



## 2021 NUESTRO PUEBLO AWARDS HONOREES

### Arts and Entertainment

Awarded to an individual who has made a significant contribution to our Hispanic community through their skills, leadership, or portrayal of Latinos in Arts & Entertainment.

### Honoree: Michael Phillip Lopez



Michael Lopez also known as #ACMike, is the face of Atlantic City and your go to guy for all things AC! Prior to TV and Radio, Mike's objective has always been to promote and share Atlantic City, hence his slogan, LIVE WORK PLAY AC. During this time locals and followers on social media dubbed him "ACMike." Which then morphed into his creation of The Mike Lopez Radio and TV Shows where he now has the ability to influence on a larger scale (followers, viewers and listeners) by sharing and promoting the Atlantic City experience through his eyes.

ACMike is a radio personality on 1400 WOND Longport Media "The Mike Lopez Radio Show," and as of September 2021 has been picked up by 3 additional stations 93.1 FM, 1230 AM & 1340 AM of Equity Communications.

ACMike is the Executive Producer and Host of The Mike Lopez TV Show on Comcast channel 1090 and YouTube Channel, "The Mike Lopez Show" in collaboration with Stockton University. Mike was raised in Atlantic County with his 8 siblings and currently lives in Atlantic City. Mike has a wide arrange of life experiences. From 1984-2009 Mike was employed at The Atlantic County Department of Public Safety. 2010-2016 Mike worked for The Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) as a Supervisor of the Ambassador Program and The Special Improvement Division. Mike was a Legislative Assistant to Assemblymen/Senator Chris Brown, he also worked for The Camden Diocese at St. Monica's Parish Atlantic City. Mike is the founder and CEO of Lopez Security and The Atlantic City Media Group.

## Community Service

Awarded to an individual who has made a significant contribution to our community through volunteerism, as a provider of social services and/or promoting the welfare of others.

### Honoree: Dr. Luis Rodriguez



Dr. Luis Rodríguez was born in the city of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and is the current President and Executive Director of La Casa Dominicana of Nueva Jersey. Dr. Rodríguez received his doctorate at the Technical University of Santo Domingo in Family Health at the Catholic University of Santo Domingo. Dr. Rodriguez immigrated to the United States 15 years ago and dedicates his time serving the South Jersey as a teacher for free English as a second language courses, advocate for the prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infections, and through various community programs for La Casa Dominicana.

The Dominican House of New Jersey has been a non-profit corporation since March 20, 1995. The purpose of this community organization is to encourage the participation and interest of the entire New Jersey resident community in activities such as: civic, sports, housing, legal assistance, professional, social, educational, charitable, national and international activities and also other important projects like, daycare centers and also important communities events like the celebration and preservation of the Latino cultural heritage as well as an active role in situations that affect the community.

## Education

Awarded to an individual at any level in the education system in Atlantic County that has made a significant contribution to our community through his/her skills, leadership, or advocacy on educational issues.



### Honoree: Yasnaya Lorick

A descendant of Colombian parents, Yasnaya grew up in the impoverished conditions many migrant children endure in the City of Philadelphia. Yasnaya was inspired by her grandmother, her first grade ESL teacher, Mrs. Rincon, and her 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, Mrs. Bivins, to become a teacher. After completing her BA in Education from Arcadia University, Yasnaya relocated to South Jersey and accepted a position as a bilingual first grade teacher for the Atlantic City School District. Yasnaya currently works as a first grade school teacher at Sovereign Avenue School.

Yasnaya became immersed in the welfare and needs of her students and the community as soon as she began her teaching career. She had to counsel students and families who lived in impoverished and distressed areas, similar to her upbringing. She felt a connection with her students and families and worked hard to fundraise to provide them with free coats, clothing, school supplies and other basic necessities. After Super Storm Sandy destroyed many of the students' homes, Yasnaya started the Blankets, Underwear and Socks Drive and secured a food distribution through Fresh Start Church which provided \$1600 worth of electric heaters to the students and families.

Yasnaya's volunteerism and passion for the welfare of the community expanded in 2016 when she and her family opened up their home for DCCP and the children of New Jersey. They have fostered eight children since then and recently welcomed a newborn baby to their family. During the pandemic, Yasnaya, her husband, and children remain active in the community assisting the Hispanic Association of Atlantic County fundraise over \$3,000 for student scholarships and volunteering at the various food distributions and events in the area.

## Entrepreneurship

Awarded to an individual in the field of business that has made a significant contribution to our community through his/her leadership in business, service, and providing professional opportunities to the Latino community.

### Honoree: Elvis Cadavid



Elvis Cadavid is proud South Jerseyan, born and raised in the Atlantic City area. No stranger to the hospitality industry, Elvis brings a wealth of experience and passion for the restaurant industry from bussing tables at local breakfast spots at the age of 14 to serving and managing some of Atlantic City's finest restaurant establishments including the legendary Knife and Fork Inn, Dock's Oyster House, and Bobby Flay Steak at the Borgata Hotel and Resort.

Following the tragedy of Hurricane Sandy, Elvis decided to pursue his dream of becoming a restaurant owner, along with his business partner, Tom Harris. In 2013, together they rebuilt and opened the doors to the Vagabond Kitchen & Tap House. Since then, Vagabond has received 10 Atlantic City Weekly Nightlight Awards and has been featured on the Food Network's hit show, *Diner, Drive-ins and Dives* with world

famous chef Guy Fieri.

On top of operating a successful business and expanding his business to multiple locations, Elvis makes philanthropic efforts a top priority. Vagabond's fundraising endeavors support his community, local charities, police and fire departments, as well as over \$40,000 in scholarships for students through Vagabond Charities. Thanks to his passion, hard work, and determination, Vagabond remains one of the top-rated local eateries serving up craft beers and pub food classics with a fun twist.



## Healthcare

Awarded to a healthcare professional who embodies the characteristics of compassionate care, respects patients' values, culture, choices and decisions, and understands the significance of educating our community with regard to the latest healthcare issues.

### Honoree: Jenny Hernandez



Jenny Hernandez is presently employed by AtlantiCare Health System, the largest health system in southeastern New Jersey, and currently serves as a Consultant in the Process Management Office (PMO), a team of Lean Six Sigma Green Belts and Black Belts who work to achieve process excellence in the organization. Hernandez's responsibilities include working closely with multidisciplinary leaders across the organization on business and clinical process redesign utilizing extensive data analysis and outcome scorecards to demonstrate process and financial improvements. Over the last 4

years, Hernandez has enabled multiple clinical teams to improve processes and workflows saving hundreds of thousands of dollars for the organization.

Ms. Hernandez earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from Federico Villarreal National University in Lima, Peru graduating at the top of her class. Hernandez earned a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt and is actively pursuing a Master of Business Administration degree at Rutgers, The State University. Ms. Hernandez came to the United States in August 2001, and obtained her U.S. citizenship in January 2017. She joined AtlantiCare in 2007 worked as an Accountant and Financial Analyst in Corporate Finance for 10 years.

In 2015, she joined ALMA (AtlantiCare Latinos Moving Ahead) an employee resource group at AtlantiCare. Ms. Hernandez presently serves as Co-Chair of ALMA, leading 20 core and ad-hoc members with the mission of building trusting, collaborative and inclusive relationships for employees and the community through education, outreach programs and increased access to healthcare services. Ms. Hernandez is passionate about serving others, understanding that with her current roles at AtlantiCare and in the community, she can truly contribute towards improvement and making a positive impact in every interaction.

Ms. Hernandez's most recent accomplishment was leading COVID-19 vaccination campaign for the Hispanic Community in collaboration with Hispanic Association of Atlantic County. Together with 14 ALMA volunteers they were able to vaccinate 1,080 Hispanic senior members of Atlantic County. Ms. Hernandez also served as a lead at her church, Beacon Evangelic Free in

Galloway, New Jersey during the vaccination campaign. In 2021, Jenny accepted the role of President of the Chelsea Economic Development Corporation Board.

Ms. Hernandez has recently taken the role of Treasurer for the Rowing team of Absegami High School where her daughter attends. Ms. Hernandez lives in Smithville, New Jersey with her husband Douglas and children Anna Sophia and Franco.

## Public Service

Awarded to an individual in public service including government employees, elected officials, law enforcement or in military services that has made a significant contribution to our community through his/her skill, leadership or advocacy of issues that affect the Latino community within the public sector.

### Lt. Wilber “Willie” Santiago



Lieutenant Santiago is a 14 year veteran of the Atlantic City Police Department and is the only state certified Bilingual police Sergeant on the force. Promoted to the First Latino Lieutenant in the history of Atlantic City. I made it my priority to be out in the community. Now I'm the NCO Commander the Neighborhood Coordination Unit. In a short time we have made many great strides. This year alone we had 7 community BBQ cook outs, 7 movies Night, 300 Thanksgiving dinner giveaway and 173 youth were taken to Shop with a cop. As a lieutenant I'm back to where I started. Helping my community in my city.

I was the Community Relation Police Sergeant and the Executive Director to the Police Athletic League in Atlantic City from 2014-2019.

Community Relations, I had the responsibility of bringing our community and police department together in many ways. We held multiple events throughout the city. Example of a few events, Coffee with a cop. This event is for the community to come out and meet the police officers and express any concerns within the community. Pizza with the police, we go to the schools and had lunch (Pizza) with the kids so that they have an understanding of what we do and also get to know us as police officers. Homework completion, we are in 3 different neighborhoods. We partner up with Stockton University to assist the children with their homework and projects. We have so many other things that we do in our community like Junior Police Academy, Movies under the stars, Cook Outs, Book bag give away, Community walk through different neighborhoods and more.

But my Pride and joy is being the Executive Director to the Police Athletic League. Well, it is up to me to come up with new innovative ways to entertain and to keep children and young adults off the streets. We are not all about sports. The youth would have to participate in Homework

completion or mentoring program before they pick up a ball. These two programs are mandated before any sport participation. We just took a few young men to Washington DC on a National Pal Summit on mentoring. There were over 800 youth and adults at the conference.

## **Future Leader**

Awarded to an individual under the age of 21 who has made a significant contribution to our community through scholastic achievement, leadership or exemplary accomplishments that qualifies him/her as an outstanding role model for other youth.

### **Honoree: Jetzaly Medina**



Jetzaly Medina is a first-generation college sophomore student at Stockton University. Recently she became a chosen beneficiary of The Engelberg Leadership Scholarship Program, a major scholarship and leadership development program supported by a \$1 million commitment of Alfred Engelberg, a 1956 Atlantic City High School graduate who became a successful intellectual property lawyer. Jetzaly grew up in Atlantic City as a student of Atlantic City public schools. She graduated from Atlantic City High School, where she devoted herself to helping her community. During her high school years, she served as secretary for her school library and student

volunteer at The Atlantic City Free Public Library. She would also lend her time as a member of Hope4AC, Campus Kitchen, and helping in different community events such as the annual Summer Reading Programs sponsored by The Steel Pier.

Jetzaly is Mexican-American and is motivated by her background. She keeps in mind her grandfather, who she recognizes, immigrated to the United States to cultivate fields in California so that his future generations could cultivate something bigger. And the adversities her family and she have faced living off domestic jobs. She is also motivated by members of her community. She believes that thanks to their support and leadership, she has had the opportunity to realize and embark on her full potential. She looks up to individuals like her mentor in Goals Gear UP, Mrs. Roxana, with whom she shares a similar background and has dedicated herself to orientating young students. Also, individuals of the Hispanic community like those elected for the Nuestro Pueblo Awards.

Jetzaly sees it for herself to take advantage of her opportunities and lead in every way she can. She offers what she can to her community as she firmly believes that sharing experiences, amplifying contacts, and deepening common ties is what will fundamentally present opportunities and change for individuals in the Hispanic community.

### **Nuestro Amigo/a**

Awarded to a non-Hispanic individual that has demonstrated devotion to the betterment of the Latino community through their work, special achievement(s) or service to the community.

## Honoree: David Vinokurov



David Vinokurov serves as a Senior Customer Outreach Specialist for South Jersey Gas. In this position, Mr. Vinokurov connects programs and services to residential customers through agencies that deliver specialized energy assistance programs and support services. South Jersey Gas delivers safe, reliable, affordable natural gas and promotes energy efficiency to approximately 385,000 residential, commercial, and industrial customers in the seven southernmost counties of New Jersey.

Mr. Vinokurov has more than 30 years of proven leadership and expertise in government and management. His influence extends from the local to State and Federal Governments with regards to community/corporate relations programs for low-moderate, income residential and small business customers. Mr. Vinokurov's consumer advocacy includes identifying, analyzing, and resolving consumer issues; guiding public education programs and policy; and lobbying Government officials for resources to support energy assistance programs.

Mr. Vinokurov is a current board member of NJCFE – New Jersey Coalition for Financial Education, as well as Coalition for a Safe Community.

David is compassionate, empathic, and resourceful individual with the ability to interact with people from diverse backgrounds and is able to work under pressure. David has excellent communication skills, proficient social media skills, and great persuasive skills.

## STEM

Awarded to an individual in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics who has made significant contributions through the advancement of their work, leadership, or in advocating opportunities for advancement of Latinos in STEM.



## Honoree: Kirby Ortiz

Kirby Ortiz, is the Professional Service Specialist within Stockton University's Information Technology department. Kirby started his career in the City of Atlantic City and Ocean Resort casino and has over 15yrs of IT experience. Dedicated to the end-user, he is passionate about finding creative solutions to complex problems. He takes pride in ensuring his contribution to improved efficiency and satisfaction at Stockton University.

Kirby worked diligently throughout the pandemic especially with the Latino community to transition to online learning and virtual platforms. On his free



time, Kirby always attends Latinx programming for Stockton University and the community. He also volunteers his time teaching salsa to our youth.

## **Nuestro Organizational Amigo/a**

Awarded to an organization that has demonstrated outstanding social responsibility to the Latino community through participation and support of issues, programs, or events relating to the Latin community or that has demonstrated a commitment to the advancement of Latinos in their organization.



### **Honoree: Atlantic Cape Community College**

Atlantic Cape Community College is committed to creating opportunity for the region by providing access to high-quality education that will also economically bolster the area and its residents. In addition, to meeting students' educational goals, the college has worked to increase its social outreach by leading and collaborating on projects that directly address the needs of the local Hispanic community such as food drives, hot meal distributions, free COVID-19 testing, vaccination clinics, DACA information sessions, consulates, and a wide array of community events and resource fairs. Atlantic Cape Community College aims to continue to collaborate with educational, community and religious organizations for the

benefit of the region.

Atlantic Cape Community College creates opportunity by providing access to excellent programs and services that successfully meet students' educational goals. The college envisions being the region's preferred choice for higher education and professional training, as well as a leading catalyst for economic and workforce development, through partnerships that provide seamless educational pathways and maximize student success.