

LEGAL EAGLES

THE 25 MOST INFLUENTIAL HISPANIC LAWYERS

Story by: Laura Rivas Courtesy photos

No List is perfect. We know that. But our research effort aims to showcase the most influential Latino Lawyers in the Country. This is not a merit based list; is actual power, relevance and success rate. The following people are those our team of advisors and reporters found out to be the Top 25 Latino Lawyers. Of course there are others that would deserve to be part of this list, but we only wanted 25 to make it manageable. The list includes attorneys across a wide range of fields, but what they have in common is the impact each has made in his or her specialty and in their community. Here we take a look at 25 of the top Hispanic lawyers in the country.

RAQUEL TAMEZ

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In her current role, Tamez is responsible for all of Legal and Compliance. Previously, she worked for CSC, a global IT services and solutions provider, as Deputy General Counsel of Litigation and e-Discovery Counsel and for a law firm in Dallas, Texas.

An active member of several professional organizations, including D.C.'s Hispanic Bar Association, Tamez has received national recognition as a recipient of the Hispanic Corporate Achiever Award. She dedicates time to pro bono matters and has served as a board member for several nonprofit organizations.

YESENIA M. GALLEGOS

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Representing employers in employment litigation and in actions against former employees in trade-secret and embezzlement actions, Gallegos also conducts and oversees workplace investigations of harassment, discrimination and wage and hour audits, and provides organizations with training in employment law and compliance.

She served as the Hispanic National Bar Association's (HBNA) Regional President for Southern California from 2013 to 2014. An active author and speaker, Gallegos served as associate literary editor and technical editor for the Maritime Law Journal from 2000 to 2002.

RICHARD J. MONTES

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Since joining MLN in 2003, Montes has successfully handled matters involving medical and other professional malpractice, employment law, products liability and commercial litigation.

As president of the Long Island Hispanic Bar Association Community Service Fund, Montes leads the organization in fostering and promoting the Long Island Hispanic community's legal, educational and charitable missions, including providing scholarships to students and charitable assistance to worthy agencies and groups that serve the area. The Hispanic National Bar Association recognized him as one of its 2012 Top Attorneys Under 40.

JESSE H. RUIZ

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For over 18 years, Ruiz has focused his practice on business transactions, including mergers and acquisitions, venture capital and private equity investments. He also counsels clients on the formation of business entities in the United States, Latin America and Europe.

In 2011, the Walmart Legal Department awarded Ruiz its inaugural Walmart Legal Spark Award for "outstanding client and community service and dedication to diversity in the legal profession." Since 2006, Jesse has served as a member of the board of directors of Commonwealth Edison.

STEPHEN N. ZACK

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Zack's main practice area is complex commercial litigation, emphasizing class actions, product liability cases and federal multi-district litigation. He is a specialist in civil trial law, as well as eminent domain, corporate and international law.

The first Hispanic to assume the presidency of the American Bar Association, Zack was also the first Hispanic and youngest president of the Florida Bar. He has served as president of the National Conference of Bar Presidents. In 2000, he represented former Vice President Al Gore in the trial of Bush v. Gore.

MARCOS G. RONQUILLO

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With over 30 years of trial experience representing governmental agencies such as the Dallas Independent School District, Ronquillo currently represents Fortune 500 companies in high-profile controversies. He is the former president of the Dallas Mexican American Bar Association and former chairman of the Dallas Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Ronquillo is the recipient of numerous honors, including Hispanic Business Magazine's 100 Most Influential Hispanics, Latino Leaders Magazine's prestigious Maestro Award for Leadership and the Texas Mexican Bar Association's Outstanding Lawyer of the Year Award.

CESAR L. ALVAREZ

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As former CEO of Greenberg Traurig, Alvarez directed the firm's growth from 325 lawyers in eight offices to approximately 1,850 attorneys and government professionals in more than 36 locations in the United States, Europe, Asia and Latin America. He has represented numerous public companies and served on the boards of several publicly-traded corporations and charitable organizations. The National Law Journal has honored Alvarez as one of the 100 Most Influential Lawyers in America in 1997, 2000 and 2006.

BRIGIDA BENITEZ

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Skilled in addressing and solving challenging problems stemming from business disputes, employment relationships or compliance matters, Benitez has represented clients in industries including banking, pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, education and aerospace. She serves as an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center, where she teaches a course on international business litigation and federal practice. Benitez is the immediate past president—and the first Latina to serve in the position—of the D.C. Bar, the second-largest unified bar in the country, with more than 100,000 members worldwide.

LARRY PASCAL

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With extensive experience in aviation, energy and infrastructure, financial services and real estate, Pascal also publishes and speaks extensively on cross-border developments. He served as chair of the International Section of the State Bar of Texas, and led a successful campaign for the adoption of the ABA Model Rule on Foreign Legal Consultants in Texas. Pascal serves as vice chair and director for World Services Group, one of the largest international networks in the world with membership in more than 120 countries on every continent.

REGINA RODRIGUEZ

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Named Latina Lawyer of the Year in 2013 by the Hispanic National Bar Association, Rodriguez is an experienced trial lawyer focusing on defense of complex litigation, mass tort and class action cases, particularly in the medical drug and device arena. Prior to joining Faegre Baker Daniels in 2002, she was an assistant U.S. attorney (AUSA) and chief of the civil division in the District of Colorado, where she supervised and directed all active civil cases for the office.

JAMES ROMO

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One of the founding partners of AtkinsonAndelsonLoya Ruud &Romo, Romo represents public employers in all aspects of labor relations and employment law matters. He is a frequent speaker and lecturer to private and public sector employers on all aspects of labor and employment law, and has also published numerous articles in professional and trade journals on such topics as wrongful termination, drug and alcohol testing, documenting employee performance, employee privacy issues, collective bargaining and Public Employment Relations Board decisions.

MANUEL SANCHEZ

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Over the past 27 years, Sanchez Daniels & Hoffman, the second-largest minority-owned law firm in the U.S., has earned a reputation as one of Illinois' premier civil litigation defense firms. Specializing in multi-million dollar complex product liability, construction, professional liability, employment law and toxic tort defense litigation, Sanchez has successfully tried more than 75 cases. He has appeared annually since 2006 as Super Lawyer in Illinois, a recognition given to the top 5 percent of attorneys in each state.

GERARDO "JERRY" GONZALEZ

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Gonzalez is a founder of the law firm and served as managing or co-managing partner for 22 years. He was recommended by the White House to a three-year term on the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago Board of Directors. A recipient of the State Bar of Wisconsin President's Award, Gonzalez also has been selected for inclusion on the Wisconsin Super Lawyers list for the past several years and was selected to the National Product Liability Advisory Council.

DINO ELIZARDO BARAJAS

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With a focus on domestic and international project development and finance - with particular emphasis on Latin American infrastructure project financings, debt financings, and mergers and acquisitions - Barajas' clients include commercial lenders, institutional investors, investment funds, project sponsors, and public and private companies.

Latinex recognized Barajas as one of the top 100 Latin American Lawyers in 2014 and 2015, and Hispanic Business Magazine named him one of the 100 Most Influential Hispanics in 2008.

RAMÓN ABADIN

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An active trial lawyer who has tried more than 30 cases, Abadin focuses on complex commercial and tort matters that frequently involve significant insurance components and has represented some of the world's largest multinational corporations and insurance companies. He became president of the Florida Bar, the second-largest mandatory bar association in the United States, in June 2015. A native of Cuba, Abadin is also past president of the Cuban American Bar Association.

ROBERT MALDONADO

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Maldonado is national president of the Hispanic National Bar Association. Specializing in intellectual property litigation, including patent, trademark, copyright, false advertising and unfair competition matters in federal court, he has negotiated and drafted major intellectual property licensing agreements in areas such as consumer products and pharmaceuticals. In 2013, Maldonado received recognitions as an American Bar Foundation Fellow and with El Award from La Prensa. He was also selected by Super Lawyers in the Intellectual Property Litigation category in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

She has been called a super lawyer, a force of nature, “A Blazing Star” and one of the most influential women in Texas. But the secret of Houston-based Sofia Adrogué’s success is simple: “It is about a relentless pursuit of life-of living with passion; remembering that ‘happiness is not an accident nor is it something you wish for. Happiness is something you design.”

The member of Gray Reed & McGraw has garnered settlements on behalf of plaintiffs and defendants in countless complex business cases in state, federal courts and Alternative Dispute Resolution proceedings.

Adrogué is married to Mr. Sten Gustafson, their children are Sloan (20), Schuyler (15) and Stefan (12). She says that her goal is that her children concentrate on education, labor, faith, humility and integrity, proud that her adopted country (she is from Argentina) of the U.S. is a place where meritocracy and egalitarianism thrive.

“In the U.S., education is the great equalizer; I am such a product. Thus, for me, my greatest assistance has come from my family and the opportunities the U.S. has provided me.”

Humble beginnings

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Adrogué arrived with her family when she was eight-years-old with her father, Horacio J. Adrogué, her mother Sara Oyenard and her four siblings- Horacio E., Soledad, Matias and Marcos. The family arrived at Boston Logan Airport with 14 suitcases and lived off of the father’s yearly \$5,000 salary he received from the World Health Organization.

“An outing at Burger King or McDonald’s was a big family affair—a true treat!” she recalls.

She learned English, studied law at Rice University and University of Houston Law Center. She became a graduate of Harvard Business School, where she has been a U.S. Keynote Graduation Speaker and U.S. class Representative.



Super lawyer

Sofia Adrogué

went from an immigrant who did not speak English to one of the top attorneys in Texas

Story by: Joseph Treviño

Courtesy photo

Blazing Star

Since then, her work has taken her from being one of the top lawyers in Texas to a fervent community worker.

“As a lawyer I can serve as an advocate, as a facilitator and as a conciliator, resolving a litany of issues,” she says. “From the simplest to the most complex. Being a lawyer has been most fulfilling.”

As a co-host of *Latina Voices: Smart Talk*, a TV and Internet program, Adrogué has addressed business, current affairs and women’s issues. With such a career in law and her dedication to Latino culture and working for non-profits, Adrogué has some advice for young lawyers or Hispanics who want to go into law.

She says: “never forget who you are and where you come from. Find your passion. Then pursue it with preparation, perspiration, persistence and patience. With some luck you may also experience power- use it sparingly, wisely and always with integrity.”

MONICA NEUMAN



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With a focus on complex transactions and regulatory compliance matters affecting companies and institutions in the health care industry, Neuman represents a wide range of clients, including tax-exempt hospitals and health systems, academic medical centers, physician group practices, medical device and pharmaceutical companies. Chambers USA named her an Up and Coming Healthcare Attorney in 2013 and 2014. Neuman serves on the Boston Children’s Hospital Trust Latino Advisory Committee and on the McDermott Will & Emery’s national coordinating committee for pro bono activities.

FRANK HERRERA, JR.



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Herrera is a longtime advocate for personal injury and accident victims who dedicates much of his time, financial resources and legal expertise to causes, including the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF). New America Alliance named him the 2014 Chairman of the Board. He is chairman of the board and managing partner of Valiente International Ventures, the first and only Hispanic supplier to form a joint venture with Toyota Tsusho America Inc., an international trading company for Toyota Corporation.

ROLAND GARCIA



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Named a Super Lawyer by Texas Monthly, Garcia has tried lawsuits in state and federal trial courts, and has argued appeals in state and federal appellate courts. He was the first minority to be elected president of the Houston Bar Association, the fifth-largest voluntary bar association in the country. In addition, Garcia was president of the Hispanic Bar Association, president of the Dispute Resolution Center, director of the State Bar of Texas and a trustee of the Texas Bar Foundation.

BENNY AGOSTO, JR

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Former president of the Hispanic National Bar Association, Agosto has been credited for rewriting a Texas law concerning police officers assisting one another regardless of on-duty status. He is co-founder of the HNBA's Legal Education Fund, a 501(c)3 charitable group that raises money to give 100 percent of its contributions toward minority scholarships. Agosto is a member of many bar associations throughout Texas and the founder of the Mexican American Bar Association of Texas Foundation, which has raised over \$100,000 in scholarships.

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Herrera concentrates on international matters, with particular emphasis in international corporate and financing transactions in Latin America and the Caribbean. For more than 25 years, he has been involved in transactions in every Latin American country and many in the Caribbean on behalf of a wide variety of clients, including private, public and multilateral entities. In addition, Herrera has experience in international arbitration matters. Latin Lawyer, the business law resource for Latin America, has acknowledged him as a "Respected Name" in International Trade Law.

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Morillo is co-chair of the White Collar and Corporate Investigations Practice in Washington, D.C. His practice focuses on criminal defense and civil litigation for major financial institutions, Fortune 500 companies, large international companies, professional services firms and senior executives. Financial Times included his representation of Brazil in a corruption matter involving former senior government officials and multiple jurisdictions in its "Innovative Lawyers 2009." The American Lawyer recognized Morillo as one of the nation's top 50 litigators under the age of 45.

DANNY MARTI

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Nominated by President Barack Obama in August 2014, Marti took office in March 2015 following unanimous confirmation by the United States Senate. He is charged with developing the administration's intellectual property enforcement strategy and his is the primary office responsible for coordinating the efforts of the U.S. government criminal, national security and economic agencies engaged in intellectual property policy and enforcement. Marti has served on several professional associations and charitable boards, including the International Trademark Association and the American Cancer Society's National Capital Region Corporate Council.

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Garcia has extensive experience handling various corporate and business transactions, including financings, private equity, securities, mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, investments, restructurings and contractual arrangements in the U.S., as well as other parts of the world. Co-founder and former Director of the former New England-Latin America Business Council Inc., he has been listed by Legal 500 Latin America for international firms in the area of Corporate and M&A, The Best Lawyers in America and by New England's top-rated lawyers.

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Sanchez has a wealth of experience in dispute resolution and has served as counsel on numerous high-profile cases, including multi-million and multi-billion dollar disputes representing sovereign Latin American states. After little more than a year in operation, under her leadership, Disan received a Chambers & Partners award for Outstanding Firm for Furthering Women's Advancement. In 2015, Latinvex ranked her among the Top 50 Female International Lawyers for Latin American and, in 2013, the Hispanic National Bar Association named her a Top Lawyer under 40.

