

## **Biography of Tammy Rodriguez**

Tomasa Rodriguez, also known as "Tammy," was born in 1961 in New Orleans, Louisiana, to parents from the Valley and Mexico. At the age of seven, her family moved to Houston, Texas, where Tammy's journey of community activism, advocacy, and leadership began, eventually establishing her as a prominent figure in the Gulfton area of Houston.

In her early adulthood, Tammy found herself in an abusive relationship. However, the birth of her daughter, Desiree, at age 20 became a turning point in her life. Determined to provide a better environment for her child, Tammy made the courageous decision to leave the abusive relationship and relocate to Gulfton, where she found the opportunity to begin her career in the apartment management industry.

Starting in 1990, Tammy worked as a Multi-Site Manager Supervisor, overseeing several properties in the Gulfton neighborhood, which was known at the time for its high crime rates and poorly managed apartment complexes. Her responsibilities involved rehabilitating these properties, addressing significant maintenance issues, and improving safety for residents. Tammy quickly earned a reputation for her ability to transform "F" properties by reducing crime, enhancing living conditions, and turning them into desirable places to live.

In 2001, Tammy was nominated to be the President of the Gulfton Super Neighborhood, a role she accepted despite initial hesitation. As President, she faced significant challenges, including opposition from local politicians who dismissed the needs of Gulfton's largely immigrant population. Sparked by what she describes as an ignorant comment at a council meeting, Tammy has made it her mission to give the residents of Gulfton a voice. Tammy's strong sense of justice and determination led her to fight for the community's rights. She actively campaigned to increase voter registration by 25%, which led to the election of a new council member, MJ Khan, who made significant improvements in Gulfton, such as establishing a multi-service center, a new library, and enhanced infrastructure like streetlights and sidewalks.

In 2006, Tammy was appointed as an alternate for the State Representative for her area. During this period, she played a key role in forming the Gulfton Management District, which came to life in 2020 under the leadership of Council Member Edward Pollard. Tammy, as the only original board member remaining, served as Chair of the Management District, guiding its efforts to improve public safety, beautification, and community engagement in Gulfton.

As Chair of the Gulfton Management District, Tammy has been instrumental in securing funding for essential public safety initiatives. Her leadership facilitated the allocation of resources to support overtime programs for on-duty officers and off-duty patrols, ensuring a more robust police presence in the community. This funding has enabled the Houston Police Department (HPD) to deploy additional patrols, reduce response times, and maintain a visible presence in high-traffic areas, greatly enhancing the safety and security of Gulfton's residents. One long-time resident, who has lived in Gulfton for 25 years, shared that he now feels safe walking outside at night for the first time, a testament to the real and lasting impact of these efforts. In addition, the

management district has implemented programs for litter, graffiti abatement and tree planting and maintenance, further enhancing the quality of life and the image of Gulfton.

Tammy's dedication to social justice, particularly advocating for survivors of domestic violence, was further recognized in 2019 when she was appointed to the Victim's Advisory Council by District Attorney Kim Ogg. As part of the council, Tammy helped secure resources and support for crime victims, enhancing their access to essential services.

One of Tammy's notable achievements is her strategic outreach to women in the community through family-friendly events designed to penetrate the apartment complexes and raise awareness about domestic violence services. She organized creative events such as jewelry parties, masked as social gatherings, that created a safe space for women to discuss their experiences and access support services discreetly. These events, known as "Princess Jewels" or "Joyas Preciosas," successfully brought together women to share their challenges and empowered them to make positive changes in their lives.

Through these initiatives, Tammy helped over 42 women and their families successfully transition from domestic violence situations by providing immediate housing, financial support, and access to community resources. Her efforts included raising funds to waive application fees, securing discounted rents, and collaborating with local businesses to provide necessities such as furniture, internet access, and educational tools for children.

Additionally, Tammy's work with the Gulfton Citizens Advisory Council and the Houston Police Department (HPD) fostered stronger relationships between law enforcement and the community. She supported programs like the Positive Interaction Program, which facilitated communication between apartment managers and HPD, and held community events to promote safety and cooperation. These events have led to a significant increase in community engagement. One example is the annual HPD Back-to-School Drive, where the number of backpacks distributed to local children in need has increased from 250 in 2018 to over 1,000 in 2024.

Based on her commitment to Gulfton and Houston City Council District J, Council Member Edward Pollard appointed her to serve as a member of the District J Patrol Task Team. She has served since the inception of the District J Patrol and continues to serve. Her leadership with this new modern approach to community policing has helped transform areas like Gulfton with her annual March on Crime event. She has been a staunch advocate for this program and has played a huge role in improving the relationship between law enforcement and the community through a variety of community events and engagement.

Though officially retired since 2018, Tammy remains deeply involved in the Gulfton community, serving as the chair of the Gulfton Management District and continuing to advocate for improvements and resources for the area. She is driven by a passion to change the perception of Gulfton and ensure the community's needs are met. She is affectionately known as the "Grandma of Gulfton," a testament to her unwavering commitment to the area and its residents.

Her efforts have profoundly impacted Gulfton, setting a model for community leadership and activism. Her legacy includes not only her professional accomplishments but also her personal journey of resilience and advocacy for marginalized populations.

Tammy credits her strength and determination to her daughter, Desiree, who, despite challenges, has thrived and even ran for the Olympics. Desiree's success has been a source of inspiration for Tammy, who continues to advocate for those in need and drive positive change within her community.

Tammy Rodriguez's life and career are a testament to her courage, perseverance, and dedication to making a difference. She has been recognized by the community for her accomplishments over the years and even received a proclamation from Mayor Sylvester Turner that was presented by Council Member Edward Pollard. However, she has not been recognized for her accumulated accomplishments over her lifetime and this opportunity allows just that. Her legacy of leadership and advocacy makes her a deserving candidate for a lifetime achievement award for Hispanic women.

### **Sources & Supporting Documents:**

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