

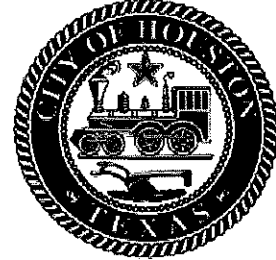
DEADLINE

Nominations must be emailed or postmarked no later than August 7, 2020 for consideration.

Website: <http://www.houstontx.gov/specialevents/Hispanic-Heritage-Awards>

2020 Nomination

Please print clearly or type in the spaces below.



Category (choose only one)

- Arts in the Community
- Community Activist
- Education In the Community
- Youth Activist
- Lifetime Achievement

Individual Nominee

Name: Hon. Esmeralda Peña Garcia

Cell Phone: 713- 857-1276 Office Phone: 713-857-1276

Home Address: 7119 Galleon Drive

City: Houston State: Texas Zip: 77036

E-mail: epgarcia@swbell.net

Nominator

Name: Alva I. Treviño

Cell Phone: 713-906-4323 Office Phone: 713-906-4323

Address: 623 Columbia St.

City: Houston State: Texas Zip: 77007

E-mail: alvatrevino@gmail.com

www.houstontx.gov/specialevents/Hispanic-Heritage-Awards

City of Houston

To: Hon. Mayor Sylvester Turner

Attn: Jackie Schuessler-Kimsey (MHHA)

901 Bagby, 3rd Floor

Houston, Texas 77002

Dear Mayor Turner:

I write to you with joy in my heart for this opportunity to nominate Houstonian Esmeralda Peña Garcia for the Mayor's Hispanic Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement. Judge Peña Garcia exemplifies the Houston virtue of good citizenship. She has enriched the lives of others, particularly in long lasting, meaningful ways. She has devoted her life to sustained and selfless voluntary service, in her community and for all Houstonians. She has earned the respect of her peers in law and has become a role model in her field of the municipal judiciary.

Judge Garcia a true Houston success story, the kind of story that exemplifies the richness that is Houston's diverse history and the "can do" spirit and generosity that makes Houston a city like no other. She grew up one of five children in Houston's Second Ward, in a neighborhood known as "El Alacran", (the scorpion). Her father was a laborer and her mother worked at home to keep her five children fed and well-behaved. But as they say, "well-behaved women rarely make history" and it was Judge Peña Garcia's destiny to make history. Judge Garcia is a product of the Second Ward Hispanic community and attended Our Lady of Guadalupe School on Navigation, where at the direction of her mama, the nuns kept a close eye on her and her siblings. She graduated from Austin High School where she graduated cum laude. Despite her mother's protestations, she applied and was admitted to the University of Houston where she earned her B.A. in Social work. Her early career after college included working as a social worker with Spanish speaking clients. Early on, Judge Essie demonstrated a penchant for agitating for change despite her mother's desire for her to behave. With drive and determination, she was admitted to the University of Houston School of Law where she promptly began to "make good trouble." She ran for the position of President University of Houston Law Student Bar Association and was elected as the first Hispanic in this leadership position. She successfully fought for the inclusion and representation of Hispanics to serve on the law school's admissions committee, a legacy that benefits Hispanic law students to this day.

I cannot possibly include all the things that Judge Peña Garcia has accomplished, both professionally and personally in this letter. Nor will I even attempt to enumerate the countless selfless acts of community service she has done over the years. But I have included in this application letters of support from some of the many people who know Judge Peña Garcia personally and are able to express the impact of her contributions from first-hand experience. She is not one of Houston's hidden heroes. She is actively and tirelessly out there giving of her time and energy to the city she loves.

A Lifetime Achievement Award sometimes implies that the best has already happened. But knowing Judge Peña Garcia, (affectionately Judge Essie for those of us who know her well), her best days are yet to come. She has truly inspired me and many others to become more involved

in our community and share our time and talents in order to make a positive change in our world. I am merely one of many of the lives that she has positively influenced. I can think of no other person who deserves the Mayor's Hispanic Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Most sincerely,

Alva I. Treviño. J.D.



JUDGE ESMERALDA PEÑA GARCIA
**Associate Presiding Judge of The City of
Houston Municipal Courts**

Judge Esmeralda “Essie” Peña Garcia is in her 33rd year serving the City of Houston and State of Texas as a Municipal Court Judge. She started her Judicial career in 1987 and in 2016 was named Associate Presiding Judge overseeing the Judicial Operations of the Court and supervising 18 full-time Judges. She has been licensed by the State Bar of Texas for 38 years.

Judge Peña Garcia is the Immediate Past President of the Texas Municipal Courts Association (TMCA). TMCA represents over 1,200 Municipal Court Judges and staff throughout the State and concurrently serves as Past President of the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center (TMCEC). Judge Peña Garcia has served on the TMCEC faculty, teaching Municipal Judges in regional seminars throughout Texas.

In recognition of her 30 years of Judicial Service, Mayor Sylvester Turner proclaimed October 11, 2016 as **“Judge Esmeralda Peña Garcia Day”** in the City of Houston. Judge Garcia recently received the Texas **“Women Making History”** Award and the Mexican-American Bar Association of Texas Foundation Award for Lifetime Achievement, and the National Hispanic Professionals Organization-Houston Lifetime Achievement Award. She has received Official Proclamations and Recognitions from Texas Governor Greg Abbott, U.S. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, U.S. Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia and Chief Justice Nathan Hecht of The Texas Supreme Court of Texas, The National Hispanic Bar Association Service Award, the Hispanic Bar Association of Houston, the Mexican-American Bar Association of Houston, in recognition of her Judicial and community service to Houston, the Hispanic community and the State of Texas. In 2016, the UH Law Center recognized Judge Peña Garcia as **“Pioneer in Diversity at the UH Law Center”** for her work in increasing diversity representation in UH Law School Admissions. Judge Garcia received the 2019 Speaker Award from the Hispanic Law Students Associations of Thurgood Marshall School of Law, The University of Houston Law Center, and South Texas College of Law Houston.

Community awards have included the Pan American Round Table of Houston’s **“Latina Law and Order”** Lex Award”, Navidad En El Barrio’s **“VIDA Award”** for service to families and children, and Leading Ladies Award for **“Latina Leader for Young Ladies”**.

In 1989, Judge Garcia was President of the Mexican-American Bar Association of Houston. She also served on the Board of Directors of the Municipal Courts Section of the State Bar of Texas and Regional Director of the Hispanic National Bar Association. She has been active with numerous professional organizations, serving on boards and committees, including the Supreme Court of Texas District Committee on Admissions, the Committee of 100 for Review of Merit Selection of Texas Judges, and other State Bar of Texas committees. During her 13 years in private law practice, Judge Garcia

specialized in Criminal, Juvenile, and Family Law. She was frequently appointed to represent juvenile defendants in high-profile cases.

She received her BA in Sociology from the University of Houston in 1974 and her Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University of Houston Law Center in 1982. In 1981, she was elected President of the UH Student Bar Association, making her the first Hispanic to serve in this position, and leading the effort for the inclusion of minority students on the Admissions Committee. She has received the "Distinguished Service Award" from the UH Law Center Faculty. Prior to law school, Judge Garcia worked for Harris County Children's Protective Services on the Abuse Team

Judge Peña Garcia's community service in Houston spans over 40 years focusing on education, scholarships, and working with minority and minority-at-risk youth.

- She enjoys working with *Navidad En El Barrio* in its mission to provide Christmas gifts and fulfill "Little Wishes" to less fortunate children and families.
- She is the Past Director of the Pan American Round Table of Houston, an organization providing college scholarships to high school seniors, focusing on Latina young ladies who will be the first in their families to attend college.
- Served on the Harris County Children's Mental Health Advisory Board
- For 22 years, has volunteered with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. In 2016, she earned "Lifetime Committeeman" status and continues to serve on the International Committee and Go Tejano Committee raising scholarship funds for Hispanic students.
- Judge Peña Garcia is a frequent speaker on Career Day and Law Day at various schools. In the past, she worked with Our Lady of Guadalupe School in the *barrio* and formed its first Chess Club in the 1994, obtained donated chess boards, taught chess after school, twice a week, for a school year. She has been participated in mentorship programs at Ridgecrest Elementary and Northbrook High School. Judge Garcia has been a Hispanic Heritage Month speaker in various schools, and in 1992 created the "Mayan Hieroglyphics" classroom activity. She has received recognition as a "VIP-Volunteer in Public Education" by HISD.

Judge Essie Peña Garcia was born in Houston, growing up in Second Ward *barrio*. She attended Our Lady of Guadalupe School, and graduated *cum laude* from Stephen F. Austin High School. She was the first Hispanic Cadet to achieve the rank of ROTC Lieutenant Colonel and first Hispanic member of the ROTC City Brigade Staff. She is an Army qualified "Expert" with .22 Rifle, and Certified Open Water Scuba Diver. She is the first in her family to graduate from college.

Judge Peña Garcia will proudly state that her greatest achievement, love and joy is being the mother of her three children: Amanda, David, and William.

Hon. Esmeralda Peña Garcia

Former Associate Presiding Judge – City of Houston Municipal Courts

EDUCATION:

Judicial: Texas Municipal Judge's CLE – 1987 to 2020
Texas Municipal Courts Education Center – Annual CLE

Doctor of Jurisprudence – May 1982
University of Houston Law Center – 1982 **Recipient of Faculty's "Capricorn Award for Distinguished Service"**; President of the Student Bar Association (First Hispanic); Dean Search Committee; Law Admissions Committee, **Honor Court Justice**; Pollack Award for Outstanding Service; Mock Trial Semi-Finals

Mexican Legal Studies Program, Summer 1980
UH Law Center and Universidad Panamericana, Mexico City, Mexico

Bachelor of Arts, Sociology 1974
University of Houston – Dean's List

Stephen F. Austin High School, 1968, Houston, Texas, cum laude, ROTC Lt. Col.; City Brigade Staff, Battalion Sponsor, Rifle Team .22 Qualified Expert, National Honor Society, National Forensic League

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CITY OF HOUSTON MUNICIPAL JUDGE – 32+ Years Experience. Appointed full-time Judge in September 2000, appointed Associate Presiding Judge 12/2017 handling Judicial Operations and supervising 17 full-time Judges. As a Judge, my duties include performing Judicial and State Magistrate duties; experience presiding over Court and Jury trials, Juvenile cases, arraignments involving the Texas Transportation Code, City of Houston Ordinances, City Health Code, Building Code and Class C Misdemeanors. Reviewing, approving and signing Search Warrants, Blood Warrants, Protective Orders, Mental Health Warrants and Juvenile Warnings/Statements. "Super-User" of CSMART. Served as an Associate Municipal Judge 1987 to 2000.

LAW OFFICE OF ESMERALDA PEÑA GARCIA. 1982 TO 2000. Trial experience in Criminal Defense, including Felony Jury trials, Juvenile Jury trials, Family Law hearings and trials, ad litem attorney representation on Children's Protective Service Cases; Criminal Appeals (published in Southwestern Reporter)

INVESTIGATIVE SOCIAL WORKER. 1974-79 Children's Protective Services social worker and Acting Supervisor of the Abuse Team. Received extensive education on child emotional and psychological development and behavior, sexual abuse investigation, interviewing and investigative techniques, and client counseling.

SPECIAL SKILLS: Fluent Spanish
Effective oral and written communication, Judicial Faculty
Public speaking, Press Conferences, Radio & TV guest panelist

HONORS AND AWARDS

2020 Lifetime Achievement Award – Hispanic Bar Association – (Award Banquet postponed)
2019 "Texas Women Making History" – 2019 Harris County Democratic Women
2019 Lifetime Achievement Award – Mexican-American Bar Association of Texas Foundation
2018 Lifetime Achievement Award – National Hispanic Professionals Organization – Houston
2018 "Leading Ladies Award" – Heights Chapter
2018 "VIDA Award" for Lifetime Achievement – Navidad en El Barrio Organization
2016 "Judge Esmeralda Peña Day" in Houston – Mayor Turner proclamation on October 11, 2016
2016 "Pioneer in Diversity" – University of Houston Law Center
2016 "Latina Law and Order" Award – Pan-American Round Table - Houston
2016 "Lifetime Committeeman" Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo
Mexican-American Bar Association of Texas Outstanding Chapter Award – President 1989
Outstanding Achievement Award – Second Ward Association
Honoree – "Outstanding Hispanic Texas Women" – YWCA
VIP Volunteer in Public School Award – Houston Independent School District
"Capricorn Award for Distinguished Service" – UH Law Center Faculty 1982

ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

PROFESSIONAL

Texas Municipal Courts Association – Board of Directors,– Immediate Past President, President 2018-19
1st Vice-President 2015-17, Region IX Director, 2012 – 2015 , Legislative Committee, Education Committee,
Personnel Committee

Texas Municipal Courts Education Center – Board of Directors, Immediate Past President, President
2018-19, 1st Vice-President 2015-17 , Region IX Director 2012 – 2015
TMCEC Judicial Faculty Member - 2014-17 Academic Year..

Texas Commission on Law Enforcement – Advisory Board Member – 2016-19
Supreme Court of Texas

Member, The Supreme Court of Texas District Committee on Admissions 1989
Appointed by Lt. Gov. and Chief Justice to "Committee of 100 to Review Merit Selection of Judges

State Bar of Texas

Municipal Courts Section, Board of Directors 2014-2015
Hispanic Issues Section, Member
Past Vice-Chair, Jury Service Committee
Past Board Member, Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect
Past Member, Liaison with Mexico Legal Profession Committee
Past Member, Lawyer Referral Service Committee

Houston Bar Association

Member, Past Speaker's Committee

Mexican-American Bar Association of Houston (MABAH)

President 89-90, First VP 86-87, Secretary 85-86, Judicial Screening Committee 84-86
Chairman of 20th Anniversary Banquet

Hispanic Bar Association of Houston - Member

Hispanic National Bar Association, Board of Governors (late 80's)

UH Law Alumni Association, Past Auction Committee, Homecoming Committee, Class Captain.

Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity

COMMUNITY

Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo for 22 years, 2016 Earned Lifetime Committeeman, presently on Go Tejano Committee and International Committee
National Hispanic Professional Organization- Member
Pan American Round Table – Houston – Member, Prior Director
Texas Hispanic Council on Aging – prior Advisory Board of Directors
Instructor, Texas Young Lawyers Association’s award-winning Juvenile Program
“Crossing the Line “ Program, 1999-2000
Speaker, Greater Houston Close-Up Program, George Brown Convention Center, 1998 and 1999
University of Houston President’s Hispanic Advisory Board, 1990
Hispanic Women in Leadership Organization – Member -Past Panel Speaker
Panelist, Houston Hispanic Forum Career Day
Harris County Children’s Mental Health - Board of Directors, 1990Our Lady of Guadalupe School, PTO President 1997-98; High School of Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice Explorers Parents’ Organization – President 1999-2000
Mentorship Program – Ridgecrest Elementary & Northbrook High School
First National Women’s Conference, The Hispanic Task Force, 1977
Mayor’s Minority Media Advisory Board, City of Houston, 1974

COURT ADDRESS:

Municipal Courthouse
1400 Lubbock
Houston, Texas 77002
(713)247-5464
Esmeralda.Garcia@houstontx.gov

Personal cell: 713-857-1276

04/2020



JOHNSON GARCIA LLP

Attorneys at Law

August 4, 2020

Dear Sir/Madam:

Please accept this correspondence as my support for Judge Esmeralda Peña Garcia to receive the Mayor's Hispanic Lifetime Achievement Award. While I am confident that Judge Garcia has many community service efforts that would justify her receiving the award, I write to specifically focus on her contributions and efforts with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo ("HLSR").

I am the cofounding partner of Johnson Garcia LLP, a law firm created to assist individuals and families who have suffered because of someone else's negligence. I am also a long-time volunteer with the HLSR. I am currently an Officer and Vice President of the HLSR. In this role I supervise and assist five different committees made up of more the 3,000 dedicated volunteers. Prior to this position I was the Chairman of the Go Tejano Committee for three years and served as a member of the Legal Advisory Committee, Breeders Greeters Committee, and International Committee. During my tenure with the HLSR I have witnessed and come to know Judge Garcia's volunteer efforts.

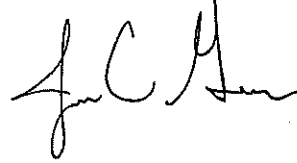
Judge Garcia has served as a member and volunteer of the HLSR's Go Tejano Committee for the last 22 years. In these 22 years Judge Garcia's efforts have supported the Go Tejano Committee's mission, which is to support our youth's education, providing scholarships for graduating students, and raising awareness of our Hispanic culture. Judge Garcia's dedication to our youth can be highlighted by her efforts on the Mariachi Invitational, which is one of the Go Tejano Committee's fundraising events. For the last 22 years Judge Garcia has sold more tickets to the Mariachi Invitational than any other member on the committee. Her efforts have resulted in countless scholarships for the youth of Texas.

In 2013, Judge Garcia also joined the International Committee assisting and translating for our international guests, which eventually translates to more revenue for more scholarships. In 2016, Judge Garcia received Lifetime Committeeman status for the HSLR.

Judge Garcia has a passion for volunteering and working with organizations that provide educational opportunities for minority students. Her volunteer hours with the HLSR reap a great return by providing so many life-changing scholarships for our Hispanic youth.

Thank you and once again please accept this as my full support for Judge Garcia's nomination to receive the Mayor's Hispanic Lifetime Achievement Award. Your courtesies in this matter are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Juan C. Garcia". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Juan" and last name "Garcia" clearly distinguishable.

Juan C. Garcia, Partner



PAN AMERICAN ROUND TABLE HOUSTON

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August 5, 2020

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—
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Dear Honorable Sylvester Turner, Mayor, City of Houston:

It is with pleasure and honor that I write this letter recommending Judge Esmeralda "Essie" Pena for the Mayor's Hispanic Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement. As the current director of the Houston Table of the Pan American Roundtable (PART), it would be an honor for one of our own to be recognized by the city she not only loves so much, but has given back to in so many ways.


PART Houston is an organization dedicated to the support and betterment of women in the Houston community, as well as throughout the Americas. The organization was originally founded by Mrs. Florence Terry Shaw Griswold in 1916 in San Antonio as a way to foster relations between Mexicans and Texans during the Mexican Civil war, over the years we have spread from San Antonio, Texas to the rest of North America, Central and South American. The Houston table was formed in 1940 by Mrs. Hally Bryan Perry, who also co-founded the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. In Houston, we have a long history of fundraising and directing scholarships to deserving Hispanic young ladies graduating from local area high schools.

In 2016-2017, Judge Essie Pena served as the Director of PART Houston. Prior to that, Judge Essie was an active member within the organization. The leadership of PART- Houston is integral and important to the mission of the organization, to stay focused and to continue to grow our membership. The members of PART Houston were honored to have such a strong and widely respected member of the Houston community serve as our Director. She brought integrity and leadership to the organization and helped us focus our efforts to better meet our mission. During her tenure, she significantly increased the monetary donations given which increased the number of scholarships provided to young latinias ladies. Her relationships with the legal community also helped attract new members and speakers to benefit our members and the young recipients of scholarships. Under her watch we went from 3 to 5 scholarships a year to over 20! We also created our Latina Law and Order event, where we recognize a high ranking latina in law enforcement, the legal system, public service and more.

Over the years we have been able to invite high school seniors to attend the event and meet female role models who have continued to encourage our scholars to dream big! We are a better organization because of her service to PART, and we highly recommend Judge Essie Pena for this prestigious award. As a home grown leader from the east side, graduate of Austin High School and now a retired judge she has always worked to give back, while never forgetting her roots. We hope you will consider our recommendation when making your selection and look forward to seeing our favorite judge named a winner in 2020.

Thank you for all you do for all of Houston, through good times, tough times and now as you guide us through this pandemic. We value your leadership and pray for you daily.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julcantar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julissa Alcantar-Martinez, Ed. D.
Director, PART Houston 2019-2021



Navidad En El Barrio

8223 Bo Jack Dr.
Houston, Texas 77040

August 6, 2020

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www.navidadenelbarrio.org

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Honorable Sylvester Turner
901 Bagby Street
Houston, Texas 77002

Mayor Turner,

Navidad En El Barrio is honored to write a letter of recommendation to support the nomination of Judge Esmeralda Peña Garcia to receive the Mayor's Hispanic Heritage Lifetime Achievement Award. In the last 33 years of existence, Navidad En El Barrio has been blessed to meet some of the most generous and genuine human beings in this wonderful City of Houston. One of the individuals that stands out is Judge Peña Garcia or as we dearly call her, "Judge Essie".

We had the pleasure of meeting Judge Essie at one of our events many years ago and knowing the need in the community herself, she quickly became a supporter and advocate for Navidad En El Barrio and our mission. One of the programs she assisted with was our "Little Wishes" program. This program relies on the community to grant wishes for our children in need. These children are selected from Title I schools, which means their families have limited income and will more than likely not have gifts for Christmas. These little wishes consist of food, clothing, beds, glasses, wheelchairs, books and one child even asked for a bible one year. The need is great in the community and Judge Garcia jumped at the chance to be able to fulfill these wishes. She gathered her friends and family to make sure that no child was left without their desired wish. She has remained a faithful supporter of our programs and has helped to grow our programs and fundraising.

Navidad En El Barrio recognized her commitment to our organization, along with other non-profits and her judicial leadership by naming her the VIDA Lifetime Achievement Award recipient for 2018. Judge Garcia has opened the doors for many of us by proving to the community that we have talents and gifts that improve the quality of life for others while staying true to our culture and lending a hand up to the younger generation. Some of the organizations she is active in include the National Hispanic Professional Organization, Mexican American Bar Association, Pan American Round Table, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Go Tejano Committee and the University of Houston Alumni Organization.

It amazes me that despite the obstacles that Judge Peña Garcia has had to face by being a Latina woman pursuing a career in judicial law, she has not only reached her goals but surpassed them. In addition, she has served as a role model for many women who have chosen to have a career and also raise a family by being successful at both. She has taken her life and made it count by making a difference in her career, family and the community. Judge Garcia has made it a priority to support organizations that focus on youth, families and education and she has been a true asset to these our organizations, in turn our whole community benefits. Judge Peña Garcia is a living legacy and we are a better community because of her.

We truly appreciate the opportunity to be able to sing the praises of Judge Essie. She deserves the Mayor's Hispanic Heritage Lifetime Achievement Award and will continue to represent our City in the most positive light possible. The City of Houston is blessed to have her as a member of our community.

Respectfully,

Martha Martinez Gomez
President

Schuessler-Kimsey, Jackie - MYR

From: alva trevino <alvatrevino@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 6, 2020 5:47 PM
To: Schuessler-Kimsey, Jackie - MYR
Subject: Mayor's Hispanic Heritage Awards Nomination- Lifetime Achievement Award
Attachments: Mayor's Hispanic Award Essie Garcia Combined File .pdf

[Message Came from Outside the City of Houston Mail System]

Dear Ms. Schuessler- Kimsey-

It is with great pride and honor that I submit as a nominee, Hon. Judge Esmeralda (Essie) P. Garcia for Mayor Turner's Hispanic Heritage Lifetime Achievement Award. I have included all of the required supporting letters, biography and resume. I hope that this information will advance Judge Essie as the Mayor's recipient of the 2021 award. I can think of no other person who has exemplified the ideals that the Mayor hopes to acknowledge and highlight during Hispanic Heritage Month. If there are any questions, or you need additional information, feel free to call me.

Most sincerely,

Alva I. Trevino, J.D.
713-906-4323