

Change Organizing

Direct Action 2020

**TOP UNVEILS COMMUNITY
DEMANDS TO EASE BURDEN
OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK
ON SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR
COUNTY RESIDENTS**



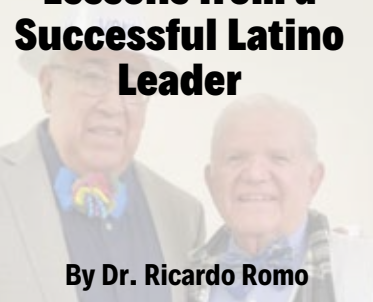
Provided by The Texas
Organizing Project (TOP)

**Sentido Fallecimiento
de Reynaldo Gonzales
Ramírez**



Por Franco

**Joe Bernal:
Lessons from a
Successful Latino
Leader**



By Dr. Ricardo Romo

Hoops For Hope



Photos by Ramon Chapa

**About the Cover Artist
Ethel Shipton**



Provided by Ruiz-Healy Art

LA PRENSA TEXAS

This grass roots publication is the life source for a community that is not easily afforded viable access to diverse and accessible media. San Antonio and the surrounding counties have become accustomed to relevant news brought to them in both English and Spanish since 1913.

Steve A Duran Sr.
CEO/Publisher
s.duran@laprensatexas.com

Ramon Chapa Jr.
Co-Publisher
r.chapa@laprensatexas.com

Yvette Tello
Executive Vice President
y.tello@laprensatexas.com

Roxanne Eguia
Editor In Chief
r.egua@laprensatexas.com

Nicodemus Gonzalez
Graphic Designer

Steve Walker
Dr. Ricardo Romo
Isa Fernández
Contributors
info@laprensatexas.com

Maria Cisneros
Sales Representative



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The vision is a vibrant Westside community where people want to live, work, and visit.

Leonard Rodriguez
President /CEO
leonard@westsidedevcorp.com

La Prensa Texas San Antonio is published once a week by La Familia Duran Inc. San Antonio, Texas (210) 686-0600. Subscription price in the U.S.A. \$125 per year (52 issues). The opinions expressed in the editorials of this publication represent the positions and ideology of this newspaper; the opinions expressed by writers and guest columnists are not necessarily the opinions of the management staff or ownership of this newspaper; the contents of which they are solely and exclusively responsible for. Letters from our readers are welcome and will be published, subject to space availability so long as they are signed and have a proper return address. All letters will be reviewed and edited for offensive language, libel, slander, defamation, proper grammar, spelling, and accuracy, according to our style. La Prensa Texas San Antonio is not responsible for advertisements that may be deceitful or fraudulent, and does not guarantee in any way the products or services offered, of which only the advertiser is responsible. All Rights Reserved. Published and printed in the United States of America.

Let's Talk About It Corona Lock Down

By Yvette Tello

San Francisco has gone on a 24 hour lock down for three weeks. If this happens here in San Antonio, and it is very much a possibility, are you prepared? What are you doing to prepare? Let's talk about it...#letstalkaboutit

Mary Svetlik Watkins:

"San Francisco is a literal crap box. You can legally defecate in the street there.

People need to stay home. Stop this before it really gets out of hand. In 2009, H1N1 was a novel corona virus. We didn't do anything to stop it and hundreds of thousands people died. Stay inside."

Luann DeLashmit

Stewart: "People...get over this crap. Quit panicking. This is way out of control. Ridiculous."

Paulina Martinez:

"We can't find anti-bacterial anything," said Cesar Zepeda, chef and owner of Sangria on the Burg and Alamo Biscuit Co." <--- Which is ridiculous because Sars-CoV-2 is a VIRUS, not a bacteria."

Katie Cantu: "The 15 days to slow the virus that Trump and Pence

kept on reiterating today doesn't seem so bad."

Michael Firtz: "I don't think the government should have the power to close a private business."

Elizabeth Ritchie: "If you're thinking about going out to eat take out from your restaurant.

Give them the business they need and deserve"

Steven Salinero: "Death of restaurants..so what. What about the death of people? Dont yall get it yet?"

John Lozano: "We have been preparing for this for years. We have a shed full of non perishables and bottled water. We are fully stocked with paper goods."

Jenifer Peres: "I didn't want to believe this was going to get to this extreme. Now, we can't find anything at the grocery store. The lines are insane and the shelves are bare."

Janie Estillas: "This will never happen here. "

Denise Rivas: "I have self-quarantine. We are no longer exposing our family to the public. This is real and mandatory lockdown is coming.



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About the Cover Artist

Ethel Shipton

Provided by Ruiz-Healy Art

Ethel Shipton's practice is informed by a strong conceptual base that encompasses text in a playful manner. Through painting, installation, photography, and text, Shipton spotlights instants of clarity that flit by in the comings and goings of daily life. Her recent works are visual displays of mindfully processing her recent artist residency at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany through Blue Star Contemporary. The piece featured on the cover this week is called 'Change Cambio' (2020, Vinyl on panel).

Her latest work can be viewed this week at the show called More Than Words: Text-Based Artworks II which opens this Wednesday, March 25, 2020, with an artist reception from 6 - 8 pm. The exhibition will be on view through May 9, 2020.


Ruiz-Healy Art is delighted to present More Than Words: Text-Based Artworks II at our San Antonio and New York City galleries featuring works by Richard Armendariz, Nate Cassie, Andrés Ferrandis, Katie Pell and Ethel Shipton in both exhibitions. In addition, works by Cisco Jiménez and Gary Sweeney will be exhibited in San Antonio, while works by Cecilia Biagini will be exhibited in New York City. The exhibits open with an artist reception in San Antonio on Wednesday, March 25th and in New York on Thursday, April 16th, both from 6 – 8

PM in their respective time zones. The San Antonio exhibition will be on view through May 9, 2020, and the New York exhibition will be on view through May 23, 2020.

From autobiographical narratives of an adventurous childhood exploring the forests of Delaware in Katie Pell's work to storylike carvings chronicling lush scenes of animals personified as literary figures in Ricky Armendariz's work, the use of text in the works of these eight artists range from subversive social commentary to rapturous meditation. Text, a recurring hallmark throughout art history, demands we read the visual composition of a painting or sculpture and interpret bits of language simultaneously. Text pulls the viewer in, slowing them down to consider how the text and its imagery inform

the other. Furthermore, the intentional use of text in artwork can serve to disrupt our passive consumption of media, both digital and analog. In these exhibitions, each artist creates work in undeniably unique styles and processes, all anchored together by the written word, granting the viewer an additional clue with which to interpret the works.

Ruiz-Healy Art is located at 201-A East Olmos Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78212. To request high-resolution images and more information about the exhibitions, please contact the gallery at info@ruizhealyart.com or 210-804-2219. San Antonio gallery hours are Tuesday - Saturday from 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM, and by appointment. New York gallery hours are Wednesday - Saturday from 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM, and by appointment.



Uresti Says Tax Offices To Remain Open Halts Delinquent Property Tax Sales Starts Curbside Drop-off

By Lisa Anderson, “My priority right now is for the safety of our citizens and employees, while still providing the services needed from the Tax Assessor-Collector’s Office,” said Albert Uresti, Bexar County Tax Assessor-Collector. The Tax Assessor-Collector’s Office has already implemented safety measures to slow the spread of the coronavirus and is implementing additional procedures to limit physical contact, maintain social distance, and limit crowd size when conducting business with the Tax Office. We will continue adding safety measures as needed and will adjust as necessary.

“To limit in-person visits for at least the next 30 days,

property tax payments and payment plan requests, as well as vehicle registrations and vehicle title transfer requests, will be accepted at our curbside drop-off, online, by phone, by mail, or in our 24 hour drop-box. Additionally, the State has postponed due dates and some requirements for vehicle registrations and title transfers,” said Albert Uresti, Tax Assessor-Collector. Turnaround on any transaction dropped off will take time, so the Tax Office asks for your patience. It is also important that a phone number and email, if available, be included with any paperwork dropped off. We Have Implemented New Procedures To Limit Physical Contact, Maintain Social Dis-

tance, and Limit Crowd Size:
- Requests for property tax payment arrangements can be made by email at taxoffice@bexar.org, by phone at 210-335-2251, or by regular mail.
- Additionally, we also have 20 private full-service title companies located throughout Bexar County that can conduct most motor vehicle transactions for an additional convenience fee charged by the title companies.
- We have curbside drop-off at 3 of our 4 locations from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and from 11 a.m. to 1:00 PM, and of course, we have a new three-lane drive-thru at our Southside Tax Office. “I understand that citizens are facing unexpected challenges right now, whether

it’s additional day-care costs or even the loss of jobs. We also understand that home evictions can be catastrophic at any time, but especially right now. The Tax Assessor-Collector’s Office wants to help our citizens through this difficult time, so I am therefore, instructing the Linebarger Tax Attorney Law Firm to work with the Sheriff’s Office and cancel all delinquent property tax foreclosure sales for the months of April and May,” said Albert Uresti, Tax Assessor-Collector. In closing, our mission is “To Help Keep Families In Their Homes” with an emphasis on helping our Senior Citizens, our Disabled, our Veterans, and ultimately our Children. As part of this mission, the

Bexar County Tax Assessor-Collector’s Office has developed the most payment plans of any of the 254 Counties in Texas, including the only 10-Month Payment Plan in the State. In addition, to help our citizens, we have some of the lowest transaction fees in the State. Citizens may pay their taxes by electronic check (free) or credit card (2.10% fee) via the internet at www.bexar.org/tax or by telephone at 1-888-852-3572. Debit card fees are \$1.50. “Finally, I want the Citizens of Bexar County to know that we are here to help, and together, we will work through this situation and evolve stronger and better, as we overcome this challenge,” said Albert Uresti.

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Broncos vs Bravos en serie del playoff Veteranos 2020

Juan Silva Torres, agradeció emotivo homenaje en su honor

Por Sendero Deportivo

Broncos de Reynosa SA doblegó 11 a 9 carreras a los Potosinos, con victoria para el lanzador estelar Gilbert Salazar, quien fue relevado por Henry Pichardo, resultando derrotado el as del pitcheo veterano Willie Martinez, quien lanzó las nueve entradas. Sergio Torres, con dos outs, y las bases llenas pegó triple (a Martínez), con lo que produjo tres carreras, para ser el MVP del cerrado combate.

Bravos derrotó a Cachorros de Nava con pizarra de 12-4, con lo que aseguró su boleto a disputarle serie en el playoff a Broncos de Roberto Garza. La serie se jugara este sábado 21 de marzo en el horario de las 12 p.m. en el campo 1 del estadio Potranco Baseball Field.

Los Cachorros con su timonel Alejandro (Rábano) Becerra, agradeció la participación de sus jugadores y de los coaches Benito Martínez y Rubén (Alacrán) Galindo, ofreciendo deliciosa cena que especialmente les preparó el chef Víctor Silva propietario de "Taquitos al Minuto". Potosinos, del manager Catarino

Obregón, recibieron flamantes mini trofeos, que les fueron presentados por Alex Obregón (hijo de Catarino), quien hizo viaje especial desde la capital tejana, la ciudad de Austin, para venir a reconocerles su excelente participación. Alex, juega en la categoría libre en potente circuito de Austin.

Resultados Abierta dominical. Cardenales de Nacho García y Efraín Cruz Franco, consumaron su segundo triunfo de la temporada con blanqueada de 12-0 ante Escogidos, con victoria para Orlando Barroso y salvamento de Juan Serrano, Sergio Gómez, pegó jonrón por los Cardenales. En gran partido que finalizó empatado en extra innings, los Tecolotes y Broncos de Reynosa SA, se quedaron con medio partido, debido a que el ampáyer en jefe decreto parar el partido por falta de luz ambiental.

Piratas de Sabinas, continua defendiendo su banderín, derrotando 8-1 a los Rieleros, con la segunda victoria para el lanzador derecho Iván Vaquera que fue relevado por su hermano Jonathan Vaquera (receptor titular).

Victoria bien celebrada por el timonel Sergio De Luna y el capitán Brayan Guerrero y su legión de seguidores y familiares.

En partido amistoso internacional, selección de San Antonio a cargo de Juan Sánchez enfrente a trabuco dirigido por el legendario beisbolista profesional Juan Silva Torres, nativo de Piedras Negras de 64 años de edad, manejador de Selección Regional Carbonifera, a quien le rindieron emotivo reconocimiento por su excelente trayectoria con el equipo Piratas de Sabinas, que estuvo afiliado a la Liga Mexicana triple A en la época de 1971-1973. Silva Torres, además se ganó el reconocimiento por ser el fundador del Salón de la Fama de Béisbol en la ciudad de Sabinas, Coahuila, donde próximamente echara a rodar interesantes academias a nivel juvenil.

Juan Silva Torres, agradeció el homenaje, a la vez convivio con jugadores de gran calibre que en sus mejores tiempos también sobresalieron en el rey de los deportes en diversos circuitos al sur del Río Bravo. Destacando en la Liga Norte de Coahuila. En

su lista de jugadores, el timonel galardonado, presentó los nombres del lanzador Raúl Javier Hernández "La Gacela", quien lanzó las siete entradas pactadas, sobresaliendo en toda la ruta con su espectacular repertorio monticular. Esteban Chavez, Manuel Almaraz, Juan Aranda. Alejandro Zavala, Sergio Ocura, Ovidio Maldonado. Julián Martínez, Fermín Alvarado. Marco Antonio Silva, Jesús Reyes, Sebastián Villanueva, Roberto González, Eusebio Bustos, Juan Díaz.

En la organización del evento participo Ventura Díaz, beisbolista de gran popularidad. Por la selección local, comenzó lanzando Ramiro Morales, seguido por Luis Sánchez, y José Luis (Liga Mexicana) Gómez. Morales, a la vez estuvo en la caja del manager enviando las señales, que a la par les dio la victoria de 7-4. "Lo importante de este partido fue el reconocimiento que les hicimos a Juan Silva Torres. Aquí se estrecharon lazos amistosos y deportivos, sin importar la pizarra. Gracias a todos los visitantes y locales que colaboraron para hacer este

evento inolvidable", dijo Juan Sánchez, quien dio las gracias al señor Eloy Rocha, quien prestó el campo 2 del estadio Potranco. En las fotos aparecen, Catarino Obregón y su esposa Leonor Obregón, posando con su trofeo de participación con Potosinos. Sergio Torres, de Broncos que pegó triple en la victoria de Broncos vs. Potosinos. Juan Silva Torres, con su familia, Sandra Rivas Liñán (esposa), Gabriela Silva Rivas y Lourdes De Luna Rivas. (Fotos por Franco).



Direct Act

Joe Bernal: Lessons from a



By Dr. Ricardo Romo

Joe Bernal was a pioneer in securing educational rights and opportunities for Latinos. All San Antonians can be proud of his many contributions.

Joe Bernal was baptized Jose Maria Bernal and is known to the Westside community of San Antonio as Dr. Bernal or Senator Bernal. He is often

called “Chema” to close family members and friends. Bernal was raised near J.T.

Brackenridge Elementary School at the corner of Brazos and Guadalupe Street. As a young student, he was often punished

for speaking Spanish in school. Growing up during the Great Depression years his

family had little money, and young Joe Bernal often was sent home from school for not wearing shoes. As a young boy Bernal remembers selling candy to customers entering the San Antonio Spanish movie theater Progreso in the mid 1930s. Bernal loved watching movies at the Progreso and would stand near the entrance on Tuesdays and Thursdays when “dos por uno,” two for one promotions, were in effect. He got in free by convincing someone attending the movie alone to include him.

On weekends the Progreso offered popular

Hollywood movies such as Tarzan and Flash Gordon. Bernal called the corner of Brazos and Guadalupe the “center of my universe.” His father’s cousin operated the Progreso Drug Store, and his family frequented the Mexican restaurant next door owned by Santos Villarreal.

Dr. Bernal is a favorite among the Lanier alum. Bernal played on the 1944 Lanier basketball team that went to the state finals and lost by one point. Following graduation, Bernal joined the U.S. Army and was assigned to the Pacific Air Command. After the end of the war, he returned to San

Antonio and attended Trinity University on the G.I. Bill. Bernal taught school at David Crockett Elementary School for ten years and worked weekends and summer months with the Guadalupe Church pre-school

and after school programs. He also had a long association with the Inman Christian Center across from the Alazan-Apache Courts Public Housing Project. I attended the Guadalupe Church programs and considered Bernal one of my major role models.

Dr. Bernal won his first state office as a member of the Texas House of Representatives in 1964. As a House member he managed to pass the first Texas law friendly to immigrants. The bill allowed citizens who had lived in the United States more than 25 years to receive benefits regardless of citizenship status. Many of San Antonio’s Mexican American seniors had arrived in the United States during the time of an open U.S. Mexico border. Texas farmers and ranchers welcomed the immigrants whom they considered cheap labor.

The pre-1930 immigrants lived in isolated rural agricultural communities, but also in barrio enclaves in cities like San Antonio. As in the case of my four grandparents, Mexican immigrants who came to the United States before 1915 often came with no formal schooling and were never required to become citizens.

Bernal is best remembered as one of the “fathers” of public higher education in San Antonio and a champion for better opportunities for Latinos. Bernal was an early Latino leader who devoted his political career to helping others. A great leader can be measured by what he or she did to improve society--to enhance progress in the world. The following are a few examples of Dr. Bernal’s contribution to a better Texas during his Senate tenure. When Joe Bernal served in the Texas Senate in



tion 2020

n Successful Latino Leader

the late 1960s he made history by introducing bills supporting bilingual education, minimum wages for workers, and kindergarten programs for state children. He also was instrumental in abolishing a law forbidding the use of languages other than English in Texas classrooms.

As a State Senator, Bernal Introduced legislation in 1969 that secured passage of the state's first bilingual education act. Texas received federal funding for bilingual education. Bernal also introduced legislation to abolish state law prohibiting the use of any other language but English.

Also in 1969, Bernal Introduced a Senate bill to establish a University of Texas campus in San Antonio. UTSA opened its doors to graduate students in 1972 and enrolled its first undergraduate students in 1974. In addition, Bernal's higher education bills supported a

new UT Health Science Dental and Nursing Program.

After leaving the Senate in the early 1970s, Bernal worked as an Assistant Superintendent with the Harlandale School District. In 1996 Bernal won a seat on the State Board of Education and was re-elected 2000. In that capacity he helped oversee the selection of textbooks and supported programs that benefitted Latino youth.

Bernal fought many political battles in the Senate and he remembers to this day the hard legislative battle when he helped pass the state's first minimum wage law. San Antonio is a better city because of his vision and commitment to improving educational opportunity, economic stability, and health care.

Three weeks ago his wife of 64 years, Mary Esther, and thirty members of his family joined Dr. Bernal for his 92nd birthday. Nearly 100 Lanier High School Alum attended this special event. All agreed that Joe Bernal had been an exceptional public servant who had served his community well. After singing Las Mananitas to him, his friends and family wished him many more years of good life.



(Photos Courtesy of Felix Yregias and Patrick Bernal #1. Joe Bernal and Felix Yregias; #2. Bernal at Ray's Drive Inn #3 Joe and Mary Ester Bernal)



Hoops for Hope Community Resource Fair

Photos by Ramon Chapa Jr.

La Prensa Texas was honored to be a part of the Hoops for Hope event celebrating our teens in the community.



Congratulations to Andres Garza and Dr. Joe J. Bernal.

By Santos S. Villarreal

Our mentor Dr. Joe J. Bernal with Andres Garza, my grandson at Trey's office in Austin.

Joe was recognized at the Capitol for his work to get UTSA built here. He was there in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the school's opening.

Andres is a 2018 UT-Austin graduate and took the year off to earn some money and take the Law School Admission Exam. He did well and received a nice scholarship offer from St. Mary's University Law School where he

will start in August. He is working at Trey's office and loves the action.

Patrick Bernal added, "Elisa and I drove Dad along with Gene Rodriguez to the Capitol for the UTSA 50th year celebration. Trey Martinez Fisher gave a very moving speech on the House floor reading from a San Antonio Light article 50 years ago that called Dad a fighter and a champion for getting the UTSA bill passed against opposition from UT and A&M universities, not to mention all the private colleges in SA! Trey is a fighter and champion for SA just

like Dad was! From the House of Representatives, we walked over to the Senate where Senator Melendez also praised Dad for passing the bill in Senate.

The current UTSA President Taylor Eighmy and his wife Peggy were very appreciative and respectful for Dad's work. So were the UTSA students! It was a very special honor for him.

We had the pleasure of meeting Andres in Trey's office. He is a fine young man and I'm sure will be a great lawyer too!"



Ayden López Rodríguez cumplió 3 años con fiesta ‘Dino Park’

Por José I. Franco
Colorida fiesta con el tema “Ayden Dino Park”, los felices y jóvenes esposos Elvis López y Amanda Rodríguez, en la compañía de su familia y amistades festejaron en grande el tercer cumpleaños de su heredero Ayden López Rodríguez. La fiesta la organizaron en el popular salón de eventos sociales Potranco Ranch Ballroom, donde Ayden, recibió bonitas atenciones y regalos,

por parte de su abuela materna, señora Yolanda Mendoza, su abuelita paterna Yesenia. Su abuelo paterno Johnny López y su esposa Claudia López. Los pequeños invitados, disfrutaron en el “brincolin” en forma de castillo, así como de los diversos eventos que fueron aplaudidos por los adultos. La quiebra de piñata en forma de Dinosaurio, estuvo cargada de diversas golosinas, siendo apaleada por los

invitados, que en varias ocasiones se pusieron en turno. El momento más emotivo, fue cuando Ayden, apago velita con el número 3, compartiendo posteriormente su delicioso pastel de chocolate. Los esposos Elvis y Amanda, fueron excelentes anfitriones, ofreciendo deliciosa cena, y una variedad de golosinas que fueron del agrado y al gusto del paladar de sus invitados, a quienes agradecieron por haberlos acompañado

y llevarle regalos a su hijo, quien fue un feliz cumpleañero. El concurrido salón, fue decorado con anticipación al evento, ya que los esposos Elvis y Amanda, no deseaban, perder ningún detalle de lo que fue el tema en honor a su hijo y del Dino Park, por ser él seguidor del misterioso mundo de los dinosaurios. “Estamos agradecidos con nuestras familias, y amistades que nos acompañaron en la celebración del tercer cumpleaños

de nuestro hijo Ayden, quien gusta divertirse con juguetes en forma de dinosaurios. También agradecemos el respaldo que nos dieron nuestros padres, su ayuda fue excelente y por ello estamos celebrando también el éxito de la fiesta”, dijo Elvis López. En las fotos aparecen: Ayden apagando vela de 3 años. Ayden, con sus padres Amanda Rodríguez y Elvis López. (Fotos por Franco).



Los Spurs honraron a hombres y mujeres en las Fuerzas Armadas

Por José I. Franco
Como ha venido siendo toda una patriótica tradición el equipo de baloncesto profesional Spurs de San Antonio (cinco veces campeón en la NBA), y la empresa financiera USAA, en su partido contra el visitante rival Mavericks de Dallas, rindi-

eron homenaje a hombres y mujeres que se encuentran activos prestando su valioso servicio en las Fuerzas Armadas de los Estados Unidos. Con una serie de actividades la gerencia general de Spurs Sports & Entertainment (SS&E), y personal ejecutivo de USAA, en reciprocidad

deleitaron al público asistente, así como a militares presentes en el estadio AT&T Center, sede de “Los Spurs”. Cabe anotar que durante el partido que Spurs sostuvo contra Pacers de Indiana, durante el intermedio, sobre la cancha presentaron selecto grupo de personal reclutador,

quienes representaron a la Fuerza Aérea (US Air Force), siendo reconocidos y ovacionados excelentemente. En las fotos aparecen elementos que forman la porra mixta “Hype Squad Team”, sosteniendo el lábaro patrio durante ceremonia del Himno Nacional en el partido contra Pacers. El guar-

dia australiano suplente Patty Mills, vistiendo camiseta de calentar con la leyenda “Los Spurs”, con la cual la NBA, ha venido agradeciéndole a la fanática hispana su apoyo en diversas plazas con mayoría de comunidades latinas, bajo el tema “Noches Ené-Bé-A”. (Fotos por Franco).



Sentido Fallecimiento de Reynaldo Gonzales Ramírez



By Leonard Rodriguez
This column highlights inspiring stories of Latino leaders. For more than 500 years, Latino men and women have positively influenced the face of United States society. Let us celebrate these outstanding hispanics.



Anthony Quinn

At age 5, Anthony Quinn and his parents immigrated from Mexico to Texas to escape the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Initially, the Quinn's were migrant workers but eventually settled in Los Angeles barrio. At age 21, Quinn began his stage career and appeared in numerous films before reaching stardom in 1952 with his Academy award-winning role as Zapata's Brother in "Viva Zapata!" In 1956, Quinn not only earned his second Academy Award for "Lust For Life," but emerged as an international star for his performance in the Italian movie "La Strada." For the next decade, he received star billing for "The Guns of Navarone," "Barrabas" and "Lawrence of Arabia." A Hollywood Superstar, he has appeared in 100 films and will go down in history as a legend.

Por Franco

Reynaldo Gonzales Ramírez, de 71 años de edad nativo de San Antonio. Paso a mejor vida.

Le sobreviven su esposa Yolanda Gonzales, sus hijos Gilbert Gonzales, Edward James Gonzales. Heather, Rocky, Stephanie.

Reynaldo Gonzales Ramírez, prestó servicio militar en el US Army. Con dos años activo y tres en la reserva (1971-1975). Siendo condecorado con las medallas:

National Defense Service Medal. Good Conduct Medal.

Su ocupación civil fue de mecánico, y posteriormente fue empleado en La Prensa de San Antonio, como jefe de circulación y mensajería (2003-2018).

En La Prensa Texas, también colaboró hasta los últimos días de su existencia.

La familia Durán y personal que actualmente presta su servicio en la elaboración de cada edición de fin de semana, da sus más sentidas condolencias a su familia y amistades cercanas. "Deseamos todo lo mejor a la familia del buen amigo Rey. Nuestras condolencias y que descanse en paz en el Reino del Creador Divino",

dijo Steve A. Duran Sr. CEO/Publisher La Prensa Texas.

De acuerdo a la señora Yolanda Gonzales, los servicios funerarios serán en coordinación con Castillo Funeral Home de General McMullen St. Y personal militar del cementerio Fort Sam Houston, donde descansarán los restos de quien fuera ejemplar persona. Descanse en paz.

(Fotos cortesía familia Gonzales)

NON-PROFIT HIGHLIGHT

TOP UNVEILS COMMUNITY DEMANDS TO EASE BURDEN OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK ON SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR COUNTY RESIDENTS

Provided by The Texas Organizing Project (TOP)

The Texas Organizing Project (TOP) today released a list of demands for City of San Antonio and Bexar County officials, as well as local business leaders to address the economic and health needs of local residents during the spread of COVID-19.

“In this time of uncertainty for many working families, we need our local officials and business leaders to step up in a big way and act on policies that will successfully combat the COVID-19 pandemic. This means investing in and targeting services for the most vulnerable among us,” said Michelle Tremillo, TOP executive director. “This includes low-wage workers without paid sick leave, immigrant families afraid to access health services due to the threat of deportation, detained and incarcerated individuals in crowded jails who cannot self-quarantine, and Black and Latino families who are burdened with the reality of being uninsured.”

With confirmed cases increasing at an exponential rate across the country, TOP is announcing these demands to spur local elected officials to prioritize the well-being of working-class San Antonio residents who will inevitably bear the brunt of the pandemic.

Economic protections for working families

We demand paid sick leave for all working families, a moratorium on evictions, and a halt to all utility shut-offs to ease the financial burden of COVID-19 recovery for San Antonio families. We demand:

- The business community immediately drop its lawsuit and work with the City to enact the paid sick leave plan as developed by the Paid Sick Leave Commission in 2019
- A moratorium on water, light, and gas cut-offs while expanding utility assistance programs
- A moratorium on evictions

and an expansion of rental assistance programs

- Access to grants for small businesses to recover from forced closures
- The citywide implementation of measures to eliminate price gouging and hoarding of supplies

“The current crisis underscores the need for Paid Sick Leave and exposes the weak points of our economic system. Our city leaders should understand that economic protections for working families are not only fair, but they are a necessary action to flatten the curve of the current COVID-19 pandemic and any future health crises.” – Bryan Ramirez, TOP member

Healthcare justice for all

We demand free testing, treatment and medical care for all families impacted by COVID-19 regardless of race, gender, religion, criminal background, or citizenship status. We believe that healthcare for all families, including COVID-19 testing, treatment, as well as access to other life-saving medications, should be a right. We demand not only these protections while this health crisis exists, but that the City of San Antonio and Bexar County support Medicare for All. We demand:

- Clear communication that immigration status will not be a factor in receiving testing or treatment and ICE will not be present in any medical setting.
- An expansion of mobile testing and an increase in the number of tests available in San Antonio
- Free treatment and medication should be accessible to all-free of cost, regardless of income, race, gender, or status

“Having Medicare for All in place right now would do far better than our current healthcare system at ensuring the safety and health of every resident of San Antonio” – Ashley Longoria, TOP member

Right2Justice in Bexar County Jails

We demand measures be taken to reduce the number of detainees and to take steps to limit the spread of the COVID-19 within Bexar County Jails to the maximum extent possible.

- Immediately educate the jail population on risks and precautions of the coronavirus.
- Release all eligible pre-trial, immune-vulnerable and pregnant inmate populations. This release should also include those with ICE detainees.
- Release all people who are within six months of completing their sentences unless they prove to impose a threat to our communities.
- Suspend all probation, parole/pretrial meetings, court-ordered classes, fines & fees as well as in-person drug testing.
- Ensure electronic monitoring and home confinement conditions allow people to seek medical help and care for family members.
- Provide free calls for people in jail.

Ensuring the rights of immigrant families

ICE has a track record of abuse and neglect toward immigrants in detention centers. This has resulted in a disturbing amount of people dying in the agency’s custody due to lack of basic medical attention. We demand the release of immigrant families, an end to local collaboration with ICE enforcement operations or raids, and humane medical attention for all immigrants.

- Cease all local enforcement operations and suspension of any raids
- Ensure all facilities where people are detained in ICE custody, be it county jails or dedicated facilities, are addressing the health and well-being of people detained



TOP promotes social and economic equality for Black and Latino Texans through community and electoral organizing.

Texas is a big and diverse state, and considering the evolving social makeup and the widespread need for improvement in areas of health care, poverty, and education, community organizing has never been more important.

*Texas has the highest rate of uninsured citizens in the country.

*Texas has the 5th highest poverty rate in the country.

*Texas has a high school dropout rate over 50% in urban areas and more than double the national average.

In order to address these and other critical issues, Texas needs empowered and organized residents. TOP provides hard working Texans the opportunity to implement real change by organizing their own neighborhoods, investing their time and energy in causes relevant to their respective communities, and collectively taking ownership of TOP’s agenda, strategy and direction.

With a seasoned and committed organizing staff with a combined 70 years of experience, and a distinguished and diverse Advisory Committee made up of leaders from all walks of life, TOP is poised to make tangible impacts on the issues of critical importance to Texas’ communities.

The Texas Organizing Project (TOP) organizes Black and Latino communities in Dallas, Harris and Bexar counties with the goal of transforming Texas into a state where working people of color have the power and representation they deserve.

San Antonio:
700 S. Zarzamora Dr., San Antonio, TX 78207 –
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