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CENTER FOR MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

# Noticias

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



*Dr. Tatcho Mindiola*

In this issue of *Noticias* I wish to acknowledge and commend the people who work for the Center for Mexican American Studies.

The success of any organization relies upon those who implement the day-to-day tasks comprising the organization's mission. CMAS has been very fortunate throughout its forty-year history to have employed people who feel they are advancing the educational status of the community. They are essential to the Center's existence through their professional handling of scholarship checks, travel vouchers, personnel forms, mailings, appointments, class and travel schedules, leaflets, financial forms, rosters, reservations, printing, meetings, phones, ordering office supplies, out-of-town guests, etc. In fact, when the Center was last audited, the state auditors said we were a relatively small unit that processed an unusual amount of information in a very efficient manner—the best in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. This is a tribute to all of the people who work for CMAS.

What follows are brief comments about the staff and their responsibilities.



**LORENZO CANO** has been working for CMAS for 30 years. He is originally from Corpus Christi, and he came to Houston to attend UH, where he earned his B.A. in political science in 1974 and his M.A. in Urban Studies in 1976. I met Lorenzo when he enrolled in one of the first classes I taught. He was a student leader and an active member in the Mexican American Youth Organization. I immediately recognized his leadership skills, intellect and commitment to raising the educational level of our community. We became friends and worked together as members of La Raza Unida Party. In 1982 Lorenzo joined CMAS as the student counselor and recruiter. He advised students, organized leadership retreats and workshops and helped students start organizations not only on campus but at high schools as well. He established relationships with the high schools that had large Latino populations and began organizing the college career days that continue to this day. In 1989 Lorenzo was promoted to Associate Director of CMAS, and his duties expanded to include teaching, developing our minor in Mexican American Studies and scheduling classes. He writes and publishes essays and is sought out by the media for his expertise in Mexican and Mexican American affairs. Lorenzo Cano is a major and invaluable part of CMAS history.

*Continued on page 10*

## Glenn Godkin: Community Leader

From Godkin's youthful beginnings as one of four children in the hardworking refinery town of Port Arthur to now, the constant has been his respect for learning. In fact, if you want to see Godkin's eyes sparkle, there is one topic guaranteed to have this effect: education.

Godkin himself says that even as a young man he noticed that education was the "great equalizer" in American society. While earning his bachelor's degree in business administration from Lamar University in Beaumont, he observed that none of his professors ever asked about students' personal lives or families of origin. Instead, they asked about homework assignments, test preparation, and the concepts in daily lessons. What was important was the learning that was taking place in the classroom, not what kind of family was at home or which neighborhood the student had grown up in. Godkin



*Glenn Godkin, Wells Fargo  
Regional President*

knew if he worked hard and did well in his studies that he would have a successful career, because the key to opportunity was being well-educated. In fact, all of his brothers and one sister graduated from college and have had successful careers—a tribute to his parents' consistent message to value education.

This commitment to his own future propelled Godkin into graduate studies at the Southwestern Graduate School of Banking at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. His next step was a banking career, began in 1973, with Texas Commerce Bank, where he worked until joining Allied Bank in 1979. Later, Allied Bank was acquired by Wells Fargo. At present, Godkin is a Wells Fargo Regional President responsible for more than 200 Community Banking stores and \$14 billion in assets. He leads a team of nearly 3,000 bankers.

*Continued on page 11*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Denise Chávez: The Dream is Alive .....	3
Sarah Cortez: Visiting Scholar and Memoir Teacher/Writer .....	4
Michael A. Olivas: The DREAM Act .....	5
Lorenzo Cano: CMAS and Leadership Development .....	6
2013 Spring Speaker Series .....	7
Fall 2012 Speaker Series .....	8
CMAS 40th Anniversary Banquet .....	9



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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS) at the University of Houston was established in 1972 as an interdisciplinary academic program encompassing the liberal arts, education, and social sciences focusing on the Mexican American and broader Latino experience in the U.S. Its mission is to advance knowledge, promote critical thinking, and foster the value of service to the community. This involves designing a broad spectrum of public and scholarly programs. Located within the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, CMAS has evolved into an academic unit with several major components: teaching, research and publications, recruitment and retention, leadership training, academic advising, and community service.

## Denise Chávez: The Dream is Alive

Driving into Houston with its gleaming lights and formidable buildings that hot summer night, I knew my life would change, but just how much I didn't know.

Recently married, with a new book in hand, I had just left my world behind (with a newly tiled floor still drying) in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Life as a Visiting Scholar at the University of Houston Center for Mexican American Studies beckoned. My first book, *The Last of the Menu Girls*, had recently been published by Arte Público Press, and it was my springboard to future writings, future work and to a world of creation that I had longed for.

In a very deep sense, my life as a Visiting Scholar expanded, solidified and furthered my understanding of culture and my role as a teacher and artist. To be part of the Center for Mexican American Studies was to be at the forefront of intellectual debate, creative action and spiritual growth. Coming from a moderately sized, somewhat provincial town in New Mexico, I was able to see the urban vista and to understand the complexities of the multicultural, multigenerational landscape. Houston was, and still is, for me my time of growing up and understanding life.

And I was not alone in my profound inquiry, as it was in Houston that I met and worked with my peers in art and literature. I met and befriended the pantheon of Latino/Latina writers whose work was seminal to that time—Sandra Cisneros, Gary Soto, Pat Mora, Ricardo Sánchez, Raúl Salinas, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Juan Bruce-Novoa, Tato Laviera, Rolando Hinojosa-Smith, Carlos Morton, Helena María Viramontes, Evangelina Vigil-Piñón; the list of names goes on and on. Once, I even followed a performance of Lydia Mendoza on a very hot outdoor stage in front of The Museum of Fine Arts, a wad of persistent gum sticking to my shoe as I read from my work. The grace and honor of those days was electric, and as a youngish Chicana writer my world grew by leaps and bounds.

It was in Houston that I came to know publisher and writer, Nicolás Kanellos, as well as found my voice in the Mexican American Studies world—teaching Mexican American theatre to a group of talented students, many of whom I still correspond with and see. I remember my office at UH, how delighted I was to be a part of what I considered history in the making. It was an exciting time to be a Mexican American writer, teacher and student. Our ideals and dreams were intact and powerful. There was an electric sense of urgency and joy, creativity was high



Denise Chávez, M.F.A.

and all seemed possible, or at least attemptable. And the journey to self-discovery and growth was what it was all about for me and for my students. They were outspoken, irreverent but not unkind; they had decency and a vision that included *familia y comunidad*. No laggards, only committed and talented young men and women who knew where they came from and where they wanted to go. None of us knew then what we know now: that the road is challenging and fraught with doubt, that friendships would come and go, that to stick to one's dream is to step outside known history and the familiar, to forge ahead with sometimes only a prayer in the darkness and a burning hope in the heart. We were hopeful, unafraid for the most part, and so young. And yet, in our core being we were old spirits confronting the new world that was daily presented to us.

I loved living in Houston, and when I was asked to continue teaching, now in the theatre department, my dream had become true. That dream being to align myself to the world I loved so deeply: *Teatro!* But first and foremost, I was a Mexican American scholar and that has never left me. I lived and worked in Houston for three years, much too short a time. I often look back at those years as a highlight of my life and career. I returned to Las Cruces to care for my elderly father, E.E. Chávez, who had Alzheimer's. And while I said goodbye to Houston, my heart was, and is still, full of charged and loving memories. I hold it as a city both dear and remembered, and I will come back someday to love it again.

Today, as Executive Director of the Border Book Festival, the longest running book festival in New Mexico, based in Las Cruces at the Casa Camino Real Cultural Center, an old adobe from the 1850s, I owe much to the Center for Mexican American Studies at UH, and to its director, Tatcho Mindiola, who had the grace and daring to take me on as a part of his Center, a Center that changed and forged my future life. I am thankful to both Dr. Mindiola and Dr. Nicolás Kanellos and his staff—and to so many others—who helped me at this pivotal and monumental time in my life and career.

I am a writer, will always be a writer, but I am also a Cultural Warrior for the Mexican American/Latino/Multicultural Community. Why? Because it is my life, my hope, my *manda* (command), if you will. Someone has to step up. And that someone is me. 

© 2013 Denise Chávez



## Sarah Cortez: Visiting Scholar and Memoir Teacher/Writer

The two greatest loves of my life are policing and poetry. In accepting the position of Visiting Scholar for CMAS, I made a choice to leave full-time police work and enter the world of the full-time writer/editor/educator.

From the vantage point of 9 books later (with three successful publishing houses) and roughly 10 years later, I can say it was a good move. Not without its costs, however, some of which occupy the space called regret, located too far down in the heart to ever heal.

During my time as Visiting Scholar (two consecutive one-year appointments), I taught both poetry and memoir, creating two new creative writing courses, edited a poetry anthology, and wrote my own book of memoir. Today, I'll focus on the memoir portion of these accomplishments.

After extensive reading in all aspects of memoir and its writing, I concluded (all those years ago) that I did not agree with the commonly held literary assumption that a memoirist had to be middle-aged (or beyond) to write complex and compelling literary memoir. I felt that traditional undergraduates could write such memoir, if they were taught to do so. With CMAS director Dr. Tatcho Mindiola's vital encouragement, I created a course proposal, reading list, and lesson plans. This course, entitled "Memoir and Mexican American Identity" looked at both historical antecedents and issues of writing craft, with a heavy emphasis on the latter.

This course brought forth such ardent and amazing writing in its debut semester that I decided to feature some of my students' writing in a nationwide anthology of young (high school and college-aged) Latinos/as short memoir pieces. At this stage, Dr. Nicolás Kanellos was an amazing source of encouragement.

Ultimately, the volume I created (through numerous feedback sessions with the writers) was published by Arte Público Press and entitled *Windows into My World: Latino Youth Write Their Lives*. It contains a wealth of young writers from across the U.S., 36 to be exact—with 21 of them from my creative writing classes at UH. This book also won the Skipping Stones Honor Award for promoting multi-cultural understanding. At national conferences and book signings, I often meet educators and librarians who thank me for creating an anthology that speaks in an intimate, focused way about the human dynamics of young peoples' lives.

My fascination with the creation, i.e. the writing, of memoir also led me, as a Visiting Scholar, to write my own memoir of growing up in the pristine, ordered world of the 1950s and 1960s in Houston, my beloved city. In fact, in the second year of my Visiting



Sarah Cortez, M.A.

Scholar appointment, my proposed project was the writing of this book. Here too, I wished to go further than what had already been done – as I had with *Windows into My World: Latino Youth Write Their Lives* by creating a resource that was the first of its kind on the market.

After an extensive reading period focusing on Latino memoir and mixed-genre memoir, I decided to write a mixed-genre book in both poetry and prose, but to abandon the predictable, commonplace (dare I say boring?), purely chronological form. Instead, I decided to write about both the conscious lives and the unconscious lives of myself and my parents. Clearly,

the realization that we all are the result of what we do and of what we don't do influenced my thinking.

In the first section of my memoir, *Walking Home: Growing Up Hispanic in Texas*, I ask the reader to first experience our un-lived dreams (in prose), then to use these vignettes to view the conscious actions of our daily lives (in poetry). This book was recently published by Texas Review Press, the foremost literary press in Texas, a member of Texas A&M Consortium.

There is not a single doubt in my mind that the position as Visiting Scholar was not only the catalyst but the crucible making possible the writing of *Walking Home: Growing Up Hispanic in Houston*. The vital mechanisms of time to read, time to ponder, and time to write and revise were made feasible for me only as a Visiting Scholar. About a year later, I was accepted as a Fellow at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and this position enabled me to continue to revise the book.

Another crucial benefit for me was teaching at the university level. For someone like me, who loves working with writers at all levels, it was profoundly rewarding to work with those students who really wanted to learn and work hard at the craft of writing. During that time at UH, I became a specialist in working with people who were scared to write, or who had had prior negative experiences. Many of the students in both the poetry and the memoir writing classes still stay in touch, and I recently had the honor of teaching the younger sister of one of the original student writers in that first memoir-writing class.

I would be remiss if I did not gratefully acknowledge the excellent mentoring of five important men at UH: Thomas Cobb, Edward Hirsch, Nicolás Kanellos, Tatcho Mindiola, and Robert Phillips (in alphabetic order). Each one of these professors made sure that my learning continued, my writing career was fostered, and made the time (over and over again) to help me. I count myself lucky to have them all as personal friends now. ❧



## Michael A. Olivas: The DREAM Act



*Michael A. Olivas, J.D.*

Who has not heard of the DREAM Act and its hopeful beneficiaries, the students called “DREAMers?” President Barack Obama employed executive authority to address the marginal status of these students, in the summer of 2011. This decision occurred within six months of the failure of the DREAM Act to attract the required Congressional votes, and resulted in the assignment of a low enforcement priority to DREAMers. Thus, they would not be deported if they were caught in the immigration enforcement mechanism, unless they had criminal records or other disqualifying characteristics. The Administration also rolled out a series of reviews of the 400,000 persons then in immigration proceedings, and would close the removal cases and grant two-year stays and possible employment authorization to legally work to those with low enforcement priority, such as students.

The review, which had seemed so promising, was underwhelming. The Obama Administration had also begun the most aggressive enforcement in U.S. history, militarizing the border, building the fence that is supposed to deter unauthorized entry, and removing over 400,000 persons in 2011, more than any recent administration. In addition, the re-set of Deferred Action was used more sparingly than had been the case in President George Bush’s presidency. Yet, even with these demonstrable enforcement priorities and results, some congressmen were not satisfied. Comprehensive immigration reform of one sort or another could regularize the flow, reorganize the complicated and unsuccessful employment provisions (especially those designed for short-term high-skilled work), and provide some trade-off for increased legal immigration: a pathway to eventual legalization or amnesty, perhaps along the lines of the last such program, that of the 1986 IRCA legalization provisions. The data were not transparent or available, but the preliminary figures revealed fewer than 2% of the test-case reviews for Deferred Action led to closed-cases, and only 54% of those fortunate few were given permission to work, and while their removals were temporarily stayed, they received no benefits, remained ineligible for most forms of relief, and were, in many respects, no better off than before. Fewer than 300 of these closed cases were DREAM Act-eligible students. They had no hope of any reconstitution of their unlawful status or work opportunity.

Worse, a number of DREAMers had become frustrated by the legislative failures, and they began to “out” themselves in a longstanding United States protest tradition. While their status may have been characterized as a low priority for removal, this public revelation of their status had the practical effect of putting their undocumented families at risk, and they were less well off than they had been before. Tens of thousands of undocumented students had been making their way through college without federal financial support and with little state financial aid available. Yet they persisted—only

to find that they could not accept employment or enter the professions they had trained for. Thus, cases of undocumented law school graduates who have passed the bar are surfacing in California, Florida, and New York, and, doubtlessly, more will surface soon enough concerning lawyers, doctors, teachers, psychologists, and others as more and more unauthorized students graduate from college. Seeing this brick wall, DREAMers pressured the White House, a number of immigration law professors drafted and circulated a letter to the President, calling upon him to use administrative discretion to help undocumented college students. It appears that President Obama heard, and in June 2012, he announced an even more expansive Deferred Action policy for DREAMers, which is still in the early implementation phases. Deferred Action is not nothing—indeed, it is as much as the President might achieve without legislation.

Even if the tens of thousands of undocumented students currently enrolled in our colleges, and many who have graduated and cannot use their education, receive Deferred Action, they will still not find themselves on a pathway to permanent residence. Despite the uncertainty, hundreds of thousands of these DREAMers have begun the process of seeking Deferred Action and employment authorization. Almost 300,000 eligible DACA applicants have applied (nearly 5,000 each day), and over 50,000 have received the DACA status and employment authorization, substantially improving their life chances and allowing them to work with permission. (These numbers are through November, the first 10 weeks of the program.) History may be on their side, but the DREAMers still find themselves in a limbo not of their making. I do not see a clear way out of the thicket, absent comprehensive immigration reform. With the elections over, Congress must turn its attention to this priority. ❏



## Lorenzo Cano: CMAS and Leadership Development



*Lorenzo Cano, M.A.*

One of the most important aspects of the Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS) is the development of the students' leadership skills. This is crucial in laying the foundation for the success of the broader community to overcome obstacles. For this reason, CMAS has initiated many different leadership activities throughout the years with the objective of increasing the leadership skills and social awareness of students.

With the initial establishment of Mexican American Studies in the fall of 1972, undergraduate students, including me, were encouraged to become involved in the success of the fledgling program. This was the time of the Chicano Movement, and many of us were politically aware and cognizant of the need to help find financial support for the program. We formed a working coalition with African American Studies and traveled to Austin, Texas at our own expense to speak with elected state officials, including members of the Appropriations Committee, and lobbied for funds for both programs. We succeeded. It was a great experience because we learned that initiative leads to results.

CMAS began sponsoring leadership retreats in 1986, and they continue today. Held at a site outside of Houston, the featured workshops include public speaking, the qualities and characteristics of leaders, a profile of the Latino Community, organizing, career development, and the public presentation of self. We also bring in leaders from the broader Houston community who speak about their careers and expertise. The weekend retreats create camaraderie among the students and staff and foster the building of mutual trust. The opportunity to spend a long weekend at a wooded campsite serves as an appropriate backdrop to forget everything else and focus on the workshops and interactions with workshop leaders. Upon their return to Houston, the students are required to put the information they absorbed into the organization and implementation of a project which will better the Houston community. Examples include the organizing of an educational conference for middle and high school students, putting a newspaper together, tutoring and mentoring high school students, and volunteering for social service agencies to speak to parents about the value of a college education for their offspring. Hundreds of CMAS students have attended the annual leadership retreats, and many have used the information and skills they learned to become leaders in the community in politics, health, education, and business.

Over the years, CMAS has encouraged and helped students

form organizations. Student organizations are important because they teach the students leadership skills such as organizing and running a meeting, time management, decision-making skills, financial management techniques, and public speaking. Organizations like Mexican American Student Organization have likewise served as role models to high school students because many of their members over the years have spoken to public school students about the importance and benefits of going to college. Most

recently, CMAS has aided in the establishment of the UH Mexican American Studies Student Organization (MASSO) for students who are interested in minoring in Mexican American Studies or who informally wish to pursue learning about the topic.

CMAS also helped students in several high schools to organize *La Raza* Student Alliances (LARASA). Their primary goal was to encourage students to stay in school and aspire to and prepare for a college education. They also sought to have high school courses in Mexican American history taught, and they sponsored cultural events like Cinco de Mayo.

Leadership skills are also obtained or honed in the various classes taught as part of the minor in Mexican American Studies. For example, research is often a requirement in Mexican American Studies classes. Learning how to conduct and analyze research are qualities important to leaders. Making presentations in the classes also helps students develop their public speaking skills. In some classes, students are required to interview leaders in the community and to present their findings to the class. In my Mexican American Urban Community class, students are taken on a tour of selected Mexican American neighborhoods and are required to analyze their quality of life. This interesting activity makes students much more aware of both the successes and challenges facing Latino neighborhoods.

Earning a college education increases the probability that an individual will engage in leadership activity. We, at CMAS, view college campuses as the training ground for leaders. The goal of CMAS is to enhance the probability of leadership by sponsoring retreats, workshops, and speakers, and encouraging students to engage in leadership activities while they are college students. Many years ago our community was viewed as lacking in leadership. This view has changed, and CMAS takes pride that many of the students who have been associated with us are now leaders in the community. ❏



# The Center for Mexican American Studies 40th Anniversary Spring 2013 Speaker Series

## **“Chicano Revisited: Politicizing the Practices of Everyday Life”**

**JOSE LIMON, PH.D.**

Professor of American Literature, University of Notre Dame

Tuesday, February 5th, 2013 ~ 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

*Rockwell Pavilion, M.D. Anderson Library*

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## **“The More Things Change the More They Remain the Same, Mexicans in Texas since the Second War”**

**EMILIO ZAMORA, PH.D.**

Professor of History, The University of Texas at Austin

## **“Writing Chicanas into History: The Decolonial Turn”**

**EMMA PEREZ, PH.D.**

Professor and Chair of Ethnic Studies, University of Colorado Boulder

Tuesday, February 19th, 2013 ~ 10:00 a.m. - Noon

*Rockwell Pavilion, M.D. Anderson Library*

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## **“The History of Arte Público Press: The Oldest and Largest Latino Publishing House”**

**NICOLÁS KANELLOS, PH.D.**

Brown Foundation Professor

Director of Arte Público Press and Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage

Thursday, March 7th, 2013 ~ 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

*Rockwell Pavilion, M.D. Anderson Library*

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## **“Chicano Paths to Power in the Last 50 Years”**

**JOSE ANGEL GUTIERREZ, PH.D.**

Professor of Political Science, The University of Texas Arlington

Wednesday, March 27th, 2013 ~ 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

*Rockwell Pavilion, M.D. Anderson Library*

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## **“The U.S.-Mexico Border, Drug-related Murders and the Peña Administration”**

**TONY PAYAN, PH.D.**

Associate Professor of Political Science, The University of Texas El Paso

Monday, April 8th, 2013 ~ 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

*Rockwell Pavilion, M.D. Anderson Library*



# Fall 2012 Speaker Series



(Left to right) Denise Segura, Ph.D. , Tatcho Mindiola, Ph.D. Prof. Segura presented “Chicana Feminisms.”



(Left to right) Lorenzo Cano, M.A., Elliot Navarro, Mario Garza, Maria Jimenez, Jaime de la Isla, Cynthia Perez, Tatcho Mindiola, Ph.D. are the original members of MAYO who also founded CMAS.



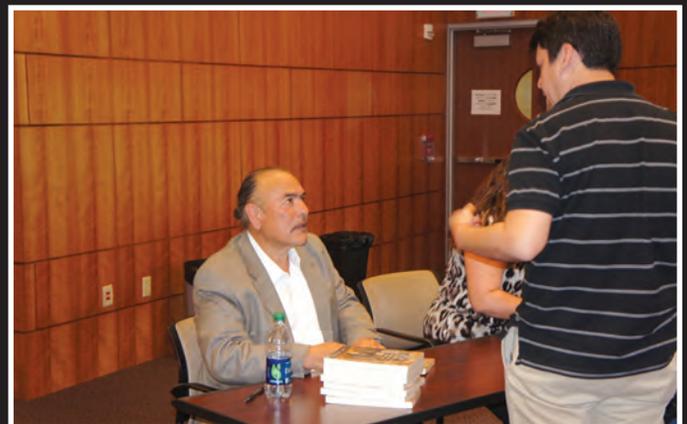
(Left to right) Tatcho Mindiola, Ph.D., Nestor Rodriguez, Ph.D., Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, Ph.D., Michael A. Olivas, J.D. discussing the topic of immigration.



(Left to right) Guadalupe San Miguel, Ph.D., Augustina Reyes, Ph.D., and Tatcho Mindiola, Ph.D. discussing the Huelga (Strike) schools.



David Montejano, Ph.D. presenting his book, *Sancho’s Journal*, and its relationship to the Chicano Movement.



David Montejano, Ph.D., signing his book, *Sancho’s Journal*.

# CMAS 40TH ANNIVERSARY BANQUET



## From the Director *continued from page 1*



**HELEN MEZA**, a native Houstonian, has been working for UH for 29 years, and 20 of those years have been with CMAS. She is the Center's business administrator. Her responsibilities include managing the budget and supervising the office. She is knowledgeable about the UH financial system and as a consequence we seldom have errors. The tribute that CMAS received from the state auditors for its administrative efficiency is due to her knowledge and diligence. She is especially concerned with staff development and is always seeking ways that staff members can improve their skills. Ms. Meza has a history of civic involvement. Her father, Siro Gutierrez, was a precinct judge, and she grew up helping him run the elections and serving the constituents of his precinct. She is a longtime volunteer with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo through her association with the El Dorado and Fort Bend Vaqueros. She is also an active member of the UH Staff Council. Ms. Meza says that from the very first moment that she started working for CMAS she felt at home: "I have learned a lot of different things working for the Center, including more about my roots and where I could go. I am very proud to have been part of the Center's development."



**REBECA TREVIÑO** has been with the CMAS for 17 years. She is from Brownsville, Texas. She attended The University of Texas at Brownsville and is currently pursuing a degree in Spanish from the University of Houston. Ms. Treviño has held positions in the front office, and was the coordinator for our outreach program at Austin High School before being promoted to manager of our Academic Achievers Program (AAP) on campus in 2001, and she is responsible for managing the program. Most of the AAP students are from low income circumstances, and under her leadership they have achieved a graduation rate of 72%, a rate which has garnered national recognition. The students turn to her not only for academic counseling but also for advice and solace in other matters as well. She is "the heart and soul of the program" and has the respect and affection of all of the AAP students who have gone through the program. For her work she received the Dynamo Leaders Award, the Kappa Delta Chi Sorority Advisor of the Year Award, and the Telemundo 47 Hispanic Excellence Award. "My job," she says, "gives me a sense of satisfaction by serving the students and the community. It has given me many professional and personal rewards. Being a part of CMAS has been a privilege."



**ALEJANDRA CASTELLANO** has been working for CMAS since 2009. She started working with CMAS as a financial clerk while she was studying for a B.A. in management which she earned in 2010. She also prepared special reports and set up and maintained our website. Upon completion of her degree, Ms. Castellano was promoted to assistant manager of the Academic Achievers Program. This involves helping Ms. Treviño with all of the myriad tasks associated with managing the program. She also sponsors workshops for the College Career Days and is involved in the planning of our banquet. Ms. Castellano was born in California and raised in Monterrey, Mexico. She returned to the U.S. with her

family when she was 13 years old. She enjoys the outdoors and likes to walk, jog and ride her bicycle while listening to music. She also likes to travel, and her favorite sports are volleyball and softball, because "I know that I am really good at them." Ms. Castellano says that she has grown personally and professionally by working for CMAS under the tutelage of Rebeca Treviño. "She helped me come out of my shell and discover that I have a deep passion in my life to help others. I have also learned how to keep a program organized and running."



**FELY AGUILAR** has been with CMAS as the Special Program Coordinator since February 2010. Her responsibility is managing the AAP-Austin High School. She has a degree in psychology from UH. She was born in San Vicente, El Salvador and came to the U.S. when she was four years old. When Ms. Aguilar was a student, she was a member of Delta Chi Sorority. She also worked for CMAS for four years as the assistant to the AAP-Austin coordinator. This prepared her to assume the position she now holds. Her responsibilities as the overseer of the Austin-AAP program include recruiting and selecting students with college potential, meeting with parents, teachers and other school personnel, supervising the five tutors and her assistant and planning the workshops, field trips, leadership retreat and community service activities. Ms. Aguilar is a hands-on manager. She visits Austin every day from 3 to 6 p.m. to supervise the tutoring and other mandatory activities. She expresses a passion for her job, saying that she loves working with the students and helping them gain admission to a university. She also prizes the "open and honest communication and supportive relationship" with her tutors and assistant, and the support she receives from CMAS. Her hobbies are going to the beach and dancing salsa. She has also been published in poetry.



**HOLLY LAURENZANA** has been with the CMAS since February 2012. She is the Events Coordinator and is responsible for planning all CMAS events. She earned a degree in Italian with a minor in Spanish from UH after studying Italian in Italy. Her study of language is part of her larger interest in Latin cultures in general. Her other interests include reading, dancing, running and the Houston Texans. She learned about CMAS when her class visited the El Día de los Muertos exhibition in the student lounge. Later, she took a Mexican American Studies class. The primary event that Ms. Laurenzana is responsible for is our annual scholarship banquet. She is also involved in planning our 40th Anniversary Speakers Series. In a very real sense, Ms. Laurenzana learned her CMAS responsibilities by doing them. Immediately upon her employment she had to start planning the banquet and its fundraising efforts. At the banquet committee meetings, she was always prepared with updates and handled her presentations with poise. Ms. Laurenzana says that her appreciation for the Center's history and its activities has deepened and that she is proud to be part of the staff.



**SONIA RAMIREZ** has been with CMAS since March 2012. Her primary responsibility

is communications and publicity. She earned a degree in journalism with a minor in Spanish from the University of Houston. While a student, she was a reporter for *The Daily Cougar* and editor of *The Houstonian*, the UH yearbook. She took courses in Mexican American Studies, studied and relaxed in the CMAS student lounge and attended the events that CMAS sponsored. Her responsibilities include serving as a liaison with Houston's media outlets, writing year-end reports, maintaining the CMAS website and offering technical and administrative support to the staff. Recently, she asked to establish a CMAS Facebook page and to coordinate the establishment of the CMAS archives at the M.D. Anderson Library. Ms. Ramirez's work experience includes the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Fox TV-KRIV and Univision-45. Her interests include writing, movies, dancing and spending time with her daughter. She is a published freelance writer and is a member of an online reporting site and has studied and taught dancing. She says that the growth of CMAS since her college days impresses her, especially the support that the Center offers the students. She says that she is proud to be a member of a team that includes working with former professors and mentors to accomplish the good work that goes on daily.



**ELIZABETH JIMENEZ** has been working for CMAS as the financial coordinator since November 2011. The financial coordinator is an

important position because the financial records must accurately reflect our revenue and expenditures in order for CMAS to operate efficiently. In this position, Ms. Jimenez works closely with Helen Meza, the Center's Business Administrator. She heard about CMAS while working at the UH Career Center, and she applied for the financial coordinator position, which offered a promotion. Ms. Jimenez says that her CMAS responsibilities have taught her many new things about the financial system. She says that she is most impressed with the effort that CMAS puts forth in helping students who are the first in their families to earn a college degree by providing them with scholarships, tutoring and other services. She also says that the close coordination between the UH and Austin High School Academic Achievers Programs has impressed her because their managers work hard to see that the students receive the services they need in order to be successful college students. She refers to both programs as "outstanding." Ms. Jimenez is a native Houstonian and a graduate of Sam Houston High School. Her interests include reading, shopping and socializing with her friends.

As you can see, our staff members are a talented, outgoing and ambitious group. We are lucky to have them working together to make all of our programs successful.

Tatcho Mindiola, Ph.D.  
*Director*

*Glenn Godkin continued from page 1*

Godkin's introduction to CMAS occurred a little over a decade ago at one of the Noche Cultural banquets. For Godkin, it was a moment akin to serendipity. In the heartfelt stories of obstacles overcome and academic triumphs, Godkin heard a tremendous affirmation of what his own blue-collar family had taught him: education matters, above all else. Almost immediately, Godkin began thinking about how he and Wells Fargo could help make a difference.

True to Wells Fargo's philanthropic goals of supporting effective community programs, several years ago they established a CMAS endowment. Says Godkin: "Wells Fargo wanted to make sure that funding was available for the CMAS students for generations to come. We didn't want there to be capable, hard-working, motivated students who encountered the financial barrier of a lack of funds." In addition to the endowment, Wells Fargo made a generous \$100,000 funding commitment to be donated in the current academic year and the next, in a shining example of corporate responsibility within the Houston community.

From his career's vantage point, Godkin speaks eloquently to the types of values that can be seen in the CMAS graduates: "The students from the program are well-rounded, grounded, and hard-working. Nothing has been given to them. Like me [as a young college student], these students don't have a safety net. If they don't make it in school, there aren't any options. It's all or nothing."

As Godkin continues to laud the can-do spirit of CMAS students, he also takes a few moments to honor the educators—from elementary to college-level—who devote their talents and

energies to teaching. He says: "When I ask members of an audience to raise their hands if they remember a teacher who turned their lives around, every hand goes up." Godkin himself remembers more than one teacher in his young life who did the same for him. Now, when he is teaching Junior Achievement as part of the investment of skill he is eager to share with the Houston community, Godkin is living out what he believes is the important value of giving back to the community. He also serves on the boards of Habitat for Humanity, Junior Achievement, Collaborative for Children, and the Zina Garrison Foundation. Additionally, Godkin has served on the CMAS Annual Banquet Committee and the CMAS Endowment Advisory Board.

This quote from Dr. Tatcho Mindiola summarizes Godkin's commitment and generous approach to the greater Houston community: "Mr. Godkin knows firsthand that a college education can have a positive and tremendous impact upon a person's life. More importantly, he knows that with his and Wells Fargo's help we are indeed having an impact upon the lives of students who otherwise might not have the opportunity to attend college. Also, Glenn is very approachable. He is sincere, down-to-earth, and easy to talk to about all issues. CMAS is very fortunate to have the support of Glenn Godkin and Wells Fargo."

Indeed, both Godkin and Wells Fargo exemplify these two crucial philanthropic goals: give back to your community by individual effort and give back to your community as a corporate entity. Together, this alliance of individual action and corporate funding makes possible CMAS programs. 

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