LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Welcome to our seventh annual celebration of one of the most important and exciting sectors of business within the Los Angeles economic landscape today — the Latino business community!

Our 2016 Latino Business Awards event, as well as the special supplement you hold in your hands now, are designed to share our honorees’ and finalists’ inspiring success stories and contributions to Los Angeles business as a whole. Once again we have singled out some of the organizations and leaders in the Latino business community who are setting a tremendous example for all of us doing business in the region.

Join us as we applaud those very special honorees and finalists we celebrated at our Awards luncheon on Wednesday, January 20th at the Omni Hotel Los Angeles.

Four Latino Business of the Year honorees are announced in this section as well as winners of three additional, very special awards. We congratulate each of these remarkable honorees, as well as the wonderful collection of finalists, also listed and described in these pages.

We hope you enjoy this special section, which contains some insights on the creative ways in which some of LA’s leading Latino businesses have made prestigious names for themselves.

Special thanks go out this year to our presenting sponsor, California Bank & Trust as well as Gold Sponsors Mount Saint Mary’s University, Los Angeles; Phillips Graduate University; and ProAmerica Bank, as well as our Community Partner, the Latin Business Association. And again, congratulations to all the great Latino businesses in Los Angeles who play such an integral role in our business community as a whole.

Matthew A. Toledo
Publisher & CEO

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We salute this year’s Latino Business Awards winners.

California Bank & Trust is proud to be the Presenting Sponsor of Los Angeles Business Journal’s Latino Business Awards 2016. We congratulate all of the nominees and celebrate your achievements. Smart business leadership is essential. So is working with a bank that understands your business, treats you like a top priority, and offers custom financial options to best meet your needs. Call or visit us online today and see what makes us different.

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MARY ANN WALKER is the Founder and CEO of Walker Advertising, a leading direct-response advertising agency serving the legal industry. For the past 31 years, Walker has also helped more than two million individuals access legal services through her powerful brands, Los Defensores and 1-800-THELAW2.

Influenced by her Hispanic heritage and her years living in Mexico, Walker takes a hands-on approach to leading her companies – combining her passion for civil rights and social action with her legal marketing and entrepreneurial expertise. Her specialty is in creating successful direct response legal marketing campaigns and delivering quality leads to attorneys in various areas of law, including Personal Injury, Workers’ Compensation, Mass Torts, Birth Injuries and more.

As a young translator in the Los Angeles courts in the 1980s, Walker saw people denied fair and equal justice simply because they couldn’t speak English. Often, lawyers would build cases based on police reports or information provided by insurance companies with complete disregard for the client’s perspectives. The end result was that clients showed up to court with weak cases. Inspired to help, Walker recruited five Spanish-speaking attorneys and formed the Los Defensores Spanish legal advertising attorney network in 1984. A year later, in 1985, Walker then formed an English brand, 1-800-THELAW2. Today, these brands are household names in the Latino community, and the Los Defensores and 1-800-THELAW2 attorney networks are comprised of approximately 150 lawyers.

Recognizing the importance of trust and credibility for the Latino community, Walker hired Jaime Jarrin, the Spanish voice of the Los Angeles Dodgers, as the Los Defensores spokesperson 3 years after establishing Los Defensores. Today, Jarrin remains the voice and face of Los Defensores, and is joined by his son, Jorge Jarrin, who serves as the spokesperson for 1-800-THELAW2.

LATINO BUSINESS OF THE YEAR
LARGE PRIVATE COMPANY

Los Defensores

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LATINO BUSINESS OF THE YEAR
SMALL PRIVATE COMPANY

Minuteman Press

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All The Honorees
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LATINO BUSINESS OF THE YEAR
SMALL PRIVATE COMPANY

Vasquez & Company

Since 1969, Gilbert Vasquez has managed and directed a successful practice in public accounting, auditing, taxation, and financial consulting. Vasquez is recognized as a prominent Certified Public Accountant, community leader and entrepreneur.

In 1972, Vasquez founded the Association of Hispanic Certified Public Accountants, which is now ALPFA, the Association of Latino Professionals For America. ALPFA has 72,000 members nationally through 43 professional and 155 university chapters and its mission is to empower and develop Latino men and women as leaders of character for the Nation, in every sector of the global economy. At a time when the business community is desperately seeking talent and America’s young Latinos are seeking opportunity, ALPFA is a bridge between the two. ALPFA offers its members professional leadership development, networking and career opportunities through hundreds of Fortune 1000 corporate partners. ALPFA has helped thousands of Latino professionals to gain the skills and connections they need to move from the outside of America’s economic mainstream to the center of it.

Vasquez has a passion for making people around him better and is dedicated to the advancement of Latinos across America. His impact on the lives of thousands of Latino students and professionals across the United States cannot be measured.

Vasquez has received many honors including: the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund Achievement Award, the Coca Cola Golden Hammer Award, and the Citizen of the Year by the Northeast Chapter of the American Red Cross. He also received recognition from the California State University of Los Angeles as one of the 40 outstanding luminaries for his exemplary service to the University on their 40th Anniversary and the YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles’ Golden Book of Distinguished Service Award.

LATINO BUSINESS OF THE YEAR
SMALL PRIVATE COMPANY

Yuca’s Restaurants

In the forty years since starting to serve up some of the finest Mexican food in Los Angeles, almost nothing has changed for the team at Yuca’s Hut, which still operates from its original location – an 80 sq. ft. converted shoe shine stand. It still serves up delicious food, and is still the go-to place for community events and information.

From this tiny shack located along Hillhurst Avenue in Los Feliz, the Herrera family has built a solid reputation for down-home, great food, receiving accolades from all over the globe for their Yucatán-inspired cuisine.

Eight years ago the Herreras opened their second location, Yuca’s on Hollywood. This sit-down style restaurant offers the same “welcome home” attention to detail in its customer service and menu offerings. The media accolades – nationally and globally - did not take long in coming.

In addition to superb menu offerings, Yuca’s remains the go-to place for community information and events, courtesy of Dora Herrera, the daughter of founder Socorro Herrera. Dora joined the family business in 1980 after graduating from Brown University with a degree in the fields of Latin American Studies and Spanish Literature.

That enthusiasm was brought to Los Feliz when Dora, a long-time community activist, became involved with the formation of the Los Feliz Village Business Improvement District (BID) as well as the Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council.

Because of this involvement in community, Yuca’s was selected to be a part of the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State’s “Welcome: Portraits of America,” a video that welcomes every arriving international traveler to the United States.

Hard work, determination and a can-do attitude have brought the Herrera family very far in the past forty years. However, not content to rest on their laurels, the Herreras are now looking to expand nationally and internationally.
Dr. Emilio Pack's life mission is to educate the next generation, especially those from low-income backgrounds, to achieve towards college, with a particular emphasis on STEM fields. The son of a single mother who emigrated from Cuba, Dr. Pack, who holds degrees from Loyola Marymount University, Pepperdine and Cal State-LA, started his early career as a social worker in Los Angeles helping abused and neglected children in the foster system.

Today, Dr. Pack is the Executive Director of an emerging charter management organization that encompasses two charter schools currently – Math and Science College Preparatory School (grades 9-11) and Crown Preparatory School (grades 5-8).

Since 2013, he founded and has been leading Math and Science College Preparatory School, a high school that earned the Gold Ribbon School award by the State of California Department of Education in May 2015. Only 18 schools in the entire LAUSD’s system received such recognition and both of Dr. Pack’s schools hold that honor.

The mission of MSCP is to operate a small, high performance school that will prepare all students to succeed and graduate from college. Math and Science College Preparatory School, located downtown on Adams Boulevard, serves a diverse cultural population emphasizing social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of each child.

More than 84% of the current student body is from Latino cultural backgrounds and 96% qualify for free or reduced lunch because of their socioeconomic status.

The school strives to instill high standards for academic integrity and leadership in its students. Students are given access to technology, skills and knowledge to make them effective members at the school and in the global society. The school utilized proven, research-based practices that make this charter school successful for its students – like data analytics, scaffolding, and 21st century learning.
Gilbert Buchanan, MA possesses more than 20 years of industry experience in the public works and commercial contracting arenas working with construction, retail, manufacturing, food services, professional services just to name a few. While working with a number of government agencies to help provide contract opportunities to minority businesses, reviewing bids, proposals, serving on proposal evaluation committees and mentorship programs, he realized one basic thing: that most large contract providers claim to help provide contract opportunities to minority and small businesses, but never really provide them the tools to become successful nor did they teach them how to develop their business infrastructures so that they can effectively compete and win contracts.

Buchanan began developing a small business-friendly cloud-based business management system called SmallBizPro. This system provides free and low-cost tools as a well as free training which helps Latinos better manage their business infrastructure wherein they are able to access critical business documents on-demand in 10-seconds or less from anywhere in the world. This business management system, in short, helps Latinos better organize and run their businesses. They are also able to identify what specifically large contract providers look for in Latinos, small and minority businesses vendors/suppliers.

Buchanan and his company, Buchanan & Associates, have been providing contract-readiness, business-readiness, and bank loan-readiness technical support to Latino businesses in Southern California now for almost a decade.

In an effort to further help Latino businesses achieve sustainable growth through access to capital and contract opportunities, Buchanan & Associates has also co-sponsored and launched multiple contract-readiness, business-readiness, and bank loan-readiness 7-week workshop series for an assortment of Latino associations.

Buchanan & Associates has graduated more than 350 Latinos and minorities from its contract-readiness program, many of whom have gone on to utilize the skills taught to them to obtain contract awards with public works and commercial contract providers.

When Gail Lara joined OPERATION HOPE’s “Hope Inside” program, which is housed in banks and credit unions, she knew it would be an uphill battle to get the community involved. Her office, based in One West Bank in Northridge, was the first of its kind in the San Fernando Valley. As the Northridge Small Business Program Coordinator, it would be her job to implement programming for the community that would rebuild credit and finances, and secure loans for home or business – but first she would have to make them aware of what Hope Inside could offer them.

To this end, Lara has also forged relationships with the WorkSource and Business Source centers, as well as VICA, VEDEC, and other agencies such as the Northridge Chamber of Commerce. Although there are a number of valuable business supports available; they are only effective if businesses know about them and how to utilize their services. Lara’s goal is to build a collaborative community of stakeholders to help her clients connect with the best services available.

Coordinated by Lara, OPERATION HOPE’s Hope Inside program includes a Credit and Money Management Class that helps individuals establish or increase their credit score, and provides assistance with budgeting. It also includes a Small Business Development Workshop and Entrepreneurial Training Program. By the end of the course, students have written and presented their business plan to a panel of lenders, and have benefitted from the mentoring provided by business professionals, who volunteered their time to provide advice and direction.

Gail has consistently filled her classes. In the first six months in her new position as the programs coordinator, she connected with 42 strategic alliance partners and hosted 29 workshops with 325 entrepreneurs. Her first entrepreneurial training class graduated ten students with $50,000 of angel investment, three businesses prepared for microloans and three working on crowd-funding campaigns.
Congratulate the business of the following inspiring, social change, listed below.

**UNLIMITED**

Realizing a need for a progressive company that offers all facets of marketing a product, while still maintaining the bottom line for the customer, Brian & Amy Arellano Williams launched UNLIMITED. A one-stop print, marketing and promotional product supplier. UNLIMITED (AB Unlimited) opened its doors in 2009 with only $1,100 in capital and equipment and one office in Los Angeles. Today, Brian and Amy have invested over $300,000 in capital and have a second office in Las Vegas. AB operates as an offshoot extension of their customer’s internal departments, providing cost-efficient solutions, quality products and concierge-style customer service. AB Unlimited has a proven track record of providing resources to fit any budget, timeframe or circumstance. Amy is an accomplished attorney with over 10 years’ extensive experience in civil litigation, regulatory compliance, and consumer/creditor collections. Realizing the value in offering branded promotional products to AB Unlimited clients, Amy created the Promotional Product Division in 2011, which now accounts for 40% of gross sales.

**ABRIEL BARRAZA FOUNDATION**

Led by its Director, Monique Barraza, the Abigail Barraza Foundation thrives on educating women, teens, and young girls on the importance of early detection and breast cancer awareness. The Foundation believes that through its work it has instilled the power of knowledge into females and that alone is greater. What’s more, the funds have sold out charity event. The uniqueness of the organization is that it mentors local teens and educates them on breast health so in turn, they can return home and educate their families. Since her mother passed away from breast cancer, she was in high school, Barazza personally knows what it is like to put your life on hold and the teens the organization works with can relate. Barazza and the organization are firm believers that if a meaningful connection is to be made with young Latinas, it’s not going to happen if you wait and see them as the young women they are. In a unique connection to breast health, in this program, which reaches 4th and 5th grade students from one of the largest performing schools in the Pasadena Unified School District. Adelante Madison Program is designed to help Latina children develop positive study habits, resourceful thinking and personal discipline, through after-school enrichment activities and leadership development. This is just one example of the kind of programs Adelante makes available to the community. Another is the Adelante Mujer Latina Conference. More than 1,800 girls regularly attend the conference held in Pasadena. The girls hear directly from college recruiters on how to apply for college and financial aid, as well as from business professionals representing a myriad of industries.

**ARJUS FILM GROUP**

Ariana Eisenberg brings over 30 years experience in the film and television industry starting in post-production at Paramount Mac-Pictures with Paul Hagger, working closely with Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer as well as Dawn Steel (to whom she brought the project City of Angels) through to opening Aegis Film Group in June of 2003. Over the last 12 years, Aegis Film Group has grown, adding Television and an award-winning Documentary division to the already burgeoning Film Division. The company’s latest upcoming Documentary film is entitled Inside Pandoras Box chronicling the abuse and torture of young girls and women throughout the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Africa. Aegis’ film slate includes feature films: Art of the Warrior, Mata Hari, Myst (Rasputin), Monet, Crossmen, Black Knights, Rogue’s Gallery and Katie’s Story. Aegis Film Group is also an altruistic company that believes in giving back and Eisenberg has set up the Aegis Foundation to assist cancer patients and their families as well as the Aegis Young Women’s Mentoring Foundation.

**ACCESS EVENTS, LLC**

Led by entrepreneur Janet Rodziguez, All Access Events LLC has been in business since 2009. Prior to this business, Rodriguez was a proj- ect manager in the medical field. After being abruptly laid off by a large medical institution during the economic shortage in 2009, she decided to put her skills to use and begin an event planning company. She had already been planning many parties for friends, family and at her employers: a Project Manager, so the transition made sense. Now All Access Events has a client portfolio that consists of entrepreneurs, entertainers, doctors, athletes, investors, teachers and more. Throughout the years, the company has been able to produce events in the community to join forces with different non-profit organizations. This past year, All Access Events was a part of The World Games Special Olympics LA 2015. They also assisted the Healthy Athletes Program to organize medical care to over 7000 athletes from over 170 different countries.

**ALMACK LINES &**

Susana Casabe Almack, a native from Mar- tinez, Buenos Aires, Argentina, is President and Owner of Almack Lines in Chatsworth, Almack, a third generation fabric converter for textiles, circular knits, warp knits, and wovens for private sector and government contracts, established her business in the San Fernando Valley in 1987. By 2003, the company had outgrown the space and moved to its current location in Chatsworth. The business continues to grow and additional locations are likely to be required. Almack Liners currently designs and produces many materials including innovative fabrics for military and physical fitness uniform contracts. In addition to fabric, Almack also offers 100% U.S. made manufacturing for apparel. Some of the history of Almack Liners includes creating comfortable lining fabric for swimmers. Almack designed and created a relationship with major swimwear and sports-wear companies. From this larger facility, Almack Liners produces materials for the government and private industry for clients like Jans, Speedo and others.

**ART LEWIN BESPOKE CLOTHIERS**

For over two decades, Art Lewin Bespoke Clothiers – a distinct national leader in premier custom cloth- ing – has planned, coordinated and maintained the wardrobes of California’s most prominent, influential leaders and some of Hollywood’s A-List movie stars so that they are perfectly attired for any occasion. As a second generation clothier, Lewin says that his clients tell him that his company’s workmanship, knowledge, attention to detail and service make it readily appar- ent why they have been working with such a loyal following – with a remark- ably impressive 94% retention rate. At Art Lewin Bespoke Clothiers, we begin well before measurements are taken. The team analyzes the client’s posture and how he/she moves to determine the personalities selected bespoke suits will exude. The fit of the bespoke suit follows the way the client wears and experiences the suit along with body ergonomics and lifestyle.

**BELLA SOL THE SALON**

Lurdes Medina is an outstanding leader, mentor, businesswoman, and activist. She has led in the beauty industry for over ten years, and also serves various nonprofit organizations, build- ing a lifelong connec- tion with the community. As owner of Bella Sol The Salon, Lurdes participates in the global movement for female empowerment by currently being the Pasadena director for the California Latina beauty pageant. She is committed to the successful future of Latinas as leaders, dedicating her talents and abilities, along with compassion and drive, to influence leadership. Lurdes is also the official airbrush artist for the Miss Pasadena & Miss Century City, Miss Malibu, Miss California USA and Miss California Teen USA beauty pageants. Her precision for detail with the airbrush has established her as one of the best in the industry. What separates Bella Sol The Salon from its competitors is the quality of customer service Medina and her team provide and her attention to detail in everything from the services to the salon itself.

**BETTER 4 YOU MEALS**

In 2011, the media spotlighted the dra- matic disparity in charter school services, specifically with the statewide lack of breakfasts for CMOs – charter school mea- l services, low-income students. The call came from charter school leaders, parents, and students was loud! They wanted new options and choices to provide their students with the proper nourishment required to actively learn and engage. It is no coincidence that also in 2011, charter school students from some of the top schools and CMOs in the state responded to that call and created Better 4 You Breakfast (B4YB), a food service company as creative and unique as your own charter. The reaction from charter schools throughout Southern California was swift and dramatic. B4YB quickly became one of California’s largest charter school providers, serving over 18,000 charter school breakfasts each morning. B4YB cooks with fresh, quality, and quality partners with farmers and growers who are committed to providing our students with high quality ingredients.
Cordoba Corporation

Cordoba Corporation is a civil engineering, construction management, program management, and planning firm specializing in education, transportation, and water. The company is headquartered in Los Angeles, with additional offices in San Francisco, Santa Ana, and San Diego. Founded in 1983 by George L. Pla as a small, specialized urban planning firm working on various transportation projects in Los Angeles County, the company has since continued to grow and develop its expertise and is now involved in the development of infrastructure projects statewide. Cordoba Corporation combines the technical expertise of its engineers, architects, and construction managers with an understanding of public policy and infrastructure development. Cordoba has successfully completed hundreds of projects throughout its nearly 30-year history, and has become one of the leading civil engineering and construction management firms in the nation, as well as one of the fastest growing companies in Los Angeles. Cordoba’s business model has been praised by Harvard Business School as a case study commending its efficiency, speed, and its multifaceted approach towards projects.

Dillon Aircraft Deburring

Perhaps taken for granted by the average layperson, the highly polished mirror-like parts used by the aerospace industry require a very difficult process with no room for error. In 1993, Dillon Aircraft Deburring was opened up his storefront in Studio City and is now involved in the development of infrastructure projects throughout its nearly 30-year history, and has become one of the leading civil engineering and construction management firms in the nation, as well as one of the fastest growing companies in Los Angeles. Cordoba’s business model has been praised by Harvard Business School as a case study commending its efficiency, speed, and its multifaceted approach towards projects.

D’Leon Consulting Engineers

Domingo Leon, PE is a professional civil engineer registered in the state of California and a dedicated leader working on some of the most influential infrastructure projects in Los Angeles. In 1989, after 12 years working with Bechtel, he founded D’Leon Consulting Engineers (DCE), headquartered in Long Beach. An entrepreneur at heart and passionate about his work, under Leon’s leadership, the firm provides planning, environmental preparation, design engineering and construction management support services to public and private sector with special emphasis in capital improvement transit and transportation projects. As president, Leon’s professional expertise spans national and international transportation engineering project experience. Over nearly three decades, the firm has worked on some of this region’s most high profile, complex infrastructure programs that are reshaping Los Angeles and the Southern California region. For example, the firm is HNTB’s partner for projects including the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s (LACMTA) Transit Corridor light rail; the Alameda Corridor project; and the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering’s Sixth Street Viaduct Replacement project.

Dexter’s Dollar Tickets

Eddie Espinosa followed his passion of attending live Concerts right out of high school. He started buying and selling tickets out of his house 23 years ago. Shortly after, and for a number of years, Eddie would sell tickets outside the various venues in Los Angeles and would travel across the US selling StubHub and Final Four Tickets. In 1997, after serving his country for eight years as a U.S. Marine, he worked his way up in the ticketing business by running All Season Tickets in Tarrant for five years while growing his own company at the same time. In 2005, Espinosa branched out on his own and opened up his storefront in Studio City. Since then, he has led Eddie’s Tickets to sales in excess of $15 million dollars over the last 13 years. Espinosa credits much of his success to being a true believer in customer service. He expects himself and his employees to always provide clients with exceptional service.

Elegance Upholstery, Inc.

Elegance Upholstery, Inc. is a minority-owned certified small business that formalized its legal structure in 2004 as a sole proprietorship and incorporating in 2008. The company specializes in the field of upholstery and the manufacturing of commercial seating, custom millwork, and laminate applications and provides these core service offerings to restaurants, casinos, hospitals, nightclubs, and hospitality. As experts in the commercial seating and manufacturing, community & business outreach, they are committed in providing excellent customer service and delivering quality workmanship on a timely manner. Ricardo “Bicky” Vargas, built Elegance Upholstery, Inc., along with his father Miguel Vargas, who had migrated to the United States at the young age of seventeen. Starting with small establishments in the Whittier area, the company’s quality grew in reputation and now it provides services to many food chain franchises across the nation and is a nationwide manufacturer of commercial seating with 20 employees.

Employer’s Choice Online

Employer’s Choice Online provides employers, nationally and internationally, with a full slate of employment background screening services to reduce workplace violence, theft, substance abuse and negligent hiring liabilities. Additionally, Employers Choice makes the hiring process more efficient for its clients by streamlining its applications and provides these core service offerings to restaurants, casinos, hospitals, nightclubs, and hospitality. As experts in the commercial seating and manufacturing, community & business outreach, they are committed in providing excellent customer service and delivering quality workmanship on a timely manner. Ricardo “Bicky” Vargas, built Elegance Upholstery, Inc., along with his father Miguel Vargas, who had migrated to the United States at the young age of seventeen. Starting with small establishments in the Whittier area, the company’s quality grew in reputation and now it provides services to many food chain franchises across the nation and is a nationwide manufacturer of commercial seating with 20 employees.

Florebi Medrano Law Group

Florebi Medrano Law Group was founded in 2007 by Mayda and Edwin. In 2008 Edwin joined the firm and the brother/sister legal team was created. Flores Medrano Law Group was founded with the philosophy of providing top-notch affordable criminal defense. Mayda and Edwin personally handle the cases and work hand in hand with their clients while applying their experience and expertise to present the best defense possible in each case.

The Garage Boardshop

The Garage Boardshop was founded with the idea for artists to come together, express themselves through different mediums. Young DJs, bands, break-dancers, and artist have flocked to the concept and it has become something of an urban haven and a proving ground for their talents. Founders Mama Ramblaz and Jerry Carrera, looking to become more involved with the community and the underprivileged, also launched “$5 & Education, a program that combines skateboarding with education — encouraging kids to apply themselves in their academics as well as in their skating. With the success of the program Carrera and Ramblaz created a non-profit called “The Jeffrey Foundation.”

The Jeffrey Foundation

The Jeffrey Foundation is a non-profit organization that strives to improve the quality of life for special needs children and their families through the development of community-based therapeutic, educational, and social programs. In 1972, in response to an urgent need, the organization’s Founder and President, Alyce Morris, opened the first day care center for multi-handicapped children in Los Angeles County and named it for her son, Jeffrey, a victim of muscular dystrophy. Since that time, no other agency provides such a wide range of disabled and at-risk children and their families. The Jeffrey Foundation programs have benefited thousands of special needs children and

Jeffrey Foundation
their families. Veronica Solano, who was born in El Salvador, has displayed strong leadership as Program Administrator at The Jeffrey Foundation. She began her journey since 2000 and has held various roles. In each role, she demonstrated capacity to lead, creativity in planning, and diligence in her work.

JMPR PUBLIC RELATIONS

Joseph Molina’s inspiration comes from his father Orlando Molina. When Orlando was 18 years old he left the life he built in Mexico to come study in the United States, with everything he owned in a small suitcase, which he carried across the border. Joe currently keeps his father’s suitcase under his desk to remind him of where he came from. Joe has been able to start his own business plus has become a prominent member of LA culture with his collection of automobiles and contemporary art. He founded JMPR Public Relations in 1977, Joe of course being the President. Beginning his career as a rock journalist in the U.S. Army and working closely with the popular rock band KISS. Molina entered the vast world of public relations. From then on, he used his dedication, drive and resilient Army roots to build JMPR into the company it is today. JMPR has represented over 600 clients ranging from Lamborghini and Infiniti to Amelia Island Concours and the Peterson Museum.

KADIMA SECURITY SERVICES

Kadima Security Services has provided security for the elite, high profile individuals such as politicians, former presidents, court security details, personal protection, and more. The year of 2015 was the most successful year for Kadima Security Services this far, with the company new and renowned clientele and its first million-dollar contact. Every week, Kadima is hiring and training quality Security Officers to observe and report at the many client properties located in Los Angeles. Dominican-born founder, Louis Perry is also a Security Correspondent for CBS, KCAL9, KTLA News. He is also a proud member of the American Board of Certification for Homeland Security, Hollywood Security Business and Infra-Gard, and has recently been appointed as a Diplomat for the American Board of Certification for Homeland Security.

L.A. FILM LOCATIONS

Owned by Panama-born Monica Harrison, L.A. Film Locations was established in Santa Clarita in 2003. L.A. Film Locations is a locally based Location Service that meets the needs of film, commercial and television businesses. L.A. Film Locations represents properties for filming. When a studio or production company needs a place to film, they often call L.A. Film Locations first. The firm represents many Santa Clarita Valley properties and is growing rapidly. It is the only Location Service owned by a local resident and based in Santa Clarita. Movie production has been lured out of California with more enticing tax incentives, but Harrison is focused on bringing as much filming revenue to the Santa Clarita Valley as possible. L.A. Film Locations’ clients includes all of the major studios and many of the production companies such as 20th Century Fox, ABC, Sony, NBC Universal, Warner Brothers, Sony, CBS/Paramount, Dreamworks, Columbia Pictures, and many others.

MAYOR LOGISTICS

With deep family roots as longshoreman and terminal operators, it seems logical that Mayor Logistics, Inc. (MLI) completed the puzzle by becoming a national motor carrier. When MLI Founder Michael Mayor saw that there was a void in the market for more qualified drivers, he took the opportunity to create Mayor Logistics. Over the years, Mayor has found a way to piece together the vast network of ports, warehouses and transportation lanes needed to efficiently move cargo. MLI combines the knowledge of old school values and cutting edge technology and is now largely considered to be among the most reliable motor carriers serving the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. As a local Port drayage entity, MLI has experienced noteworthy growth in the industry. MLI’s hardworking staff has contributed to the steady success and growth of the company over the past eight years. Mayor works very closely alongside all members of his team and is very hands on in every aspect of the operation of the company.

NATIONAL LATINA BUSINESS WOMEN ASSOCIATION

NLBWA’s mission since 1998 has been to promote, develop and support the rapid growth of Latina business owners, professionals and their families. The national organization supports the development of chapters throughout the U.S. and these
Continued from page 45

chapters deliver programs and services en-
abling greater success for this critical, under-
represented market. The purpose of NLBWA is to create more rep-
resentations, visibility, and business develop-
ment, networking and
mentoring opportunities for Latinas and
their families in the world of business
and at the executive level throughout the
country. NLBWA is committed to
becoming the country’s leading business
resource for Latinas and their families,
attracting and embracing the following
of women in diverse business sectors and
corporate America. Its current national
president is the president and founder of
Savvy Solutions Inc., Suzanna Sánchez.

NEW AMERICAN FUNDING

Born into a hard-work-
ing Mexican-American family, Patty Arvielo’s first exposure to the
mortgage industry
was as a young girl. She accompanied her
mother to real estate offices at night where
her mom worked as a cleaning woman. The finely appointed
offices and prosperous-looking agents
there working late, helping other fami-
lies like hers to buy homes, sparked her
curiosity. She worked tirelessly to build
real estate agent and community relations-
ships and, by 20, she had ignited a life-
long passion for service and the pursuit
of self-made, enduring success. Early in her
career, Patty was compelled to serve her
own Spanish-speaking markets. In 2003,
and her husband Rick Arvielo
launched New American Funding as a
46 employee, call-center
office. In the years since,
Patty Arvielo has worked to
transform New American Funding into
a national mortgage lender and servicer
that funds more than $900 million in
home loans each month.

PEREZ CONSTRUCTION GROUP

James Perez founded Perez Construction
Group, Inc. in 2013 after having more than
15 years in the indus-
try. His career started as a
teenage boy working weekends and sum-
mers for his father’s residential construc-
tion firm. Given his limited array of knowl-
dge he acquired over the years in con-
struction and business management, he
decided to open his own business.
In 2011, Perez Construction Group’s first
client was Southern California Gas. Within 6
months, after successfully completing the
first contract, Perez bid a larger contract
and won. In 2014, Perez expanded and
awarded several small/medium size
contracts in LAX and Downtown LA,
which include the Wishbone Grand Hotel
and Metro Southwestern Yard for Turner
and Hendel Phelps, respectively, in 2015.
Currently, the company employs 21 men
and women, and our projects work through the end of 2017 and an
increase of at least another 20 employees, for
a total of 40-45 employees.

PRIMESTOR DEVELOPMENT, INC

Leading by its CEO Arturo
Suñéder, Primestor
Development Inc.’s mission is to manage
and develop properties that will have a direct
and positive impact on the communities
the company serves; foster-
ing an ethical, dynamic
and rewarding work environment for employees, while achieving superior finan-
cial returns for clients, partners and inves-
tors. Primestor’s vision is driven by a need
to revitalize urban areas. The company
was founded to build community projects in
areas overlooked by other developers.
Primestor’s track record of detailed archi-
tecture, highly desirable tenancies, generous
grounds and amenities and extensive commu-
unity outreach has made the company a lead-
er in the real estate development industry.
Now Primestor develops, manages, leases and constructs groundbreaking urban
projects in cities throughout the country. In partnership with community stakehold-
ers, municipalities and institutional inves-
tors, Primestor’s projects become regional
and local gathering spaces for the neigh-
borhoods they serve.

REVOpay

RevoPay builds beauti-
ful and simple, indus-
ty-focused payments software. Led by its
CEO, Mike Costera, a first-generation,
Cuban-American, RevoPay has devel-
oped vertical-specific payments solutions.
The RevoPay platform allows properties,
schools, non-profits, and businesses to be
paid online. RevoPay’s unique distrib-
ution model pioneered a new software cat-
gory, Software as a Bank Service (SaasB).
By licensing the platform to banks that
leverage the robust ePayments system as a
means to attract and retain bank custom-
ers, RevoPay quickly acquired a strong,
portfolio of loyal clients in our key ver-
ticals. Today, its software is unique with
multi-vertical capabilities – it powers a
variety of enterprise and channel partners
who need industry tools to empower the
conversion from paper checks to ePay-
ments. Embracing a culture of innova-
tion, entrepreneurship and quality, the
RevoPay team is dedicated to building the
best platform for our industries combined
with superior customer service.

RÓDRIGUEZ & TRAN LLP

Two law school friends
driven by the belief
that quality and afford-
able legal assistance
should be accessible to all,
led to the formation of
Rodriguez & Tran,
LLP. Last year, Rodriguez & Tran Labor
practice on Employment
and Family Law matters. Its employment
law practice is contingency based; giving
clients representation at no upfront cost
and the firm only gets paid if it wins. The
firm’s family practice focuses on helping
clients navigate their divorce in an equi-
table and healing manner.

SANCHEZ & SANCHEZ

The Sanchez & Sanchez team
has a long passion for service and the pursuit
of making a difference in the lives of
others. Throughout their careers
they’ve worked with
community members, and
have a unique
relationship with
urban communities.
Griselda Rodriguez has dedicated most
years later, Quality Material Handling, Inc.
becomes a multi-million dollar company grow-
ing by the day, Quality Material Handling, Inc., services companies such as South-
ern California Edison, Harley Davidson, Wamer Bros., Porsche, Mitsubishi, Boeing,
HAAS Automation, AIDS Project LA.

RUBBY MAKEUP ACADEMY

Rubby Makeup Academy, founded by its
president Ruby Polanco, is a story of a
life immigrant coming to this country at twelve years old, barely speak-
ing English, surviving domestic violence,
and near homelessness
becoming a $3 mil-
nion per year business
owner. Incorporated in January 2006, the Ruby
Makeup Academy, serving four locations
throughout Southern California, offers courses in beauty, fash-
ion and special effects makeup designed for
individuals seeking careers in the
makeup industry. The academy gradu-
ates over 1,000 students per year with an
internship program that seeks out real
career opportunities. Many of the gradu-
ates have gone on to become Ruby Make-
up Academy employees comprising a staff
of 45 throughout the various locations.
Polanco does weekly training sessions
with her sales and management team that
have grown the Ruby Makeup Academy
into what it is today. On average for the last five years, the business has seen 30%
growth each year and in the life of the
company, it has never been in the red.

RUIZ STRATEGISTS

Ruiz Strategies and its
president and CEO,
Michele Ruiz, have the
ability to articulate the
“unique value of a business” in a language
that transcends competi-
itive business envi-
ronments. The strategic
communications firm
creates sustainable value. Moreover, Ruiz has a relentless focus on bridging the gap
to ensure that other women entrepre-
eurs are achieving success in the value
chain. The company has grown a stag-
gering 475% since its inception in 2010
and has several Fortune 500 companies as
clients. Ruiz Strategies’ expertise in
the oil and gas energy sector, the financial
sector, technology and communica-
tions as well as the food industry. As
industry experts, the firm translates the
value to clients by asking the right
questions, listening and then
performing a market analysis while
focusing efforts on the proper research
to ensure that the presented solutions fit
into the client’s internal strategy.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY PALLET

In 1996, San Fer-
nando Valley Pallet
Company was founded by Susana
and Jorge Eroz. Together their vision
was to create a company
that would include a strategy
to “save the planet”
via creating a working model of materials
and pallets. Over 90% of all pallets and wood received
back from customers and vendors are
recycled. In 2003, with all their retirement
savings and the help of their children
Eroz expanded the company and purchased a 10-acre facility
in Lancaster. The company added multi-acreage facilities to better serve the
whole Southern California area. During the past year, they have added approxi-
mately 10 personnel at both their facil-

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FINALISTS
ties Chatsworth and Lancaster. They also developed a network of conveyers and stackers for the pallet material handling and selection process, which improves production efficiency and creates an easier environment for their workforce. Overall, the hard-working Erazao and their team increased sales this past year by 25%.

SAZON LATINO FUSION CATERING
Claudia Quiñones, founder of Sazon Latino Fusion, learned to cook in her mother’s kitchen and has been in the restaurant industry for over 20 years. Since the passing of her mother, Quilnías has picked up different Latin dishes by traveling and eating out in many Latin restaurants, trying different Latin cuisines – and giving them a healthier twist. As she tells her catering customers, “expect the unexpected!” Sazon Latino Fusion offers healthy Latin food to the community, and has been doing so for six years. Not only is the food delicious, it is also healthy. Sazon has customers that have lost weight and have improved their health thanks to the healthy options provided. And for those with a sweet tooth, Sazon has an award-winning flan – said to be among the best in Los Angeles!

SCALE 1:1 FURNITURE
SCALE 1:1’s office furniture products are designed, developed and manufactured in Los Angeles. The company’s product line stimulates creativity and encourages collaboration. SCALE 1:1 furniture is installed in some of the leading workplaces in the United States, including the Google Headquarters, IBM, Galvanize co-working campuses, New York University, and others. It was ranked among the top 10 furniture manufacturers in the United States, Clara Reis, the co-owner and founder of SCALE 1:1, moved to the United States from Brazil in January 2000. After graduating from Sao Paulo University with Bachelors of Science in Physical Education, Reis excelled as a workplace ergonomics specialist, assisting large corporations in producing healthy work environments.SCALE 1:1 furniture is fabricated in one of the leading workplaces in the United States, Clara Reis, the co-owner and founder of SCALE 1:1, moved to the United States from Brazil in January 2000. After graduating from Sao Paulo University with Bachelors of Science in Physical Education, Reis excelled as a workplace ergonomics specialist, assisting large corporations in producing healthy work environments. SCALE 1:1 furniture is fabricated in one of the leading workplaces in the United States, Clara Reis, the co-owner and founder of SCALE 1:1, moved to the United States from Brazil in January 2000. After graduating from Sao Paulo University with Bachelors of Science in Physical Education, Reis excelled as a workplace ergonomics specialist, assisting large corporations in producing healthy work environments. SCALE 1:1 furniture is fabricated in one of the leading workplaces in the United States, Clara Reis, the co-owner and founder of SCALE 1:1, moved to the United States from Brazil in January 2000. After graduating from Sao Paulo University with Bachelors of Science in Physical Education, Reis excelled as a workplace ergonomics specialist, assisting large corporations in producing healthy work environments. SCALE 1:1 furniture is fabricated in one of the leading workplaces in the United States, Clara Reis, the co-owner and founder of SCALE 1:1, moved to the United States from Brazil in January 2000. After graduating from Sao Paulo University with Bachelors of Science in Physical Education, Reis excelled as a workplace ergonomics specialist, assisting large corporations in producing healthy work environments.

SSENSIS
Jose R. Villa is the founder and President of Sensis, a cross-cultural marketing agency focused on behavior change. For the past 18 years, Villa has thought about the advertising industry differently than most. Seemingly one step ahead of the past 18 years, Villa has thought about how to use advertising to make marketing and campaigns more relevant and engaging. Sensis has created a new standard in the advertising industry and has been recognized for its creative and effective campaigns that appeal to people from different backgrounds and cultures.

SOUTHBEACH WOMEN’S ORGANIZATION
Marisol Camelo founded the Southeast Women’s Organization six years ago to give women in the Southeast cities of Los Angeles a resource to encourage and empower them to overcome the horrors of domestic violence and abuse and take control of their lives. This year Camelo has ramped up her information flow and even participated in a radio show to try and reach more women in need of her services. To hear the stories and pain of people who called in to the radio show was at the same time heartbreaking and uplifting to see that Camelo and the Southeast Women’s Organization have given these women hope in their lives. The Organization has also extended its reach to the thousands of needy children in the region with an annual holiday toy drive that culminates in a toy giveaway in multiple locations so that they can experience joy during the holidays.

SPARK PROGRAM
The Spark Program believes that every young person in America – including Hispanic and Latino(a) students - deserves to be engaged in his or her education, and inspired to graduate from high school. In order to increase student engagement and raise high school graduation rates, Spark strives to make apprenticeships the capstone of middle school, and a widely available, consistently effective approach for underserved and struggling middle school students. Spark’s middle school mentoring program pairs students with volunteer mentors at the workplace, where they work on individual projects related to their interests and future career goals. Spark knows that engaging these students in their education early on—in middle school, through one-one-one mentoring, hands-on learning, and access to work environments is an effective way to ensure that they thrive in school, graduate, and lead successful lives. Spark Los Angeles is partnered with six schools across East and South Los Angeles, serving 300 students.

TRUCONNECT
TruConnect is a privately owned business providing telecommunications services to the Latino community throughout the city of Los Angeles. Co-owned by Nathan and Matthew Johnson, TruConnect is one of the nation’s fastest growing providers of no-contract, wireless voice, messaging, and data services. The company is focused on offering virtual wireless technology to those most in need by providing affordable, flexible data and telecom solutions to the underserved: low income, over 65, and Internet users. TruConnect offers affordable wireless, residential, and small business telecommunication services to the Latino community for more than 15 years. TruConnect currently serves more than 291,408 California Lifeline subscribers and has experienced a subscriber growth rate increase of 81% in the last 11 months. TruConnect is a powerful sales trajectory, with $107 million in sales in 2015, after hitting $45 million in 2014. The company is hiring a diverse group of employees to help support the telecommunication needs of the Los Angeles area Latino population.

VAO LOS ANGELES
Frances Moreno is a successful Latina entrepreneur and a business and community leader. Moreno founded Vao Los Angeles and is celebrating the company’s 10th anniversary in 2016. Vao Los Angeles is a placement firm specializing in finance, accounting, and IT professionals for both projects and permanent hire positions. Moreno is the only Latina managing partner in the resources staffing industry in all of Los Angeles. Under her leadership, Vao was awarded five national Gold Stevie Awards and four #1 rankings on the Best Places to Work in Los Angeles list. Moreno gives back to community, has transformed the workplace to provide true flexibility and work/life balance, and has helped thousands find jobs in her 15 years of service to her Los Angeles community. Her modest start raised by a single mother and grandmother and with 8 older siblings, Moreno grew up learning the value of hard work and ethic that has helped her succeed.

VELEZ VIP EMPIRE REALTY
While her hands-on approach is appreciated by her clients, real estate agent Karina Veliz acknowledges the support of an extended team of industry specialists whose commitment to excellence rivals her own. “When it comes to buying or selling a home, consumers should feel more than safe—they should feel more than the best,” she has said. “My business model supports that in every way.” Veliz has aligned herself with an excellent group that includes lenders, escrow and title personnel, insurance agents and home service providers such as termite, home warranty and home inspection. She has worked hard to surround herself with a team that is as dedicated as she is to getting the job done. As a result, she has a very loyal client base, leading to a thriving business thanks to referrals among her clients and colleagues. She believes that her successful business ties in to her core values and beliefs – working to make people happy.
Over 300 attendees were on hand for the Business Journal’s 7th annual Latino Business Awards Luncheon held at the Omni Hotel Los Angeles on Wednesday, January 20, 2016.