

2021 Hispanic Heritage Award Recipients



HISPANIC/LATINO COMMISSION OF MICHIGAN

Alfonso Salais



Educator in the Community Award & 2022 Keynote Speaker

Alfonso Salais, Jr. is an enthusiastic and dynamic educator who has helped many students make successful transitions from high school to college. With waiting lists, to get into his classes, Alfonso has served as a high school Spanish teacher at all three LSD high schools and has served in an administrative capacity on several occasions. He has assisted with both Central Michigan University's and Michigan State University's College of Education programs in developing highly qualified teachers for many communities throughout the nation. Alfonso created and led, with a colleague, the first High School Mariachi Ensemble in the State of Michigan. Alfonso is also a state board member of the Michigan Education Association. Over the years, he has inspired, captivated, and entertained his students and broader audiences with his lively delivery of his anecdotes and quotations. He has received The Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award, an award dubbed as the "Oscars of Teaching Awards" by *Teacher Magazine*.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr. José Cuello is Emeritus Associate Professor of History and Latina/o Studies at Wayne State University in Detroit. He was born in Tampico, México in 1947 and became a citizen of the United States at age 14. He attended Chicago Catholic and public schools. He earned his B.A. in History from the University of Illinois in

Jose Cuello, Ph.D.

Chicago and his Ph.D. in History from the University of California in Berkeley in 1981.

Dr. Cuello continues to be deeply involved with social service and artistic organizations in Southwest Detroit, particularly El Central Hispanic News and LA SED. He has written extensively in El Central on social justice issues in which he has participated. He has documented the history of the Latina/o Community with over 1,000 hours of film and thousands of photos. He and his wife, Marie, archived 30 years of El Central at Wayne State University and Michigan State University.

His current mission, in retirement from the classroom, is to see Wayne State transform itself into a fully Green University. He explains how we got to our present global economic and environmental crises with a unified theory of the rise and fall of civilizations that he will publish under the title of *Human Imperatives, Earthly Consequences*.



Sara Lamblin



Arts in the Community Award

Sara Gonzalez-Lamblin is an Event Coordinator for the TempleArts Foundation, and Talent Buyer for the Temple Theatre, a 1750 capacity historic theater in Saginaw Michigan. Since joining the team in 2018 she has booked and promoted events focusing on diversity and inclusion such as the Dia de Los Muertos exhibit at the Saginaw Art Museum and events at the Temple Theatre such as the Flor de Toloache concert, two shows with Tom Segura and most recently the Latin Kings of Comedy tour. She also runs the Hispanics for the Arts-Saginaw Facebook group. Sara is a 2022 Michigan Arts and Culture grant recipient, the 2018 HLCOM Top 50 Latina in Michigan award, the 2017 Guadalupe Gomez award for Community Service and Leadership as well as a graduate of the 2017 Great Lakes Bay Hispanic Leadership Institute.

Unsung Hero Award

La Lucha Fund was created as a short-term, emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic,

La Lucha Fund

and was designed to provide direct cash assistance to families who were undocumented or had mixed immigration status in Kent County, making them ineligible for unemployment, CARES Act relief, or other government support. From April to December 2020, La Lucha Fund awarded more than \$700,000 to nearly 1,200 families across the county. La Lucha Fund was a collaboration between Movimiento Cosecha, the Grand Rapids Area Mutual Aid Network, the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan, Latino Community Coalition, Latina Network of West Michigan, and the West Michigan Latino Network, and was held at Grand Rapids Community Foundation.



Young Changemaker Award

Loida L. Tapia has dedicated her career to building capacity for communities to engage in public policy and government both at the state and federal level. Loida is leading MI Poder, a new 501c4 in Michigan, to engage Latino communities across the state in civic participation and political advocacy. She previously led Redistricting Initiative for Michigan Nonprofit Association. She led the largest statewide redistricting engagement program. In 2020 she led the ACLU of Michigan's Election Protection Program. In 2019 Loida established the Office of Public Engagement in the Michigan Department of State. As Director, she led internal analysis of policies to remove systemic barriers for marginalized communities to attain Secretary of State services and information. She led the implementation of a statewide public education strategy around new voting rights laws and helped establish the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. She is a proud resident of Detroit, MI.

Loida Tapia



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