



HONORING THE PAST - EMBRACING THE FUTURE

Top row, from left to right: Adelfa Callejo – First female Hispanic practitioner in Dallas; Alberto Gonzales – First Hispanic US Attorney General (2005-2007); Gustavo C. Garcia – Together with Carlos Cadena, first Hispanic Attorney to argue before U.S. Supreme Court in the landmark case Hernandez v. Texas (1954); Richard Peña – First Hispanic to serve as State Bar President of Texas (1998-1999); Justice Eva Guzman – First Hispanic Woman on Texas Supreme Court (2009-present); Bottom row, from left to right: Justice Raul A. Gonzalez, Jr., – First Hispanic appointed or elected to statewide office in Texas; first Hispanic on Texas Supreme Court (1984-1998); SBOT President J. Chrys Dougherty with founding members/leaders of the Concerns of the Spanish Speaking Community Section: James W. Ray, Jr., J. Manuel Banales, Hon. Reynaldo G. Garza and Frank Herrera (1980); Linda Reyna Yañez – Appointed by Gov. Ann Richards in 1993, the first Hispanic woman to serve on an appeals court in the history of the State of Texas and the first woman to serve on the 13th Court of Appeals; Carlos Cadena – Together with Gustavo C. Garcia, the first Hispanic attorney to argue before U.S. Supreme Court in the landmark case Hernandez v. Texas (1954).

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Message from the Chair



Judge Maria Salas Mendoza

Greetings! I'm Maria Salas Mendoza, and I am honored to serve as the chair of our section this year. With the amazing officers and council members (and many former council members who I insist stay on to support us), I am excited to roll out the coming year and its projects. Thank you for being a member of this section, and for supporting the development of our profession addressing the issues of the Hispanic community and serving our members across the state of Texas. Many thanks to Immediate Past Chair Angelica Hernandez for a fantastic year highlighting the 70th anniversary of Hernandez v. State as well as celebrating the 45th anniversary of our section. She is a tough act to follow.

This year I hope to grow our section. I am surprised that we are only a medium section in the bar. Know that I will be reaching out to have you join our committees and recruit members to our section. Why? Along with dynamic CLE

(free to members!) and networking opportunities, the HIS reaches out to and supports law students and serves various access to justice efforts.

I have to mention the 5th Annual Lawtería event set on September 24, 2024. Over the years, we have contributed over \$200,000 to access to justice efforts in our state. It is a fun time and recognizes important "firsts" in our history. We've sent e-blasts to members and there is more information in this newsletter. Thank you to co-chairs Judge Victor Villarreal and Betty Balli Torres for the heavy lifting on putting on this year's event.

I am committed to improving communication with members, increasing the benefits of membership, and listening to the needs of our lawyers. By serving you we can better serve our community.

Reach out to me directly with any concerns, questions or offers to serve!

See you soon!

Maria Salas Mendoza, Chair
Judge, 120th District Court

**Opinions expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and not necessarily the opinions of the State Bar of Texas.

HIS Council Meets in Austin

The Hispanic Issues Section Council kicked off the new bar year with an in-person retreat at the Texas Law Center in Austin. The retreat provided the opportunity to meet new council members and for old members to reconnect. At the retreat, Section Chair Judge Maria Salas Mendoza led a discussion on priorities for the year, including increasing membership, access to justice, and member benefits such as CLE and networking opportunities. The council will meet monthly, with in-person meetings scheduled quarterly throughout the year and will also plan for a program to be held in conjunction with this year’s Annual Meeting in San Antonio. The council welcomes your input on issues that it should consider; to reach the council or to get more involved in the section’s work, contact sections@texasbar.com.

HIS FY 2025 Council

- Chair:** Judge Maria Salas Mendoza
- Chair-Elect:** Chris Pineda
- Vice-Chair:** Veronica Legarreta
- Secretary:** Isaac Faz
- Treasurer:** Augustin “Augie” Rivera
- Immediate Past Chair:** Angelica M. Hernandez
- Webmaster:** Manuel Escobar

Council Members with Terms Ending 2025

- Judge Beckie Palomo
- Enrique Chavez
- Judge Anna Perez

Council Members with Terms Ending 2026

- Sylvia Borunda Firth
- Frances Maldonado
- Judge Lauren Sepulveda

Council Members with Terms Ending 2027

- Justice Dennise Garcia
- Elma Garcia
- Judge Gloria Lopez

HIS encourages the submission of items for future newsletters. These can be sent to Elma Garcia at egarcia@Texasbar.com.



The HIS Council discusses priorities for the year at its meeting in Austin.



L – R: Isaac Faz, Frances Maldonado, Augie Rivera, Elma Garcia, Bety Balli Torres, Judge Gloria Lopez, Judge Maria Salas Mendoza, Veronica Legarreta, Judge Anna Paz, Justice Dennise Garcia, Gloria Leal, Novert Morales

LAWtería!

September 24, 2024



The Hispanic Issues Section, along with the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, hosts the 5TH annual LAWtería virtual event on **Tuesday, Sept. 24, at 6 p.m.** via Zoom. LAWtería 2024 will again feature prominent Hispanic leaders committed to access to justice, intermission entertainment, and fabulous door prizes, with proceeds benefiting Texas legal aid.

The event is hosted by State Bar Past President Sylvia Borunda Firth and will include Celebrity Callers: Senator Judith Zaffirini, Justice Robbie Partida-Kipness, Justice Gisela D. Triana, and Justice Lori I. Valenzuela. Entertainment, artists, and special guests will include Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Nathan Hecht, Justice Brett Busby, Judge David Sanchez and Dan Sanchez, Armando Lopez, Ruben Medina, and Patrick Gabaldon.

You can participate by becoming a sponsor, purchasing an electronic LAWtería card (\$50 per card, one card is good for all games), or donating to the event. Find more information, at: www.teajf.org/donate/LawTeria.aspx.

Noteworthy Events and Happenings:

September 15 – October 15

Hispanic Heritage Month

September 20

El Paso Bar Association
Anson 11, El Paso, 12:00 p.m. (MDT)

Judge Irma Ramirez of the 5th Circuit, who is the first and only Latina to serve on that court, will be the guest speaker for the monthly meeting.

September 24

LAWtería, via Zoom, 6:00 p.m. (CST)
See page 3 for details or to donate, visit www.teajf.org/donate/LawTeria.aspx

September 26

Hernandez v. Texas at 79: An Impactful but Overlooked Decision
ABA Webinar, 12:00 p.m. (CST)

Chief Justice Dori Contreras, Justice Gina Benavides, and Chris Pineda will host an ABA webinar highlighting *Hernandez v. Texas*, the Supreme Court decision holding that Mexican Americans were entitled to equal protection. For details, visit www.americanbar.org/events-cle/mtg/web/445200636/

HIS member and prior Chair Judge Victor Villareal has been elected Chair-Elect of the State Bar of Texas Judicial Section.



Pictured at the 2024 Annual Judicial Conference are (l to r): Judge Jessica Vazquez, Judge Maria Aceves, Chief Justice Dori Contreras, Judge Carlos Barrera, Judge Victor Villareal, Judge Toni Arteaga, Judge Maya Guerra Gamble, Senior Judge Elma Teresa Salinas Ender, and Judge JoAnne Garcia.



October 9

HBAA Annual Heritage Luncheon
AT&T Conference Center, Austin, 11:30 (CST)

The Annual Heritage Luncheon fundraiser provides scholarships for students in the community; more information at: www.hispanicbaraustin.com/

October 16

HIS Virtual Council Meeting, 12:30 p.m. (CST)

October 23 -25

Texas Minority Counsel Program
AT& T Conference Center, Austin

The program, which is open to all attorneys, aims to bolster the amount and significance of legal work obtained by minority, women, and LGBTQ+ attorneys, and attorneys of other groups historically underrepresented.



HIS member Judge Jessica Vazquez has been elected President-elect of Texas County Courts at Law Association.