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## YOLANDA BLACK NAVARRO

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Most people are nominated for Lifetime Achievement Awards as a culmination of the successful events in their lives. In the case of Yolanda Black Navarro, we choose to nominate her for showing us how to celebrate life, in full concert with those around us, and accountable to each other and to our community. As she reaches her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, there is no visible end to her service and she continues to build her legacy through everyone she touches.

As a longtime resident of the East End, Yolanda has been a fearless advocate for quality of life issues impacting the residents of this neighborhood and the surrounding communities. She has served on the boards of the East End Management District, The Park People, oversaw the funding of the Lanier Aquatic Center at Moody Park, and was appointed by Mayor Lanier to the Houston Parks Board, where she has served for over 15 years.

Yolanda shows her dedication to families and especially children by serving on boards of select organizations, and as one of the founders of Shoe's for Kids, which is celebrating its 20 year anniversary this holiday season. Thousands of children have benefited from this collaborative effort that involves a generous shoe donation from a local vendor, teams of corporate volunteers and Yolanda's large circle of friends and family who don Santa hats and wrestle happy, sweaty little feet into the new shoes of children referred by neighborhood schools and community centers.

Another milestone this year marks Yolanda's success as a businesswoman and owner of Villa Arcos, a well-known gathering place and taquería on Navigation Boulevard celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Home of the best tacos in the city and a center of information, it serves as a haven for meetings of the brightest minds and an incubator for many a promising initiative.

Her business expertise and corporate responsibility have made her a valuable member of several business organizations and earned her an appointment to the board of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (1998-1999) by Mayor Brown, and a recent Mayoral appointment on the Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority.

Finally, Yolanda is a community leader who models for us the ultimate expression of commitment – civic engagement. Yolanda has supported and volunteered on the campaigns of several candidates on all levels since her first involvement in 1960 on the Kennedy campaign. At one time, she was also a candidate for Houston's City Council. She was one of the founders of Latina PAC, member of Hispanic Women in Leadership and the Greater Houston Hispanic Coalition.

Her wide and influential network has helped her develop a credible reputation as a source for emerging leaders and she has consequently opened the doors for many young, and

seasoned, men and women. Through her moral and often financial support, she conveys her belief that everyone has a responsibility to serve to the best of their ability.

Yolanda's life is one seamless, diverse and interwoven tapestry of life's celebrations, challenges, and victories. We hope you will favorably consider this nomination and know that in honoring Yolanda Black Navarro, you will also recognize the very best in all of us.