



Hispanic Women's Council

Fall/Winter 2020 Newsletter

Board of Directors

MAJ (Ret.) Linda C. Zamora
President

Dr. Carmen Samora
Immediate Past President

Marissa Elías
Vice President, Pres. Elect

Raqui Martínez, Treasurer

Vangie Samora, Secretary

Nicole Flórez

Lucía López

Dr. Victoria Sánchez

The Hispanic Women's Council is a non-profit, inter-generational organization established in 1988 to promote, support, and create opportunities for Hispanic women.

P. O. Box 27271
Albuquerque, NM 87125

www.nmhwc.com

Vangie Samora, Editor

Un mensaje de la presidente

Greetings Dearest HWC Comadres,

My wish is that this newsletter finds you and your loved ones healthy and happy.

I would like to extend congratulations and gratitude to all of you, our Members, and our Board for the beautifully successful events and accomplishments we've achieved over the past few months. Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, we were able to continue our legacy and dedication to service by exceeding our fundraising goal for the Scholarship Fund. We were able to celebrate our outstanding Scholarship Recipients in a virtual Meet and Greet that captured the warmth and camaraderie of the live events. These ladies are able to continue excelling and contributing in their chosen fields thanks to the financial support and mentorship of our organization.

Congratulations to the incomparable Teresa Leger Fernandez for her Congressional victory. We wish her success in this endeavor and by virtue of her character and love of our State know that her successes will be victories for us all.

Sadly, we also lost a precious friend with the passing of long time Member Raquel Velásquez. She leaves a beautiful legacy captured in our book *Mujeres Valerosas*.

Through our trials, successes, loves, losses, virtual engagements, and everything else this season we are grateful for this HWC Family which not only supports us, but uplifts us. Thank you all for everything you do to help this organization thrive!

With Deepest Affection, Gratitude and Respect,

MAJ(R) Linda C. Zamora
HWC President 2020



HWC Virtual Holiday Party

Sunday, December 6, 2020, 4:00pm to 5:00pm
Enjoy a sing-along with "Las Flores del Valle"
and reconnect with your comadres
Zoom Link will be provided in an email.



Keynote Speech by Dr. Florencia Monge

Delivered at the HWC Virtual Meet & Greet, September 23, 2020

Dr. Monge delivered a personal, heartfelt message to the incoming students, and we are pleased to publish her message in full. Enjoy!



Dr. Florencia Monge & her mother
Florencia Vela-Monge

Good afternoon everyone and thank you for having me. I would like to take a moment to congratulate all of the scholarship recipients. We are so proud of you. You all have come along way. I would also like to welcome you to the Hispanic women's council if this is your first time. I hope you find what I found here which is a community of wise women that want success for you and have tools to help you.

I am Florencia Monge and I am honored to have been invited to speak to you at this reception. I want to use this opportunity to share my story with you a little bit, and I hope to serve as some source of inspiration, maybe a resource, a point of reference, something that will help you move towards your professional goals.

So, a little bit about myself – you know I find this question a little bit funny but something that seems to be pretty commonly asked, more recently in my medical school interview, and it's like well what do I say, how much time do I have, but I think I have an answer that aligns with how I want to be seen. I am a Latina, I am a mother, a wife, a daughter, an academic, a scientist, and now a medical student.

A Latina – one of the greatest benefits from being a recipient of this HWC scholarship has been the mentorship. I have been Dr. Victoria Sanchez's and Dr. Romero-Leggott's mentee for a couple of years now, and I am so thankful to them. Beyond their professional accolades, which I am in awe of, it is through conversations with them that I have embraced that. I didn't shy away from it before, I wasn't ashamed, but I felt that my Mexican culture seemed to bump into my identify as a scientist. Some of my colleagues eat/breathe/sleep science and they're great scientists, and I'm sure they're happy in their personal life too, but I can't do that. I have a mom that calls me and invites me for dinner 3-4 times a week, and I want to go to dinner. I like to spend time with them. This does not make me a less competent scientist, a less successful professional. Being "dependent" on your family like this didn't make a less successful "adult." They [Dr. Sanchez and Dr. Romero-Leggott] allowed me to see that they are like this too and their careers are amazing! You just learn to work a little differently, move things around and prioritize.

I'm a new mom – all I have on that is that It takes a village to raise a kid and guess what – I have a village, because culturally that's how we are too. Three weeks after my daughter was born, I started studying for the MCAT and 3 weeks after that I went back to work to finish up projects preparing for graduation. Having my family around, and a community of women that share these cultural views with me, has been so helpful in relieving some of the stress that accompanies these events. It's not enough to just know someone far away that does it or maybe is even a little more separated culturally than you, it's just harder to share, at least it was for me.

I'm a wife, a daughter, and a sister too. I mean I keep these in my introduction because I can't separate those from who I am. Granted I know different introductions ask for different versions of you but you catch my drift, I can't separate the scientist, the doctor, from the mom, or the daughter that speaks with her parents almost every day.

I'm a scientist and a medical student. I defended my dissertation in July, and I started medical school two weeks after. I decided to switch career paths because I have to ask myself – what do I want to leave behind and where can my skills be most beneficial. I do love research, its exhilarating and frustrating but rewarding. However, I feel that as a physician I can help my community more. I think the doctor's office, the hospital are very vulnerable places and, if its hard to comfortable, I think there could be some barriers in treatment.

At this specific point in my life/academic/professional journey I do feel like things are going well, but this did not come at a free cost, or stress-free, nor did I do this alone. Dr. Sanchez has also helped me to recognize that if I don't speak for myself, other people won't either, and in the professional, male-dominated fields in which I find myself, this is a skill I am still working on.

I am grateful for the opportunities that I have had that have led me here, but in line with my last comment, I continue to reach for my professional goals because I have learned to take advantage of opportunities. I have made connections and surrounded myself with people who look out for me with professional/ personal advice, praise, with constructive criticism, with resources.

You are now part of this group that has all of this for you, so I am happy that this scholarship can relieve some of the financial burden. That is a great help, but also I urge you to take advantage of the mentoring sessions. It may change as you progress from undergraduate to graduate or professional but the great thing is these women can help you throughout! They have the knowledge, the experience, the resources. I definitely could not have done this or continue doing this without my family and communities like this one.

You know this is a weird time for everyone. I think politically things are chaotic, there's a historical pandemic going on and, I don't meant to make this sound as a call to arms, but ... maybe I do.. I'm just so inspired every time I'm at the HWC receptions because you are all doing so many great things that I just want to remind you to be strong in your cultural identify, be a strong woman, be a strong student, be a strong professional. Take criticism when you need it and from who you need it, but don't let other people's expectations define if you're a good mom, good student, good scientist, good writer, good doctor, 'good Mexican' – don't. You're here, you know what you're doing, keep working hard.

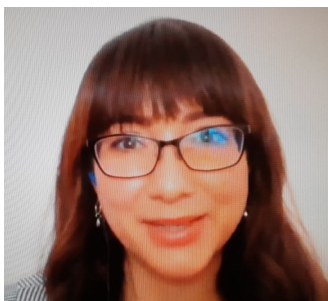
Learn to ask for help, learn to take advantage of opportunities, learn to advocate for yourself. I'm asking for a lot and this is exhausting, trust me I know, so lastly, don't forget about learning to take care of yourself.

Again, thank you for having me. As I said, I am always so inspired to be here and now so honored to have been invited to speak to you. Congratulations on all of your accomplishments!



Welcome to the HWC 2020/2021 Scholarship Recipients

The Hispanic Women's Council is proud to introduce the 2020/2021 HWC Scholarship Recipients. We learned more about them at the **Virtual Meet & Greet** event held on September 23, 2020, via Zoom. The students shared remarks with all who logged in, one delivered live, and the rest video taped in advance of the event. Their collective message was both impressive and inspiring, and we are pleased to share the following excerpts. Congratulations to each and every one of the students. We look forward to following your progress and successes.



Nicole Martinez, MPH Master of Public Health

"I'm a first year graduate student at UNM. In 2014 I graduated with a dual degree in biology and psychology with a minor in chemistry. Since then I've been working as a registered behavior technician providing evidence-based interventions to children with autism. I'm currently pursuing a Master's degree in Public Health with a concentration in community health. My ultimate goal is to return to Las Vegas, NM, where I was born and raised, and improve health outcomes in rural and underserved populations by increasing access to medical care and mental health services."



Lizzet Castillo, MD Doctor of Medicine

"I am a third year medical student. Thank you to HWC for allowing me this scholarship opportunity and to meet mentors. I am a first generation Mexican-American. I grew up in Chihuahua, Mexico, and have lived in Albuquerque for 10 years. My goal is to work with underserved populations as a physician. I'm also interested in mentoring students and am part of a student-led initiative to mentor undergraduate, underrepresented students who are interested in medicine. I hope everyone is staying safe and healthy"



Alexis Rael, MBA Business Administration

"I am a third-year recipient of the HWC scholarship. I am pursuing my Master of Business Administration degree with a concentration in Strategic Management and Policy. Currently I work as a business graduate intern at Sandia National Labs, and I was recently appointed to the Governor's Advisory Council for Racial Justice. My experience with HWC has been amazing. I thank the HWC Board and, especially, want to thank Dr. Leila Flores-Duenas for all the mentoring. She tells me what I need to hear, not what I want to hear, and has helped me with things like writing a resume."



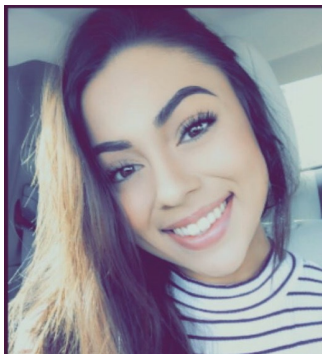
Brittney Sanchez, MPH Master of Public Health

"I am concentrating on both epidemiology and community health. I am currently a paramedic who works part-time in an Emergency Room/Urgent Care clinic, and I also work as a graduate assistant for Public Health 101. My future goals are to become an ER physician to better serve my community. This is my second year receiving this scholarship. This is so much more than a scholarship, it includes a mentor and a community of talented and smart Hispanic women. You ladies have given me new inspiration to follow my dreams and be proud of my culture, and I am forever grateful for that."



Rosalinda Pacheco, BFA Art Studio

"I am a senior at UNM working on a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Art Studio with emphasis in printing and drawing. I grew up in a family very involved in the arts and believes that culture is extremely important. My art practice focuses on highlighting the people of NM and telling stories that never get told. I plan to pursue a masters in counseling to get an interdisciplinary approach to what I'm doing, as art can be very therapeutic. Thank you very much for this award; it means a lot to have this kind of support."



Raylynn Quintana, BS Nursing

I was born and raised in Española, New Mexico. I am a dual degree student at Santa Fe Community College and the University of New Mexico where I study nursing. My career goal is to earn a Doctoral degree and become a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. Thank you so much for supporting my career goals, dreams, and aspirations.



Yohana Martinez, BBA Business Administration

"I am a Junior at UNM working on a business administration degree. I would like to continue my education and pursue a Law degree. My professional goal is to advocate for Latino-owned businesses. I am very grateful for this scholarship as it will allow me to continue my education while I work and care for a family member. I am very excited to be a part of HWC because I will get to meet other successful women."



Andrea Medina, Graduate Certificate, Educational Diagnosis

"I have a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a master's degree in Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies from UNM. I am working towards a graduate certificate in the Educational Diagnostician program at UNM. Currently I am a general education elementary school teacher with the Albuquerque Public School District. The Hispanic Women's Council has provided me with amazing Hispanic, female role models of all ages and with the mentorship I needed to move my career forward."



Analissa Gutierrez

BS Population Health, Minor in Chemistry and Biology

"I have chosen to pursue a career in public health because I want to focus on the social determinants of health that affect New Mexicans. I want to be a change agent in hospitals and clinics all around NM, advocating for quality patient care and to improve health outcomes. Thank you for this opportunity; I'm excited to be working with HWC."


Irma Rocio Vazquez, PhD Mechanical Engineering

"First I want to give a huge thank you to HWC; this is the 5th year that I received this scholarship. It has seen me through more than 120 hours of course work and many life changes. Having the honor of receiving this scholarship from when I was a sophomore to now being in my 2nd year of my PhD has been invaluable to my academic career. I'm studying Mechanical Engineering and doing research in Materials Science. I have received great mentorship. I am very happy for all the recipients, so congratulations to you all."


Rebekah Pacheco, BA Political Science/Management

"I'm a senior at UNM majoring in Political Science with a minor in management. I have also started my MBA this semester with a concentration in operations management, as part of a program that lets students, in their last year of undergraduate studies, begin taking graduate courses. I'm also interested in commercial and real estate development as well as private equity. A big thank you to HWC for the scholarship, I'm so grateful. Congratulations to everyone else."


Monique Gallegos, BS Biology/Spanish

"I will be receiving two degrees in December, a BS in Biology with a minor in Chemistry and a BA in Spanish with a minor in Management. I'm going to begin prepping for the MCAT this semester and will apply to medical school next year; my professional goal is to become a doctor. The most valuable thing about the HWC scholarship is the mentorship I have received from Dr. Leila Flores-Duenas. It is very reassuring to know you have someone rooting for you and to help you stay on track when facing adversity."


Kyla Fugate
BAEPD Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Planning and Design

"I'm from Alamogordo, NM. I'm a junior at UNM, studying Environmental Planning and Design with a minor in Sustainability Studies. In the future, I'm thinking about going to graduate school, studying sustainability and resiliency. I want to travel; I'd like to do the Peace Corps or travel abroad in general. I'm a new member of HWC and really excited to meet everyone and be a part of this group."


Maria Vielma, BA Criminology/Spanish

"I am a renewal student for the HWC scholarship. My degrees are a dual major in Criminology and Spanish and double minor in Chicana Studies and Honors. My professional goals are to receive my Master's degree in Spanish and in Social Work because I want to provide affordable and accessible sex education and therapy for the Latinx community. What I've gained from the HWC scholarship is amazing mentorship and peer support. The humanitarian support I received from my mentorship was really helpful towards my academic achievement. I'm honored to receive this scholarship once again."

Éxito y Más

Twelve years ago, **Teresa Leger Fernandez** almost ran for Congress. But, because her sons were young, she decided to wait. Now they are grown-ups, and Teresa decided “it’s time.” In fact “Ahora Es Cuando” was a theme of her campaign for New Mexico’s 3rd Congressional District seat. She ran an exceptional campaign and won her race with an impressive 59% of the vote. Her values—“love of our planet, love for our nation, love of our beautiful land we call home and love of our families”—resonated with the citizens of her district. Her passion, smarts and ideas, sealed the deal.



Congresswoman-elect Teresa Leger Fernandez and her sons Dario, Alisandro and Abelino

Teresa is a long standing member of HWC and served a term on the board. In 2004, she was awarded the HWC Primera Award after becoming the first woman from NM appointed by a U. S. President to serve as White House Fellow in the country’s foremost leadership program. Now she achieved another first: she is the first woman to represent New Mexico’s 3rd Congressional District.

Her voice on the national stage is important to us. We send her off to D.C. with her our best wishes for a long and productive political career and lots of love and admiration.

In Memoriam



Raquel Velazquez (right) and Dr. Diane Torres Velazquez

Raquel Velásquez passed away on October 16, 2020. She was a loyal member of HWC for many years and is featured in our book, *Mujeres Valerosas*. Her daughter, Dr. Diane Torres-Velásquez, has also been an active member of HWC and served a term on the HWC board. We send Diane and her siblings, Cathy Coffey, Dr. Linda Renner and Michael Torres, our deepest condolences.

Raquel was a life-long learner, had big dreams, and pursued them with passion. She grew up in San Antonio, Texas. Starting at the age of five, her grandmother took her to Mexico every summer where they traveled across the countryside in a horse-drawn coach—her love for exploration was born. A year after high school, she married and started a family and in 1962 moved to Albuquerque. She worked as a secretary at a military base and spent many weekends, children in tow, exploring the pueblos and small villages in Northern New Mexico. At age 41, her children were off to college and it was time for her to pursue her own dream of going to law school. She studied sociology, graduated with honors, and was offered a fellowship to pursue a doctorate at the University of Texas. She would not be diverted from her goal of attending law school, and she graduated from the UNM School of Law.

Raquel built a rewarding career in law, initially as an assistant district attorney, then as a public defender and finally settling into the field of child support enforcement. Raquel also founded a Mexican dance group at UNM (when she was an undergraduate student). Later the dance group was given the distinction by the Governor of being named the official *Ballet Folklorico de Nuevo Mexico*. A life well lived and inspiring to us all.

Staying in Touch: Messages from Past Scholarship Recipient



Yadira Salazar Sanchez earned a BS in Biology, BA in Spanish and completed her MPH with a concentration in Epidemiology in May 2020. She has accepted a position as an Associate Scientist 1, Office for Community Health Emerging Infections Program, University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center, Albuquerque, NM. She is passionate about working with underserved communities and strives to promote health equity. She also gave birth to Jasmine.

My name is **Ivonne Granados Alvarez**; a woman adapted to her circumstances. I entered CNM with a degree in mind, but thanks to the support and generosity of the Hispanic Women's Scholarship, I graduated with three degrees and two certifications. Which are, *Associates of Arts in Early Childhood Multicultural Education—Birth to 3rd*, *Associates of Arts in Modern Languages—Spanish concentration*, *Associates of Arts in Liberal Arts*, *Child Development Certificate*, and *General Studies Certificate*. Proudly earned them with the Highest Honors and four places on the Dean's List. However, it was the positive examples of powerful, positive, and accomplished women from HWC that installing in me the desire to keep forward and to do my best to honor their trust and support. I am deeply grateful for the Hispanic Women's Council support and commitment to a great community.



My name is **Carlie Rose Márquez** and I am one of the many proud Hispanic women who recently graduated from the University of New Mexico. I received a Bachelor of Arts degree in both Political Science and International Studies, a Certificate in Peace Studies and a Designation in the Honors College on May 16, 2020. While obtaining my degree, I conducted research on genocides and Indigenous peoples. I also had the amazing opportunity to study abroad for a semester in New Zealand. These past four years have been quite busy, but I can honestly say I have done the majority of things I set out to do in college. One of those things I was able to achieve was regaining my heritage. I have always known where I came from and the importance of my culture, but I never truly

knew who I was. Hispanic is a label that was given to us, it is not necessarily a term that we identify with. Being Hispanic means that a part of us descended from Spain, but it does not acknowledge other parts of our blood line and who we actually are as a people. Being a part of the Hispanic Women's Council (HWC) allowed me to explore those roots that we ourselves and others have denied us. Finding groups that revolve around Hispanics are hard to find but finding a group that revolves around Hispanic women is rare and fulfilling. My HWC mentor, Leila Flores-Duenas, assisted me in not only finding my path in life, but also showed me how strong Hispanic women can be.

Jacque Garcia is in an entry level Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program at Samuel Merritt University in Sacramento, California. She became a Registered Nurse (RN) in February 2020, and is now working towards becoming a Family Nurse Practitioner. Upon graduation in May 2021, she plans to work as a Nurse Practitioner in a community health clinic. While pursuing her career in nursing over the last few years, she somehow found time to get married and have a baby!



2020 Masquerade Ball “Alternative” Fundraiser Beats Expectations!

We couldn't gather in person this year so the Masquerade Ball Event Committee sent a letter to HWC members asking for donations to the scholarship fund or sponsorships for the campaign. Our members responded with enthusiasm and, in turn, reached out to their own networks. Additionally several sponsors stepped up. As a result, the \$15,000 goal set by the Committee was surpassed and a total of \$20,450 was raised! This is remarkable, and we are humbled by the generosity of our members, their friends and our sponsors.

At a time when everyone is facing more challenges, the importance of assuring that students continue their studies was made a priority in the hearts of so many. The message to our students is loud and clear: “we care about you, and we want to help you succeed.”

Special thanks to the Committee Co-Chairs, Kathryn Ramsey and Dr. Viola Florez and to Committee members Raqui Martinez, Nicole Florez, Sonya Chavez, Maj. Linda Zamora, Marissa Elias, Melissa Rodriguez, and Dominique Rodriguez.

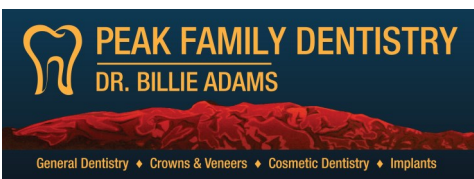
We also received strong support from sponsors of our fundraising campaign, and they are acknowledged below. All of them have been past sponsors of the Masquerade Ball, and we sincerely appreciate their unwavering support.



The Cates Team
www.rbcwmfa.com/thecatesteam



**Wealth
Management**



2020 HWC Membership

Clara Apodaca, Former First Lady of New Mexico	Dr. Parisa Kermani Northwestern Memorial Hospital	Brittney Sánchez, HWC Scholarship Recipient, MA Public Health
Valerie J. Borrego, CPA	Teresa Leger-Fernández Officer, Leger Law and Strategy, LLC	Elsie Sánchez Small Business Consultant
Theresa Cárdenas Sustainability Practitioner & President, Noble Renewables Group LLC	Edna L. López, President & CEO Compa Industries, Inc.	Petra Sánchez Retired Educator
Sylvia Celedón-Pattichis Professor, Interim Senior Associate Dean, UNM COE	Rose López, Retired	Dr. Shelle V. Sanchez, Director of Cultural Services, City of Abq.
Sonya K. Chávez, U. S. Marshal U. S. Marshals Service	Karla Barela Lucero, Advance Planning Consultant, FRENCH Funerals	Verónica T. Sánchez Retired UNM Administrator
Gloria Chávez-Sampson	Dr. Helen Lucero Retired Museum Curator/Director	Theresa Sandlin, Retired Admin. Los Alamos National Laboratory
Yolanda Cruz	Josephine Martínez Retired FAA	Loretta Sandoval
Dr. Rose Díaz, Library and Archives Research Historian, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center	Linda López McAlister, Founding Artistic Director, Camino Real Productions, LLC	Mary Frances Santistevan Retired, APS
Dr. Leila Flores-Dueñas Associate Professor, UNM COE	Maria Meier	Rose Spader, Author
Elena Flórez, Student	Gloria Mirabal Member, MANA del Norte	Sylvia Ortiz Spence, President Silverado Apparel & Home
Dr. Viola E. Flórez Professor Emeritus, UNM COE	Dolores Montoya	Sue Stone, Lecturer, UNM College of Population Health
Dr. Merrilee Foreman, Owner Chiropractic Lifestyle Center	Dr. Cecilia J. Navarrete Retired Education Consultant	Elizabeth Trujillo
Kyla Fugate HWC Scholarship Recipient	Nicky Ovitt Designer, Illustrator	Joanna Trujillo
Barbara Gallegos	Kathryn Ramsey APS Instructional Coach	Kim Trujillo, Costume Designer New Mexico Film
Margaret Gonzales Senior Operations Manager UNM Graduate Studies	Carmen M. Rodríguez, President Carmen Cares Consulting	Mary Lou Trujillo, Retired Public Health Administrator
Tanya Gonzales, Paralegal, Law Offices of the Public Defender	Dominique Rodríguez, Student Cibola High School	Rachel A. Valenzuela
María J. Gutiérrez Financial Planner	Louella Rodríguez Retired Educator	Carol Vigil Entertainment Consultant
Samia Hindi, Educator	Melissa Rodríguez, 5th Grade Teacher, Petroglyph Elementary	Sylvia Vigil-Raines, Program Communications Specialist Sandia National Labs
	Reina A. Romero Retired Educator	Miranda Zamora-Williams MS, ATC/LAT