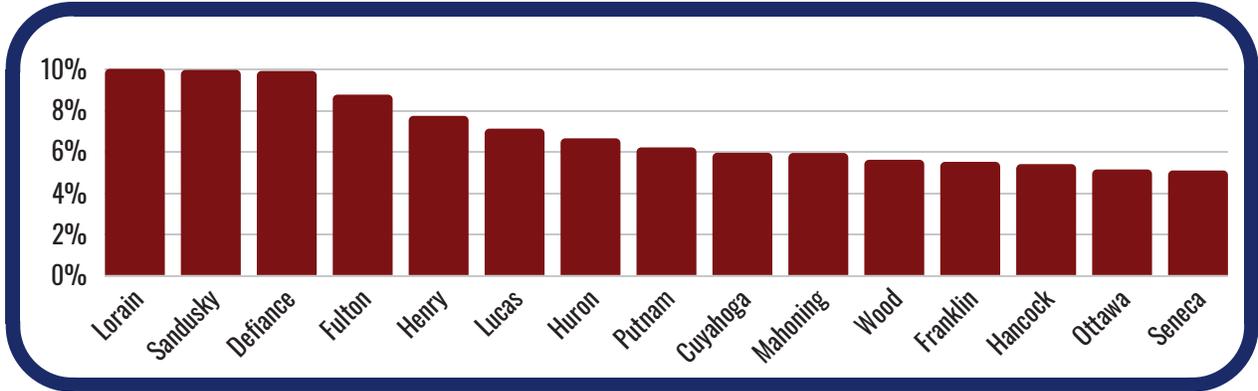


CONNECTION TO LOCAL LATINO ORGANIZATIONS



INFORMATION & RESOURCES ON MATTERS REGARDING OHIO'S LATINO POPULATION

## TOP 15 OHIO COUNTIES BY % OF HISPANIC POPULATION



## OUR ANNUAL EVENTS



OHIO HISPANIC  
LEGISLATIVE  
VISIT DAY



OHIO LATINO  
HEALTH SUMMIT



OHIO LATINO  
EDUCATION SUMMIT



DHO AWARDS  
GALA



AGENDA LATINA



MINORITY HEALTH  
MONTH WORKSHOPS

## OUR REPORTS & DIRECTORIES

Directory of Hispanic Service Providers (OLAnet)

Catalogue of Latino Outreach Initiatives (of State Agencies)

Latino Community Reports

Legislative Updates

Central Ohio Health & Social Services Directory

English (ESOL) Course Catalogue

Hispanic Serving Churches Faith Directory

Grant Foundations Database

State Agency Grant Directory

OCHLA Annual Report

## HOW TO REACH US



OCHLA.OHIO.GOV



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YouTube.com/OhioLatino  
AffairsCommission



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+OhioLatino  
AffairsCommission

QUESTIONS?

¿PREGUNTAS?

(614) 466-8333



**Ohio**

Latino Affairs  
Commission

# STAY CONNECTED

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Agenda Latina 2018**

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2018, COLUMBUS

**Behavioral Health Roundtable**

FEBRUARY 20 - 21, COLUMBUS

## OCHLA COMMISSIONERS

**Luis "Tony" Ortiz**, Outgoing Chair  
Dayton

**Mary Santiago**, Incoming Chair  
Lorain

**Michael Florez**, Outgoing Vice Chair  
Cincinnati

**Dan Molina**, Incoming Vice Chair  
Loveland

**Jose Feliciano Jr.**, Outgoing  
Secretary  
Aurora

**Beth Guzman-Bowman.**, Incoming  
Secretary  
Columbus

**V. Anthony Simms-Howell**  
Cincinnati

**Gregory Guzmán, Ph.D.**  
Maumee

**Rev. Juan Rivera**  
Campbell

**Emanuel Torres**  
Columbus

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**Rick Perales**  
**State Representative**  
District 73 ~ Greene County

**Gayle Manning**  
**Senator**  
District 13 ~ Huron & Lorain  
Counties

**Charleta Tavares**  
**Senator**  
District 15 ~ Franklin County



## Our hat's off to you.

We're proud to support the Distinguished Hispanic Ohioans Awards Gala and we congratulate all of tonight's honorees.

**FirstEnergy**  
Foundation



Honda congratulates the Distinguished Hispanic Ohioans and supports the work of The Ohio Latino Affairs Commission.

Follow us on Twitter: [@HondaMfgOhio](https://twitter.com/HondaMfgOhio)  
Consider a career with us at [ohio.honda.com](https://www.ohio.honda.com)

**HONDA**  
The Power of Dreams



# OHIO LATINO EDUCATION SUMMIT

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The Ohio State University  
November 9, 2018

**Save the Date!**

**Ohio** | Latino Affairs  
Commission

**Ohio** | Department  
of Education

  
THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY

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