

2022 Hispanic Heritage Month Award Recipients



HISPANIC/LATINO COMMISSION OF MICHIGAN

Educator in the Community Award

Lupe Ramos-Montigny calls herself “a servant of the people.” She is one of nine children, seven of whom traveled with her parents from Texas to Michigan for seasonal farm work. From humble beginnings, she demonstrated greatest passion and exemplary service in education, and selfless leadership in community service.

Lupe worked for 36 years in public education, the majority dedicated to Grand Rapids Public Schools as a teacher and principal, before retiring in 2008. In 2013, she was elected for an eight-year term to the State Board of Education and in 2017, she was elected to the National Association of State Boards of Education as a Central Area Director.

Lupe Ramos-Montigny



Monica B. Reyes

Monica Reyes is with the Great Lakes Bay Hispanic Leadership Institute and was reappointed by Governor Whitmer to the Hispanic Latino Commission of Michigan. She is also retired from Saginaw Valley State University Former Director of Disability Services and Director of Continuing Education and Professional Development. And now devotes most of her free time to Advocacy and Community Service.

Monica is married to her partner, friend, and biggest supporter Lupe, they have 3 children, 11 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. She came from a typical Latino family, with 11 brothers and sisters and over 140 nephews, nieces, great-nephews, and great-nieces and that is just on

Lifetime Achievement Award



her side of the family...she was brought up in a very Mexican family, living and making things work in an all-Anglo community, which brought many challenges but her parents worked hard to help the family navigate life, which allowed us to keep our Latino culture and values.

Arts in the Community Award

Alberto Jimenez is a resident of Saginaw, Michigan. He was always drawn to the Cinco De Mayo Parade to watch the beautiful floats that each new generation created for the community. He learned about float making in Carrollton High School, where he constructed floats for the Homecoming parade. In 2010 his involvement with La Union Civica Mexicana contributed 6 artistic projects to influence the parade line up. Then Alberto moved on to the Mexican American Council to help provide the great lakes bay region youth to the Arts. In 2019 he received a grant to provide a cultural arts program for the youth. Currently Alberto Jimenez strongly supports the Arts at the Mexican American Council. In Partnership with the SVSU Marshall Fredricks Museum in 2020 the team was able to provide the youth with an art program once a month.

Alberto Jimenez



Reyna Masko



Unsung Hero Award

Reyna X Masko has worked for Ottawa County Friend of the Court for over 22 years. In 2013, Reyna was appointed as chair of the County's Cultural Intelligence Committee (CIC). The CIC was responsible for designing and implementing diversity and inclusion initiatives to educate employees on implicit bias, as well as to build strong ties with the community at large.

In 2015 the CIC launched an Annual Diversity Forum to highlight the issues faced by under-represented, ethnically and linguistically diverse, and LGBTQ+ communities, as well as the strategies that businesses and government agencies are executing to create a more inclusive and equitable county. In December of 2018,

Reyna assisted in the establishment of the county's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which is responsible for identifying implicit bias in internal policies, procedures, practices, and in external service delivery.

Young Changemaker Award

Born and raised in Muskegon, Michigan Devon learned from an early age that hard work is the only way good fortune will find you. Cross Country and Track and Field at Aquinas College brought Devon to Grand Rapids, where he was part of 4 Wolverine-Hoosier Conference Cross Country championship teams. While finishing his athletic career, he was also completing his Master's degree in Management at Aquinas. During that time he started his first company (Devon Joslin Consulting) which developed advanced marketing strategies, conducted market research, innovation coaching, and built entrepreneurship plans for clients across the United States. Devon is now the Chairman and CEO of JosVon Holdings, Chairman of the Michigan Center for Economic Innovation, and an Adjunct Professor of Business at Grand Rapids Community College.

Devon Joslin



Manuel Lopez



Distinguished Veteran Award

Born in Michigan, Manuel Lopez was a migrant farmworker who traveled between Michigan and Texas with his family as a youngster. Upon settling in Michigan Manuel learned English and after graduating high school enlisted with his friend Bill in the Marine Corps. Manuel ended up in Camp Pendelton and then was stationed in Okinawa, not knowing that a few months later he would embark upon a war he and his friend were unprepared for in Vietnam, a country neither he nor his friend had heard of before.

After his time in Vietnam he returned to the U.S. and went to his next duty station in North Carolina at Cherry Point, Marine Corps Base for a period of time. After his enlistment was over, he returned to Michigan and went to work with General Motors in 1970. In 1987 he joined the Army National Guard at the age of 42 years old.

He served in various capacities in the unit and retired in 2003 after 20 years combined service to his country. In 1987 Manuel and other Vietnam Veterans started a chapter of The Vietnam Veterans of America. He then became a member of the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, The Marine Corps League, served as president of the Bay County Veterans Council, and presently serves as Commander of the American G. I. Forum of Bay City and State Commander of the G. I. Forum of Michigan. Manuel has been with these organizations for many years and these organizations help the community be a place to be proud of with events like the Parades of honor guards or color guards for funerals of Veterans. Manuel works with Veterans by helping them get their benefits from the VA for their service-related disabilities. He helps not only Veterans but spouses and widows of deceased Veterans too. Manuel states: "I will continue helping Veterans and the community until I can no longer."

Community Service Award

Eva Alvarez is the proud daughter of immigrant parents from Mexico and advocates for immigrant rights. She holds her master's degree from Western Michigan University in Public Administration and is the Public Policy Coordinator for the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center. In that role she focuses on advocating for and influencing local, state, and federal policies impacting immigrants. Eva works to ensure that policies are a true reflection of our country's values by being inclusive of immigrants and their families. She has also represented clients before the Executive Office of Immigration Review and the Department of Homeland Security. In 2018, she helped launch Empowering Latina Leaders and Advocates for Success (ELLAS) - the first professional network in Southwest Michigan - with the mission to enrich and elevate Latina leaders and allies to become bridge builders and change agents in Southwest Michigan. Eva enjoys art, traveling, and spending time with her 3-year-old.

Eva Alvarez



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