



Christina Morales

State Representative • District 145
Harris County

September 5, 2024

Jackie Schuessler-Kimsey, City of Houston
Mayor's Hispanic Heritage Awards Committee
901 Bagby St
Houston, TX 77002

RE: Nominating Juan Hernandez | Mayor's Hispanic Heritage Award Community Activist

Members of the Mayor's Hispanic Heritage Awards Committee:

It is my distinct honor to nominate Juan Hernandez Jr. for the 2024 Mayor's Hispanic Heritage Awards in the Community Activist category. Juan's lifelong dedication to public service and community improvement, particularly in the Denver Harbor and Second Ward neighborhoods, makes him an exemplary candidate for this recognition.

Juan's journey of service began with a remarkable 35-year career in the Houston Fire Department, where he rose to the rank of Junior Captain. During his time with the department, he co-founded the Hispanic Firefighter Caucus Local 341, alongside the late State Senator Mario Gallegos. Through this caucus, Juan championed equality and fairness for Hispanic firefighters, leaving a lasting impact on the department and setting a powerful example of leadership.

After his retirement from the fire department, Juan's commitment to community service only grew. He and his wife, Anna, became the proud owners of Doña Maria Mexican Cafe in the Second Ward. This small business has become a vital hub for the community, where Juan uses his extensive network of connections to bring people together and drive positive change. Through the cafe, Juan has organized numerous community service initiatives, from beautification projects in Denver Harbor to efforts improving neighborhood safety and infrastructure.

One of Juan's most recent achievements includes his work with Harris County Commissioner Adrian Garcia to secure funding for the revitalization of Selena Quintanilla Park. He has also spearheaded the Denver Harbor Matters – Lyons Avenue Cleanup and has been instrumental in securing new LED streetlights under the I-10 East Loop. His future plans to establish Team Denver Harbor, a volunteer group equipped with landscaping tools to maintain the area's green spaces, further demonstrate his unwavering commitment to improving the quality of life for his neighbors.

Juan's selflessness and tireless dedication to his community are truly inspiring. Whether he is advocating for better infrastructure, organizing cleanups, or providing educational resources for local residents, Juan always

leads by example. His ability to unite people and create meaningful, lasting change in the community speaks to the depth of his character and his genuine desire to give back.

For these reasons, I am proud to recommend Juan Hernandez for the Mayor's Hispanic Heritage Award – Community Activist. His decades of service, leadership, and dedication to improving the lives of Houston's Hispanic residents make him a truly deserving recipient of this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christina Morales". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christina Morales
State Representative
Texas House District 145