

# Biographies



**Al Borrego**

Al Borrego resides in El Paso, Texas. A self-taught artist, he began painting in June of 2007. He has exhibited in many venues. Mr. Borrego is the President of the San Elizario Genealogy + Historical Society and the Binational Committee of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro en el Septentrion. He serves as commissioner of both the El Paso County Historical Commission, and San Elizario Landmark Commission.



**Alan Russell**

Mr. Alan Russell is the Chairman of the Board, CEO, and Co-founder of TECMA. Alan, has made the Tecma Group a national leader among binational enterprises. The company employs over 8,000 individuals in over 50 facilities throughout Mexico and the U.S. The Tecma Group of Companies has recently received national awards in environmental responsibility and human development. He was recently honored with the District Director's Achievement Award by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Alan also serves on the Board of Directors of the binational economic alliance, serving El Paso, Cd. Juarez and Las Cruces, N.M. He is president of the Industrial Development Committee for the Juarez/El Paso area, a member of the Southwest Maquila Association, and member and investor of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.



**Alvaro Gurovich**

Before receiving his Physical Therapy degree from Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile in 1990, Dr. Alvaro Gurovich, P.T., Ph.D., FACSM was a Chilean Swimming National team member and record holder. After graduation, he worked as a clinician for more than 15 years in different fields such as sports medicine, cardiovascular rehabilitation, and human performance, including as a scientific advisor for the Chilean High Performance Athletic Center and several professional athletes like soccer, tennis, and rugby.

Dr. Gurovich is an active member of the American Physical Therapy Association, the American Physiological Society, the International Society for the Advancements in Kinanthropometry, and the American College of Sports Medicine, from which he was granted Fellow member status in 2010. In addition, he serves as a reviewer in several high impact journals such as Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise, Journal of Applied Physiology, Journal of Orthopedic and Sports Physical Therapy, European Heart Imaging Journal, and the Cardiopulmonary PT Journal, where he is an Associate Editor.

Dr. Gurovich has many peer-reviewed scholarly products, including publications and abstract presentations; and he has been extremely active procuring internal and extra-mural grants, including NIH submissions and an American Physical Therapy Association grant awarded through the Cardiovascular and Pulmonary section. His current lines of research are blood flow regulation, exercise-induced blood flow patterns, and cardiovascular rehabilitation and he is the Program director in the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at UTEP.



**Albert C. Zapanta**

Mr. Zapanta is President and CEO of the United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce, which operates 9 regional offices in the United States and 9 in Mexico. Mr. Zapanta is also Founder Member and Chief Executive Office of PAZ Resources, with overall responsibilities of management of the executive staff and overall business strategy. Previously, he was Chief executive Officer of PAZ energy, a single purpose entity that participated in the DFW International Airport natural gas project. He worked in upstream operations of Atlantic Richfield Co. (ARCO Oil & Gas), and retired as Director of Governmental Affairs for ARCO where he was responsible for negotiations with U.S. and Mexican (PEMEX) governments on oil and gas matters, and coordinated ARCO's effort to deregulate the natural gas market which became law, the Natural Gas Policy Act (NGPA) Gen. Zapanta's military record includes the award of the Silver Star, 5 Bronze Stars for Valor, Purple Heart, and 30 other awards during the Vietnam War. He was awarded the Joint Service Commendation Medal for Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Restore Hope in Somalia and Restore Democracy in Haiti. Mr. Zapanta has a BA in Industrial Psychology, MA in Public Administration and has completed work for his PhD in International Political Economics from the University of Southern California. A Harvard School of Business graduate, Mr Zapata attended the Inter-American Defense College at the National War College. In June 2018, he was elected to serve on the Irving City Council in the State of Texas, where he lives with his wife Rochelle.



**Alejandro Barron**

Alejandro Barron has been a Cultural Affairs Specialist at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City for the past five years. In that position he oversees the Sports Diplomacy portfolio, developing and managing exchanges of athletes, coaches, and sports administrators between Mexico and the United States, as well as liaising with sports organizations in both sides of the border, including the offices in Mexico City of the NFL, the NBA, and the MLB. Successful examples of these exchanges include the first project in Mexico to train and provide coaching licenses to women's soccer coaches at the amateur level; court refurbishing programs in Mexico City in partnership with the NBA, and a comprehensive program to develop the sport of triathlon for Special Olympics athletes. Before his time at the U.S. Embassy, he co-owned a sports tourism-oriented travel agency specialized in tourism for large-scale sporting events. From 2009 to 2013 he coordinated collegiate programs for the Real Madrid International School in Mexico. Mr. Barron has lectured at Mexican colleges, including lectures on sports diplomacy at Anahuac University, and sports law at Escuela Libre de Derecho (Free School of Law.) He holds a B.A. in Law from Universidad del Valle de Mexico (Valley of Mexico University), and a Masters in Sports Management from Universidad Europea (European University) in Spain.



# Biographies



**Ana Sandoval**

Councilwoman Ana Sandoval currently serves on the San Antonio City Council, where she represents Council District 7 and champions issues of public health, open government, climate resiliency, and public transportation. She chairs the Council's committee on Community Health & Equity and committee on Public Safety.

Since taking office, Councilwoman Sandoval has led policy initiatives to raise the bar for the City's public participation efforts, protect children from the detrimental effects of early-tobacco use and air pollution, and expand transportation options for residents tired of traffic and poor air quality.

Councilwoman Sandoval's studies took her from MIT to Stanford to Harvard, where she obtained degrees in engineering and public health. She has devoted her career to public service. Previously, she worked for the San Francisco's Air Quality Management District, where she focused on air quality and environmental justice, and VIA Metropolitan Transit, where she worked as a transportation planner.



**Andrew Forrest**

Mr. Forrest comes to El Paso from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga where he was most recently employed as General Manager for Learfield Sports. Prior to that, he worked for the San Antonio Scorpions Professional Soccer Team as Director of Sponsorship and then as Vice President and Assistant General Manager. He held previous positions with Playbook Management International, as Senior Account Executive with the San Antonio Scorpions and as Consultant with FC Edmonton and in the cities of Baltimore and Dallas. Mr. Forrest is a graduate of Roanoke College (Salem, Virginia) and he earned an M.S. in Kinesiology – Sport Leadership from James Madison University (Harrisonburg, Virginia).



**Arturo Barrio**

He has a Bachelor of Business Administration of the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), and a Master's Degree in Applied Political Studies from the International and Ibero-American Foundation of Administration and Public Policies of Madrid.

He is currently the Director of Collaboration and Stakeholder Development at UTEP. He served as Advisor to the President of UTEP for issues related to Mexico and Latin America. He was the Executive Director of the Office of International Programs and Special Assistant to the President of UTEP in External Relations.

In 2018 he was appointed by the Mayor of El Paso, Dee Margo, to serve on the City's Border Relations Committee. In April 2019 he was elected Coordinator of said committee.

He worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2003 to 2015 where he held various positions. He served as Minister of Economic Affairs and Cooperation in the Mission of Mexico to the OAS (2012–2015), was General Director of the Integration and Development Project of Mesoamerica (2009–2012), Deputy Director General of Social, Human and Sustainable Development of the Mesoamerica Project (2007–09), Director for Border Affairs of the General Directorate of North America (2005–07), as well as Advisor to the Undersecretary for North America (2003–05).



# Biographies



**Brad Taylor**

Brad Taylor serves as the Senior Vice President of MountainStar Sports Group and as the Senior Vice President & General Manager of the El Paso Chihuahuas. Taylor, who has been with the Chihuahuas since May 2013, oversees the team's ticket sales, corporate partnership sales, guest services, community programs, operations, marketing and merchandising. Since his arrival to the Sun City, Taylor has witnessed the groundbreaking of Southwest University Park, helped oversee the construction of the ballpark, and led the charge as the Chihuahuas successfully launched their brand on October 22, 2013. Under Taylor's guidance, the Chihuahuas have become the top selling brand in Minor League Baseball (MiLB), a feat that includes the top social media ranking (more than 220K followers across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn & YouTube) out of 160 teams. Through six seasons, the Chihuahuas have drawn more than 3.2 million fans. Before coming to El Paso, Taylor was the President of the Bowling Green Hot Rods. Prior to his stint in Bowling Green, Taylor spent nine seasons (2000-2008) working for one of the most successful teams in minor league baseball, the Trenton Thunder, the Double-A affiliate to the New York Yankees. As general manager (2006-2008), the Thunder became the only team at the Double-A level or below to draw more than 400,000 fans per year for 14 consecutive seasons. While in Trenton, Taylor spearheaded the effort to create a new logo for the Thunder which is still used today and is still a top 10 mark in Minor League Baseball. Taylor currently serves on several board of directors around the community including, the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce, Border Youth Athletic Association, United Way of El Paso, Providence Children's Hospital, and Downtown Management District. He also is a member of the Sun Bowl Advisory Board, the Downtown Management District Marketing Committee, and helps spearhead the Minor League Baseball Promotional Seminar Steering Committee. In his spare time, Taylor also coaches in the Southwest Baseball League. Taylor received a bachelor's degree in Sociology from Randolph-Macon College (Ashland, VA) in 1991, where he also played baseball for four years as a second baseman, serving as team co-captain his senior year. Entering his 26th season of professional baseball, Taylor is a native of Fairfax, Va. Taylor and his wife Jennifer have two sons, Braxton and Parker.



**Bryan Crowe**

Bryan Crowe joined Destination El Paso as the Director of Operations in 2004, was promoted to Assistant General Manager in 2006 and was appointed as General Manager in September of 2013. He serves as chief executive of Destination El Paso, the destination marketing and venue management organization for El Paso, Texas, branded as Visit El Paso for destination marketing and as El Paso Live for venue management. Responsible for convention and meeting development, tourism development, film commission, marketing/branding of the destination, and operation of over 2M gross square feet of public assets - a convention center, two performing arts centers, a stadium, three parking garage facilities, two outdoor public festival spaces, and an outdoor amphitheater. Prior to joining Destination El Paso, he worked supporting operations at the Breslin Center, a 15,000 seat special event center on the Michigan State University campus where he also received his Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering. Mr. Crowe is also a LEED Accredited Professional and an active member of the International Association of Venue Managers. He also served five years as a Vice-President of Amigo Airsho, Inc. - a Texas nonprofit corporation dedicated to aviation education, science education, and military awareness and to the production of an annual public air show at Biggs Army Airfield, Fort Bliss, Texas. Mr. Crowe currently serves on several boards such as Texas Travel Industry Association, Texas Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus, El Paso Club, YWCA Foundation, Governing Board for The Hospitals of Providence and the Governing Committee for the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce.



**Calixto Mateos-Hanel**

On November 14, 2019, Calixto Mateos was named Managing Director of the North American Development Bank (NADB), after having served as Deputy Managing Director (2017-2019) and Director of Risk Management and Control (2014-2017). Prior to joining NADB, he gained more than 25 years of experience at the Mexican central bank (Banco de México), where he held various positions from 1988 to 2014, including economics researcher, deputy macro-financial programming manager, deputy project manager, macroeconomic analysis manager, strategic planning project manager and risk manager. His last position with the central bank was as Director of Institutional Liaisons. He has been a professor of Economics at the graduate school of business administration (EGADE) at the Tecnológico de Monterrey (ITESM), teaching courses on Macroeconomics, Monetary Theory and Policy and Financial Economics. He has also participated in international and national seminars hosted by financial institutions, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Bank of International Settlements (BIS), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as other central banks in England, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Canada, Guatemala, Colombia, and Brazil. Dr. Mateos has also published several articles in books and specialized magazines on such topics as monetary and fiscal policy. He holds a Ph.D. in Applied Economics from Stanford University. He was awarded a Fulbright scholarship for doctoral studies and graduated in 1996. That same year his doctoral thesis placed second for the Banamex Award in Economics.



# Biographies



**Carlos Martinez**

Dr. Carlos Martínez-Vela is executive director of Pioneers 21 in El Paso. Carlos has had a distinguished career working in various capacities in government, business, civil society, and higher education – always at the intersection of innovation and economic development. During almost 20 years in Boston, he was researcher at MIT, director of innovation policy at the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, executive director of the Venture Café Foundation, and director of District Hall, which is the world's first public innovation center. Before moving to El Paso, he was vice president for innovation and entrepreneurship at the Institute of the Americas in La Jolla, CA.

Throughout his career, Carlos has been committed to building research and innovation partnerships between the U.S. and Mexico. At MIT, he mobilized faculty and students to establish the MIT-Mexico Program. Also at MIT, in 2016 he launched the Border Economies project to examine the emergence of a binational innovation system in El Paso-Juárez. In 2017, and in collaboration with the Aspen Institute Latinos and Society Program, he convened a seminar on innovation and culture at the border in San Diego-Tijuana. He was also a lead organizer of the Red Global MX in Boston and San Diego. A dual citizen of Mexico and the U.S., Carlos was born and raised in Monterrey, Mexico. He earned his bachelor of science in engineering physics at Tecnológico de Monterrey and master's (1998) and Ph.D. (2007) degrees in technology and policy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).



**Carol Robertson Lopez**

In August of 2018, Carol was elected Vice Chair and Chair Elect of the SCI Board of Directors. Previous to serving nine years on the Board, Carol was a State Coordinator/ Representative for New Mexico and appointed to the SCI Honorary Board.

At the local level, she serves as the Chair of the Santa Fe Sister Cities Committee and the Bukhara/Santa Fe Sisters Cities. She is a recent Past President of the International Women's Forum-New Mexico. Carol is Past President of the American Women for International Understanding.

Carol has been a board member of the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market since its creation. Providing folk artists with markets preserves cultural heritage and promotes cultural understanding.

Carol served two terms on the Santa Fe City Council and six as Mayor ProTempore. In addition to Chairing Public Works, Finance and Public Safety, a major accomplishment was the securing the funds for the building of the Southside Library. She served as State President of the New Mexico Municipal League and chaired the International Council for the National League of Cities.

Carol was named the Honorary Consul for Uzbekistan for her work with Bukhara and Santa Fe Sister Cities and the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market. Honored with the title "Honorary Citizen of Bukhara," she cut the ribbon for the Silk and Spices Market and spoke at the International Conference on Tourism in Bukhara. She has also been honored as an Honorary Citizen of her Sister City in Korea, Icheon, center for ceramics.



**Cecilia Ochoa Levine**

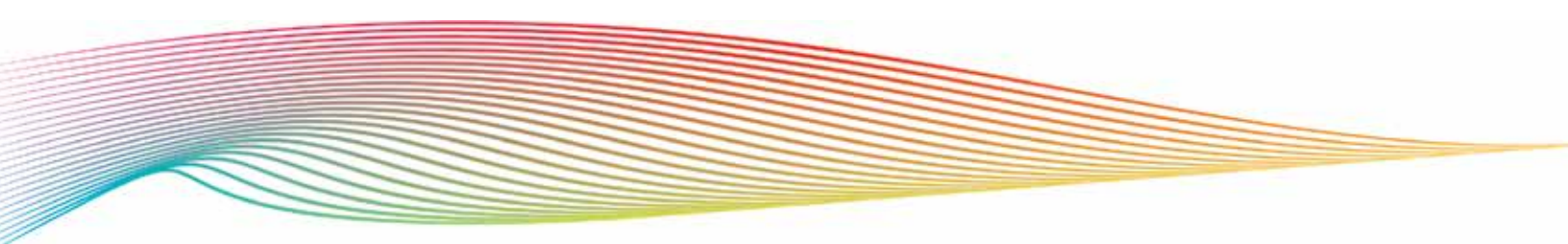
Cecilia Ochoa Levine has been owner of MFI International Mfg., LLC, headquartered in El Paso, Texas, since 1990. Prior to joining MFI, Levine was President and Founder of Ceci Inc. El Paso, Texas and Contratistas de Confecciones in Juarez. Levine, has worked with major companies from around the world but also she has guided smaller companies during their start-up phase.

From 2003 to 2008, Levine, served as a member of the President's Export Council, which worked with the Department of Commerce, the U.S Trade Representative and the Executive Branch in promoting U.S. Exports. From 2002 to 2007, Levine served as a board member for the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, El Paso branch.

Levine founded the US/Mexico Strategic Alliance which networks with various existing organizations to improve the life of U.S. and Mexican citizens living in the border regions of the United States and Mexico.

Levine has been working for the last 8 years putting together the social ecosystem that will be housed in the Herzog and de Meuron El Punto project that will be built in Ciudad Juarez. El Punto will house a music conservatory, arts academy, (dance, photography, painting, sculpture etc.), Permaculture program, hospitality Institute, digital education programs "Paco El Chato".

In 2018 Levine became an investor in an ophtolmology clinic in Ciudad Juarez to improve in the quality of life of the people from El Paso and Juarez.



# Biographies



**Cindy Ramos-Davidson**

Ramos-Davidson has been the CEO of the EPHCC for the past 21 years. A bold and dynamic leader, she has taken the organization to astounding new heights. Her encouraging and empowering leadership reflects on the vast variety of achievements and recognitions she has received throughout her 42-year chamber career.

The accomplishments achieved by the organization under Cindy's leadership have garnished local, state, and national attention and recognition. The brilliant combination of both director and organization have received the 2008, 2009, 2010, 2017, and 2019 USHCC Large Chamber of the Year Award. In 2018, she was named the first recipient of the TAMACC Joe M. Rodriguez Leadership Award for her forward thinking and steadfast dedication to the Chamber and our community's small, minority, women, and veteran owned businesses.

Aside from championing these businesses, Cindy is a significant leader and excellent role model to the community. She was appointed to be on the El Paso Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas Board of Directors. In 2012 and 2013, she served as the Chair of the highly esteemed national institution of the Eleventh District. In 2018, she was selected by Governor Greg Abbott to serve on the Governor's Committee to Support the Military.

In all, Ramos-Davidson's ultimate mission is evident throughout her career. Every effort she puts forth has been in order to improve and advance the borderland's economy. Her dedication to entrepreneurship, commitment to business development, and overall passion for the El Paso community has driven her to accomplish the remarkable. Even with her 21-year tenure, Ramos-Davidson's vision for all that can be reached is still in progress. Always looking towards the future, the borderland business community is an everlasting prospect of opportunities.



**Claudia Arias**

Claudia Arias serves as Senior Vice President of BBVA USA Commercial International Banking division. She is the International specialist to support 57 Relationship Managers at BBVA Compass Footprint in Texas. In her role, she leads the cross-border initiatives to provide support and banking services to foreign-owned companies expanding into the United States. In addition, in coordination with BBVA Group's banking network, she helps Texas clients to have access to financial product and services in foreign markets where BBVA has commercial banking operations.

Mrs. Arias has over 18 years of international experience. She has been with BBVA USA for a two and half after holding various positions for nine years at Citibank Commercial Bank. In addition, Mrs. Arias held global responsibilities at Celanese Chemicals in sales for LATAM, global commodities procurement and M&A group. She has lived and worked in Germany and Mexico (native)

Mrs. Arias holds a degree in International Business (minor in French) from University of Texas – RGV and MBA from COX School of Business at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. She obtained her Credit Certification at Citibank Credit College in NYC.

Mrs. Arias served as part of the Board in a non-for profit organization for Microfinance and she's a member of the Bi-Nacional US-Mexico Chamber of Commerce. Claudia speaks Spanish, English and French. She lives in Houston with her husband and two kids.



**Dorah Benavidez**

With over 30 successful years in the hospitality industry. In her current role as Director of Tourism Development, she is responsible for developing consumer and trade marketing strategies, executing direct-to-consumer programs and promotions, and also support the domestic and international air service development and retention alongside the San Antonio International Airport. Through these efforts, the Tourism Development division contributes to the overall Visit San Antonio goal of driving the city's hospitality industry, which has a \$15.2 billion economic impact, employs approximately 140,000 locally and welcomes more than 37 million visitors annually.

Dorah's 30 years of hospitality experience have guided the Tourism Development Department to execute game changing strategies that have proven to increase awareness of the destination both domestically and internationally.

Prior to joining Visit San Antonio, she served as the Director of Leisure Sales for Marriott International where she successfully developed and implemented leisure sales strategies for seven managed properties.



# Biographies



**Emma Wollschlager Schwartz**

Emma Wollschlager Schwartz is President of the Medical Center of the Americas (MCA) Foundation. The MCA developed the region's first biomedical incubator: the Cardwell Collaborative (60,000 sf) and the first free-standing mental health clinic for the VA (33,000 sf). The MCA also works to harness a Life Sciences industry for the region through its Innovation Center; BIO El Paso-Juarez, representing the bi-national medical device manufacturing industry; MCA Clinical Trials Consortium; MCA Health Care Think Tank; and STEM camps.

Before the MCA, Ms. Schwartz worked in healthcare management, revenue cycle improvement, strategic planning and regulatory compliance for a variety of healthcare companies in Texas, Hawaii, Oregon and California.

Ms. Schwartz's is on the boards of WestStar Bank, Progress321, Workforce Solutions Borderplex and Borderplex Alliance, as well as on the CPRIT Product Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) and co-chair of El Paso's chapter of Stanford OVAL. Formerly, she served on the board of the PDN Center of Hope and the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas' Emerging Leaders Council.

In 2016, Ms. Schwartz was inducted into the El Paso Business Hall of Fame, and she was named 2017's El Pasoan of the Year. In October 2019, Governor Greg Abbott appointed Ms. Schwartz to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) for a term that expires in August 2025.

Ms. Schwartz received her BA in Human Biology concentrating in Comparative Health Policy from Stanford University and her MPH in Health Services Management from UCLA, where she was a Foley & Lardner Fellow.



**Genesis Gavino**

Genesis currently serves as the Interim Deputy Resilience Officer where she works closely with the executive team across the organization to implement the Resilient Dallas Strategy. She previously served as the Assistant to the City Manager and Chief of Staff where she managed the Council Agenda Office, Local Government Management Fellows Program, departmental budgets and worked with the executive team to advance the City's strategic priorities.

Prior to Dallas, she served as Systems Analyst for the City of Tacoma's Neighborhood and Community Services and worked on the development and implementation of a systems-approach to addressing homelessness to include outcome-based evaluations for service providers. Genesis successfully led the development of Tacoma's first Faith-Based Emergency Shelter Program, assisted executive leadership with the acquisition of property for the development of a youth and young adult drop-in center and adult emergency shelter, and a Community Needs Assessment to inform policy and programmatic decisions.

Genesis is a founding member and current president of the International Network of Asian Public Administrator's, an affinity group affiliated with the International City and County Management Association. Genesis holds a bachelor of arts in business administration with a focus on management and operations from Washington State University; and a master's in public administration and certificate in nonprofit management from the University of Washington.



**Ivan Gris**

Dr. Gris was born and raised in Juarez. He obtained his doctoral degree in Computer Science in 2015 from the University of Texas at El Paso. Throughout his career he worked on data visualization and high-performance computing before transitioning into digital realities, virtual humans, artificial intelligence, and human-computer interaction.

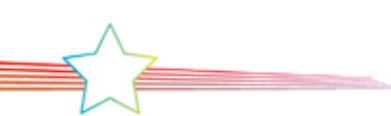
Currently he is the CEO at Boost Human, a software development company that creates virtual training simulations and augmented reality telecommunications software. Boost Human is a high-tech El Paso company employing engineering talent from both sides of the border, operating in Mexico and the US.

During the past decade he has presented over 400 talks, workshops, and demonstrations to encourage young minds and seed their interest in STEM related fields. He is a Microsoft TEALS volunteer and an Assistant Professor of Instruction in Information Systems at The University of Texas at El Paso.



**Janean Mann**

Janean is a self-taught front-end developer and mostly recently worked as a Tech Lead in a digital agency in Midtown Manhattan in New York City. She has worked with influencer brands on projects such as Nintendo, Konami, Virgin, Nikon and Go Army. Learning from a variety of careers, including photographer, graphic designer, and pastry and prep chef, in cultural capitals like Austin, Marfa, Portland and NYC, she adventurously navigated her own path. Her style and aesthetic influences have transformed over the years and come from her love of still life art, minimalism, film photography and her love of desert plants. Proud to have grown up in the binational culture of the border in El Paso, Texas and neighboring Ciudad Juárez, Mexico she is excited to have her new company based in the area. Janean holds a degree in Environmental Design from Texas A&M and currently based in El Paso, Texas.



# Biographies



**Janet Green**

Janet Green, a native New Mexican retired from NMSU as the Special Assistant to the NMSU Chancellor. She was formerly the Chief of Staff to the NMSU Board of Regents. Green was the director of the School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management at New Mexico State University (NMSU) from 2002-2014. She completed a doctorate in Educational Administration at NMSU in 2007. She also holds master's and baccalaureate degrees from NMSU. Green returned to NMSU after serving for almost eight years in the State Capitol as a Deputy Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for New Mexico's Tourism Department. In 2004, she was inducted into the New Mexico Tourism Hall of Fame, becoming its youngest member.

Prior to that appointment, Green served as the director of the rural development initiative, Rural Economic Development Through Tourism (REDTT) from 1993-1995 which focused on tourism as an economic strategy for community development. Green served as the state's Economic Development Commissioner for Dona Ana, Sierra, and Socorro counties from 2013-2018.

Green is a past president of The New Mexico Amigos, the state's Goodwill Ambassadors and was a member of the 2011 class of Leadership New Mexico. She has served on the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Chaired the Las Cruces Convention and Visitor Center's Board and served three terms on the Board of Directors of New Mexico First, a public policy organization.



**Jessica Molinar**

Jessica Molinar Muñoz is an adjunct professor in the Department of Communication for Park University. She is a former Director of News Content for KTSM/KDBC/KVEO tackling border issues along the U.S./Mexico Border, crime, politics and sports. Jessica began her journalism career at KFOX-14 as an assignment editor and associate producer. After leaving the media, Jessica became the Communication Director for the University of Texas at El Paso's Centennial Celebration. Her time at UTEP was comprised of researching the university's rich history, developing a marketing campaign and creating public awareness and interest in the Centennial Celebration at UTEP.

Her academic research explores the Positive Deviance Approach, health communication, culture on the U.S./Mexico Border and media technologies. She currently holds a Certificate in Effective College Instruction from the Association of College University Educators (ACUE) and the American Council on Education (ACE). Jessica received her Bachelors in Electronic Media and Masters in Communication from the University of Texas at El Paso. She volunteers in the media department of her church in El Paso and homeschools her two young children. Jessica grew up in El Paso, Texas and is a Burges graduate.



**Jesus Seade**

He is the Undersecretary for North America at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico. He studied chemical engineering at the Faculty of Engineering at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and obtained a Masters in Economics at the Colegio de México. He holds a Masters and a Doctorate in Economics from the University of Oxford, where he also taught Microeconomics.

Deputy Founding Member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the most important international organization created since World War II, and considered the largest effort to regulate world trade in the history of mankind.

Former Ambassador of Mexico before the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and Chief Negotiator of the Uruguay Round, he also served as a senior advisor for the International Monetary Fund. He is considered one of the most prominent Mexican economists worldwide.

Seade was Vice President and Professor of the Lingnan University Chair in Hong Kong. At the same time, he was a Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Financial Services and the Secretary of Commerce and Industry of Hong Kong, subsequently appointed as their Professor Emeritus. He was a professor at the University of Warwick in the UK and the Founding Director of the Center for Economic Studies of the College of Mexico.

One of his most recent achievements as the Chief Negotiator for the USMCA, was the elimination of one of the main obstacles for its ratification, the tariffs on Mexican steel and aluminum, through negotiations with the United States Trade Representative, Robert Lighthizer.



# Biographies



**Jose Rosario  
Gamez**

In the tourism industry we know him as Pepe, he is serious-faced, but sincere smile and an inexhaustible cordiality when he receives you in the beautiful Mazatlan or some property of Pueblo Bonito Golf & Spa Resorts.

When talking with him, you realize that his path in the middle is endowed with the same philosophy with which the Pearl of the Pacific is projected: work hard, despite adversity, despite setbacks, when the natural essence is known (or professional) work always pays off.

Sales Director of Grupo Pueblo Bonito and immerse yourself in the swells that have made Mazatlan a destination rich in history, culture and tourism.

From the age of six, Pepe was taught to work in a town in his native Guasave, Sinaloa when his father died

At age 15 he went to Mazatlan to attend high school and today is a reference for how to develop a successful product.

15 years working for Pueblo Bonito, as Sales Director of the 2 hotels chain in Mazatlan and 4 in Los Cabos Mexico.

Jose Gamez has a degree in Public Accounting from the Autonomous University of Sinaloa.



**Juan Antonio  
Flores**

Juan Antonio Flores is Executive Vice President for Government Affairs at Port San Antonio, a 1,900-acre industrial complex that is home to over 80 companies and 14,000 employees in the aerospace, defense, cybersecurity, and manufacturing and logistics sectors. Mr. Flores leads Port San Antonio's engagement with local, state and federal governments to develop and implement initiatives in advancement of the Port's mission of economic development and job creation.

Mr. Flores has over 25 years of experience in government relations and public affairs management, including with the North American Development Bank (NADB), a US-Mexico financial institution focused on developing environmental infrastructure projects in the border region in both Mexico and the U.S. During his time at the NADB, he worked extensively on the ground throughout Mexico, and with the Mexican Congress, as well as local and national media.

Mr. Flores is proud to have started his government relations career in the office of Texas Governor Ann Richards, working on Texas-Mexico border affairs and on programs in support of immigrant and refugee populations in Texas.

In addition, Mr. Flores has served on various boards, including for the San Antonio-Mexico Friendship Council, for which he currently serves as President; the Board of Directors of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; the National Immigration Forum in Washington, D.C. and remains actively involved in various capacities with his alma mater, St. Mary's University.

Mr. Flores is a graduate of St. Mary's University in San Antonio, and is currently pursuing an MBA at St. Edward's University in Austin.



**Kathleen Welsh**

Kathleen Welsh, Ph.D. has been employed in Texas higher education for over 35 years. She is a professor of management and has been at Texas A&M University-San Antonio since 2004. She is currently Acting Dean for the College of Business. Formerly, she was at Texas State University for over 20 years; her last appointment was Special Assistant to the Vice President for Finance & Support Services.

Dr. Welsh holds an undergraduate degree in accounting, an MBA; and a Ph.D. with a major in strategic management and minor in international business. She has taught undergraduate and graduate business policy classes, as well as Entrepreneurship: Creativity & Innovation, Total Quality & Lean Management, and Supply Chain Management courses. Dr. Welsh embraces an experiential learning approach and has for example, organized numerous study abroad trips, and overseen the development of over 50 business student projects for clients primarily in the San Antonio community.

Her discipline-centered research interests focus on strategic relationships and organizational change especially in the areas of privatization and public-private partnerships. She is published in both United States and international journals. Her current research agenda is the study of institutional drivers of market orientation in small and medium size businesses in transition economies.



**Laura Dixon**

Laura joined Spurs Sports & Entertainment in November 2009 to direct the organization's social responsibility efforts and served as Executive Director of Silver & Black Give Back. She led the community engagement initiatives for all franchises and the corporate administration – including the creation of a seven million dollar endowment for facilities, a student led service-learning program and an employee volunteer program. In 2017, she was named head of external relations, a new position in which she strengthens SSE's mission of providing leadership excellence in sports, entertainment and corporate citizenship beyond San Antonio. Laura earned a bachelor's degree from Texas Tech University and a MBA from the University of Texas-Austin.





# Biographies



**Leroy R. Allala**

Leroy R. Allala is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Sister Cities International.

Mr. Allala is a globally recognized civic, business and community leader with a depth of executive leadership and expertise in corporate, international and governmental relations, board development and program management.

Prior to joining Sister Cities International, Mr. Allala served as Executive Vice President of World Business Chicago, the economic development engine for the city of Chicago. In addition, he served as Executive Director of Chicago Sister Cities International, where he served as a member of the city of Chicago's global strategy team. Mr. Allala worked under three Chicago mayors where he helped build the nation's largest sister city program with 29 sister city partnerships and over 600 Mayoral appointed volunteers.

From 1994 to 2008, Mr. Allala served as Executive Director of the United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce, Mid-America Chapter, a bi-national business association with offices in 19 cities whose mission is to promote trade and investment in both the United States and Mexico.

Mr. Allala previously served as a senior consultant to The Mid-America Committee for International Business and Government Cooperation, Inc., a Chicago-based international organization whose membership comprises the CEO's of leading multinational corporations.

Mr. Allala earned his B.A. from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. He is a fellow of Leadership Greater Chicago and the BMW Foundation.



**Maria Eugenia Campos**

Mayor Maru Campos holds a Law degree from the Technological Institute of Higher Studies of Monterrey (TEC). She also holds Masters Degrees in Administration and Public Policies at TEC de Monterrey; and in Latin American Studies and Government at Georgetown University.

She has been a professor at TEC, and was a successful litigator. She has been a federal and state Congresswoman, in addition to holding positions in different positions at the federal level.

Elected as Mayor of Chihuahua in 2016, she is the first woman to hold that position in the history of the municipality. In her work at the helm of the Municipality of Chihuahua, she has strived to strengthen security and care for vulnerable groups; as well as for an orderly development of the city and its services, summoning important actors of organized civil society, business and academia.

Among her main achievements are the Chihuahua Shield Platform, a technological mechanism for security governance; a scholarship program that has benefited more than 25 thousand students in just two years. She has managed to bring order to the municipal finances, receiving outstanding qualifications from specialized companies, and elevating the City of Chihuahua from site 34 to 3 nationwide, in terms of transparency.



**Mayra Maldonado**

Mayra is a Research Economist who leads the Institute's work on binational, comparative commercial and financial analysis. She has worked as an Economist at the Central Bank of Mexico, where she led the economic and financial analysis of Mexico's northeastern border region, and its linkages with the rest of Mexico and the U.S. Mayra has also worked for Morgan Stanley Capital International, where she led the Americas Index Research and Corporate Actions teams based in Mumbai, India, and Monterrey, Mexico. During her time at MSCI, she specialized in analysis of Inter-American financial markets inequities. She received her BA in Economics from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM Campus Monterrey) and her MA in Economics from New York University (NYU) through CONACYT and Fulbright scholarships. During her BA studies, she participated in an exchange program with the École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris (ESCP). Born and raised in a dynamic cross-border region (Texas-Nuevo Leon), Mayra is personally and professionally invested in contributing to the economic development of the Paso del Norte region.



# Biographies



**Miriam Baca Kotkowski**

Miriam Gpe. Baca Kotkowski, born in El Paso, TX, with more than 25 years of Transportation and Logistics experience in the Border Region. She founded Omega Trucking, Inc. in 1998 on the principle of serving as a dedicated “door-to-door” transportation service company between the United States and Mexico with its sister company AutoTransportes Chamizal S.A. de C.V. Omega Trucking, Inc. headquartered in Santa Teresa, NM, is an asset based trucking and logistics company, it has received recognition for its professionalism, punctuality, and customer service. Miriam is interested in regional economic development, education and environmental issues.



**Peter Svarzbein**

Peter Svarzbein is a photographer, curator and disruptive media specialist. Graduate of the renowned Eddie Adams Photojournalism Workshop, Svarzbein earned his MFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York. During graduate school at the SVA, Svarzbein created the El Paso Transnational Trolley Project. This self-created activist/artist project is the impetus for Svarzbein’s current public service. His work advocating with community leaders resulted in TXDOT committing \$97 million to construct a trolley route and refurbish the original streetcars that ran between El Paso and Juarez.

Svarzbein has exhibited work both nationally and internationally including a video installation in the Guggenheim’s “Still-Spotting NYC” exhibition, at UTEP’s Rubin Gallery in a bi-national exhibition “El Flow” and in the “Puro Border” exhibition at the INBA Museum of Fine Art in Cd. Juarez, Mex. His most recent installation “Conversos Y Tacos Kasher Gourmet Trucks est. 1492” was funded thru the City of El Paso’s Artist Incubator Grant and featured on NPR’s “Here and Now”.

Partial client list includes: Fortune Magazine, Wall Street Journal, Der Spiegel, Le Figaro, Cornell University, Jet Blue, Panasonic, New York Times, Heeb Magazine, People Magazine, and the Advocate. He has taught at the Texas Tech College of Architecture and has lectured at Harvard University, NMSU and UTEP.

He is also the proud city representative for District 1 in El Paso, Texas.



**Raul Rodriguez-Barocio**

Associate Vice President for International Affairs at Monterrey Tech. Raul has participated in leadership roles in academic, business, civic, and government affairs, based in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. He has served as CEO of the North American Development Bank; Chairman of the Board of the U.S.-Mexico Foundation in New York; Executive Director at the Mexican Foreign Trade Bank; Mexico’s Trade Commissioner in Canada; Secretary of Economic Development for the border State of Tamaulipas; Founding Chairman of the North American Center at Arizona State University; Engineering Professor at Monterrey Tech; Distinguished Professor and Chair in Banking and Finance at UIW, the largest Catholic university in Texas; Co-Chair of the International Committee of the Harte Research Institute at Texas A&M University; Honorary Consul of Spain and Chairman of the World Affairs Council and the Free Trade Alliance in San Antonio; and business consultant. He has published business essays in the U.S., Mexico, Canada, the U.K. and the Netherlands and has participated as a speaker in over 30 countries. Spain’s King Felipe VI Order of Civil Merit and Mexico’s Ohtli awardee. A graduate of Monterrey Tech and Harvard University, where he was recognized as a Littauer Fellow for his “commitment to excellence, academic achievement, and public service”.



**Nicole Ferrini**

In 2014, Nicole became El Paso’s first Chief Resilience Officer (CRO). After 3 years of intensive community engagement, research and planning, Nicole led the team that completed the City’s first comprehensive Resilience Strategy. Now, from a platform in the Department of Community + Human Development for the City of El Paso, she continues to press forward for municipal leadership, civic empowerment, and community prosperity. She remains focused on building grass roots resilience at a regional scale emphasizing dynamic solutions to the challenges of climate instability, urban development, economic prosperity and social justice.

Nicole has established herself as a community leader working to raise the bar for urban design and public policy by provoking a new conversation among civic leaders, industry professionals, and the community at large. She is focused on building grass roots resilience at a regional scale with emphasis on issues ranging from climate instability, resource conservation and crisis management to urban development and social justice.



**Ramon Salcido**

Ramon Salcido Moreno, is a Master in Business Development from the Autonomous University of Chihuahua, Bachelor of Business Administration from the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez. He has worked in companies in the industrial and services sector, in addition to working for more than 15 years in the media in the area of Business and Economics. He is currently a Full-time Research Professor at the Autonomous University of Chihuahua and Editor of Economics in the newspaper El Diario de Juárez.



# Biographies



**Robert McKinley**

Robert McKinley leads the Economic and Workforce Development initiatives for the Alamo Colleges, which is the largest source of San Antonio's workforce talent, conferring 11,000 degrees and certificates in 2018, aligned with high-demand occupation fields. Five Colleges and eight regional Education & Training Centers serve 60,000 students annually, with multiple pathways to careers through Associates degrees, Certificates and workforce training programs. Alamo Colleges is the first community college district to achieve the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, designated in 2018. McKinley oversees the Continuing Education and Workforce Training Network, State and Federal Workforce programs such as the Skills Development Fund, Health Professions Opportunity Grant and Alamo Academies, and the Office of International Programs. McKinley previously led the Institute for Economic Development for the University of Texas at San Antonio, and served as lead consultant to the State Department's "Small Business Network of the Americas" initiative in 22 Western Hemisphere countries. He holds a Master's in Public Administration from UTSA and Bachelors in Community Development from Penn State University.



**Ron Nirenberg**

Ron Nirenberg is the mayor of San Antonio, one of the nation's fastest growing cities with the 7th largest population in the United States.

He was raised in Austin, Texas, and attended college in San Antonio. Nirenberg is the son of an immigrant from Southeast Asia and the grandson of immigrants from Eastern Europe who passed through Ellis Island. Through his personal experiences, Mayor Nirenberg developed a core commitment to civic participation and the universal values of liberty, justice, and equal opportunity for every person.

Mayor Nirenberg was re-elected to a second term on June 8, 2019.

He was first elected to represent District 8 on the San Antonio City Council in 2013. During his two terms, he championed smart city and regional planning, inclusive economic development, environmental stewardship, fiscal responsibility and governmental accountability. As councilman, Nirenberg brought together a public-private coalition to save the world-renowned Bracken Bat Cave, the largest colony of bats in the world.

Under his leadership as mayor, the city's budget has been adopted with a focus on equity to ensure that all parts of the city have the same level of services and infrastructure. He is focused on making key investments necessary to accommodate the growth of San Antonio, which is expected to nearly double in population by 2040. This forward-looking approach drives the mayor's vision of a compassionate community with a globally competitive economy. In 2018, the United States Conference of Mayors recognized Mayor Nirenberg with the Small Business Advocate award for his efforts to encourage entrepreneurship.

The Mayor's policy priorities include nurturing an educated workforce in San Antonio through the AlamoPROMISE tuition-free college program and championing innovative transportation solutions through the city's first comprehensive multimodal transportation plan. In August of 2017, Mayor Nirenberg created the Mayor's Housing Policy Task Force because all San Antonians, regardless of income level, deserve opportunities to find quality affordable housing within city limits.

In an effort to combat the effects of global climate change, Mayor Nirenberg spearheaded a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, which was adopted by the City Council in October 2019. Shortly thereafter, Mayor Nirenberg joined the Climate Mayors Steering Committee, a group of 24 mayors who will serve as a leading voice in efforts to further climate action in the more than 400 cities across the U.S. making up the Climate Mayors coalition.

Mayor Nirenberg is the Chairman of Sister Cities International, a nonpartisan organization that connects cities across the globe through civic, educational and cultural exchanges. The City of San Antonio enjoys active and productive Sister City relationships with 11 cities worldwide and Mayor Nirenberg has been an active participant in establishing productive, people-to-people relationships through global community partnerships and volunteer action.

Prior to his public service, Nirenberg was the founder of two small-businesses, worked as the general manager of KRTU-FM San Antonio, and as a program director for the Annenberg Public Policy Center where he developed and directed award-winning civic engagement programs.

Mayor Nirenberg graduated summa cum laude from Trinity University and received a Master's Degree in Communication magna cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania.

He and his wife, First Lady Erika Prosper, are the proud parents of their son, Jonah.



# Biographies



**Ruth  
Ruggero Hughs**

Ruth Ruggero Hughs was sworn in as the 113th Texas Secretary of State on August 19, 2019. Secretary Hughs is one of six state officials named by the Texas Constitution to form the Executive Department of the State. In addition to serving as Texas' Chief Elections Officer, Secretary Hughs is also senior advisor and liaison to the Governor for Border and Mexican Affairs, is the state's Chief International Protocol Officer, and chairs the Border Trade Advisory Committee, which works to identify and address key border trade transportation challenges facing Texas.

Secretary Hughs has a proven record of public service, most recently having served as Chair and Commissioner Representing Employers at the Texas Workforce Commission. Prior to her appointment, Secretary Hughs worked as a licensed attorney and was a small business owner. She also previously served at the Office of the Texas Attorney General as the Director of Defense Litigation, where she was responsible for the successful management and oversight of the civil litigation divisions representing agencies across the state.

Secretary Hughs received a Bachelor of Arts from The University of Texas at Austin, and a Juris Doctor degree from the Rutgers Camden School of Law, and she earned a certificate in Leader Development at the U.S. Army War College's National Security Seminar.



**Ryan Wicker**

Ryan Wicker, Ph.D., P.E., is the endowed Mr. and Mrs. MacIntosh Murchison Chair I professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), and director and founder of the UTEP W.M. Keck Center for 3D Innovation (Keck Center). He is also Editor-in-Chief and founding editor of Additive Manufacturing, an Elsevier journal. Wicker received degrees in mechanical engineering from The University of Texas at Austin (B.S., 1987) and Stanford University (M.S., 1991, and Ph.D., 1995), worked at General Dynamics Fort Worth Division (1987-1989), and has spent his entire academic career at UTEP (1994-present). He has co-founded two university spin-out companies, holds 16 U.S. patents (including associated foreign patents) with numerous patents pending, published hundreds of peer-reviewed articles, and has employed hundreds of student researchers in UTEP's Keck Center with many of them becoming leaders in the additive manufacturing industry.

Due to its national prominence, the Keck Center was named in April 2015 the first satellite center for America Makes, a national public-private partnership focused on innovating and accelerating additive manufacturing technologies to increase the nation's global manufacturing competitiveness. The Keck Center helps provide a new level of national reach for America Makes, serving to advance research in additive manufacturing as well as assisting in building both local and national economies centered around additive manufacturing and providing unique opportunities for UTEP students to drive a new economy in the El Paso region.



**Wellington Reiter**

Wellington "Duke" Reiter, FAIA, is Senior Advisor to the President of Arizona State University and the Executive Director of the University City Exchange (UCX). His UCX portfolio features complex, multi-stakeholder projects involving university/city collaboration, sustainable urbanism, healthcare, and university design.

Over the past twenty years, Reiter has played numerous roles: academic administrator, faculty member, architect, urban designer, community leader, and public artist. He has established a track record of highly effective partnerships. Mr. Reiter was a key player in the conceptualization and creation of the award-winning Downtown Phoenix Campus for ASU. At the metropolitan scale, Reiter is spearheading the Rio Reimagined study, a 40+ mile vision soon to be designated a priority project via the Federal Urban Waters program.

Reiter's most ambitious project is Ten Across (10X), an expansive undertaking which suggests that the U.S. Interstate 10 corridor provides the most compelling window on the future of the country.

Reiter is the past President of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the former Dean of the College of Design at Arizona State University, and a long-time faculty member at MIT in the Department of Architecture. A recipient of the Arizona Architect's medal, he is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architect, a Trustee of the Urban Land Institute and former Chair of the University Development and Innovation Council. His projects and visualizations have been featured in numerous museums and Princeton Architectural Press previously published a monograph on Reiter's work, *Vessels and Fields*.

