

## Society

Amegy Bank CEO Paul Murphy, left, takes the spotlight at the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Triunfando Awards evening at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts Saturday night along with chamber CEO Laura Murillo and Artista restaurant owner Michael Cordúa.

**BILL OLIVE:** FOR THE CHRONICLE



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### Hispanic chamber's ¡Triunfando! Awards Gala a triumph

By **SHELBY HODGE**

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The Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce packed the grand lobby of the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts Saturday night with close to 1,200 guests celebrating the chamber's 30th anniversary and the annual ¡Triunfando! Awards Gala.

The evening recognized outstanding Hispanic business leaders. **Russell Ybarra** of Gringo's Mexican Kitchen received the Hispanic Male Entrepreneur of the Year award, and **Sonia Clayton** of Virtual Intelligence Providers was recognized as Hispanic Female Entrepreneur of the Year.

The Emerging Business of the Year award went to **Carlos de Aldecoa Bueno** and Maximus Coffee Group. **Michael Loya**, president of Vitol S.A., was named Hispanic Male Executive of the Year, and **Gilda Ramirez**, director of small-business development for the Port of Houston, was named Hispanic Female Executive of the Year.

The Chairman's Award was presented to **Paul Murphy**, CEO of Amegy Bank of Texas. In addition to joining Northwestern Mutual Financial Network as a major underwriter of the gala, Amegy is providing the chamber an office and furnishings in the bank's Main Street location — rent-free for 10 years.

It was a night of Latin *sabor* as guests swayed to the sounds of salsa and merengue music and dined on fare from Cordúa Restaurants. **Rosario Guzmán**, accompanied by husband **Fernando Guzmán**, chaired the gala, which held the crowd until well past midnight. Basking in the success of the evening was Houston Hispanic Chamber CEO **Laura Murillo** with proud husband **José Luis Murillo**.

Notables attending included U.S. Rep. **Al Green**, Mexico Consul General **Ignacio González Magallón**, Northwestern Mutual managing partner **Jeff Reeter**, Cordúa Restaurants' **Michael Cordúa**, HHCC chairman-elect **George Gonzalez**, Houston Dynamo president **Oliver Luck**, Sterling Bancshares CEO **J. Downey Bridgwater** and **Roland Rodriguez**, CEO of Mir, Fox and Rodriguez.

### Special honor

River Oaks Chrysler Jeep honcho **Alan Helfman** is walking tall these days after receiving the Humanitarian Service Award Friday from the Houston Police Department. The honor was given in recognition of Helfman's long-standing support of HPD through his organization of various fundraisers for officers and their families.

Friday, he went into action again with a barbecue fundraiser to assist Officer **Vonda Higgins**, whose wheelchair-accessible van was stolen. That's when Executive Assistant Chief **C.A. McClelland** presented Helfman the award signed by Police Chief **Harold Hurtt**.

### Czech mates

That would be **Julie Halek Kloess** of San Antonio and **Marta Pour Latsch**, who were honored Saturday at the 13th annual Czech Cultural Center Houston Museum gala. Both Kloess, unable to attend, and Latsch are honorary board members of the museum.

More than 200 attended the dinner evening of song and dance, including guest speaker **Bob Boudreaux**, museum chair and president **Effie Rosene**, Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic **Raymond Snokhous**, Honorary Consul **Ken Zezulka** of New Orleans, **Gabriela** and **Daniel Dror**, **Sharon Frank**, **Julia Foster**, **Robert Dvorak** and Miss Texas Czech Slovak **Marianne Beran**.

### Wedding guests

After spending a week honeymooning at the Sanctuary Resort on Kiawah Island, S.C., **Rosemary Malone** and **Harvey Houck** want you to know that that was Dr. **Michael DeBakey** and wife **Katrin** among their wedding guests at St. Martin's Episcopal Church. Another doctor and wife were named incorrectly in last week's column.

#### RESOURCES

[Mixing and mingling at the Triunfando Awards gala](#)

## Sight 'ems

Quarterback **Matt Schaub** kicking off the NFL season with the entire Texans offense at Fleming's, where operating partner **Maeve Pesquera** and staff were on high alert for the 25 behemoths. **Keenan McCardell**, **Ahman Green**, **Andre Johnson** and **Jerome Mathis** were among the big guys chowing down on hand-cut bone-in steaks and chili macaroni and cheese.

**Willie Nelson** and friends lunching at Grotto 610 . . .

U.S. Attorney General **Alberto Gonzalez**, with a passel of security types, stopping in at the original Ninfa's on Navigation Friday night for a dinner of chile con queso and guacamole, followed by cheese enchiladas. His arrival brought out the cell phone cameras . . .

**Jan Carson** whooping it up with girlfriends at Grotto 610, where hubby **Tim Connolly** surprised her with a shiny black Jaguar topped with a red bow. Swooning girlfriends included **Connie Cooke**, **Virginia Reisman** and **Carol Sawyer** ...

**Lilli Braniff** tossing a birthday celebration for hubby **Noel** at Smith & Wollensky. Celebrating were **Theresa** and **Johnny Zummo**, **Tony** and **Beverly Zummo**, **Mary Jane Zummo**, and **Tami** and **Lee Orgeron** of Houston and Golden Meadow, La.

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**tamara25** wrote:

at least eddie e. looks good in the lead pic. would have been cool to see willie though.

in other news...i've eaten at ninfa's on many occassions, i bought my own car wiht no bow and i can barely remember the names of half the ppl who attended my last party, so it's no big deal if you miss the names on who was there...no no will get mad, cause it was off the hook.

btw...i heard shelby did NOT attend the Hispanic awards gala...only a photographer was sent...hmmmm?...tsk, tsk.

8/29/2007 3:22:36 PM

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**panavision60** wrote:

The Triunfando event gets better and better each year! So much time effort and planning is put into this worthy event. The best part is getting to meet new friends and others with similar goal's & interests. Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce did a simply fantastic job this time and we look forward to next years Gala! Thank you for showing other major cities in the US that we Houstonian's know how to put our city in the spotlight, in style!

8/27/2007 1:45:20 PM

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