

New Americans Appreciation

Gala



Immigration - Innovation - Job Creation

BUILDING **UNITY**
AND CREATING
OPPORTUNITY

Thursday, October 12, 2017

ANN ARBOR MARRIOTT

Ypsilanti at Eagle Crest



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Michigan Office for New Americans



GOVERNOR'S NEW AMERICAN LEADERSHIP AWARD

Elizabeth Rosario

Grand Rapids Law Group, PLLC

Nominated By:



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I moved from California to Grand Rapids, MI when I was only 10 years old, therefore I consider Grand Rapids, Michigan my home. I am married to my team mate and number one supporter, my husband Andy, and we have two beautiful daughters Iris, 22 and Gia, 5 and another one on the way.

I dropped out of high school at the age of 14 when I learned I was pregnant. But instead of giving up, the birth of my daughter strengthened my resolve to pursue and receive my GED. At the age of 18, I started my first business, Unico Income Tax, a small tax preparation firm. I went on to complete my associates, bachelor's and finally my law degree all while running the business and being a full time mother.

I joined Grand Rapids Law Group in 2012 and by 2014, was the lone practitioner remaining. By 2015 I hired my first associate and a year later hired my second. In 2016, my goal of merging both businesses under the same roof was fulfilled. I was able to purchase a 4500 square foot building that would allow me to do just that. From a very young age I knew that I wanted to be a lawyer. I had a passion for defending and advocating for those that could not defend themselves, be it because of a language barrier or confusion of the legal system.

My goal, when representing clients, is to continue making a difference for those that I advocate on behalf of. Those people that can't advocate for themselves. I want to continue making a difference in people's lives, one person at a time.



GOVERNOR'S NEW AMERICAN LEADERSHIP AWARD

Chain Sandhu
NYX, Inc.

Nominated By:



Chain S. Sandhu, Chairman of NYX Inc. is a testament to the results of an uncompromising work ethic and a desire to succeed. From humble beginnings in a small village in what is now part of Pakistan, Mr. Sandhu has become one of the most successful entrepreneurs in Michigan.

Mr. Sandhu's beginnings are not those typically associated with the type of success he has achieved. Growing up in a small village where education was typically not a priority and losing his father at the age of five, Sandhu later went to Guru Nanak Engineering College (GENC). After a successful college career, Mr. Sandhu went on to complete his masters in engineering and later on to work as an Assistant Professor at Punjab Engineering College in Chandigarh. However, in 1969, his ambition led him to leave his secure job and to come to the United States.

In addition to the opportunities that the United States showed, it also posed many new challenges. At General Motors, Sandhu held every position imaginable, including a stint as a janitor. But through his persistence, Sandhu was able to rise through the ranks to become one of the most successful engineers at General Motors.

Eventually, ambition led him to leave General Motors and buy a faltering company which eventually became the successful NYX. As Chairman of NYX, Sandhu grew the company from 50 employees to a total of 2000 and revenues from 2 million to 400 million in 2016. His business continues to grow, servicing major companies such as GM, Ford, Lear, Honda, VW and Tesla.

Sandhu's success as an entrepreneur (Ernst & Young's) "Entrepreneur of the Year" in 2000 is matched by his success as a humanitarian. He was awarded the "Humanitarian of the Year" by the MMBDC (Michigan Minority Business Development Council) in 1999, Sikh Heritage Achievement Award in 2001 and in 2003, a recipient of the Vision in American Award given by the Comcast / International Channels Network for outstanding contribution to the immigrant community. In 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2014, 2015 and 2016 NYX was honored to receive the "GM Supplier of the Year" award given by General Motors.



GOVERNOR'S NEW AMERICAN LEADERSHIP AWARD

Ravinder (Ron) Shahani
Acro Service Corporation

Nominated By:



Ravinder (Ron) Shahani is Founder, President and CEO of Acro Service Corporation, headquartered in Livonia, Michigan.

Acro Service Corporation (Acro) is a total workforce solutions provider and a recognized leader in delivering managed service provider (MSP) programs, vendor management systems, staff augmentation, recruitment process outsourcing, IT consulting and other solutions for organizations that need to outsource management of contingent labor. Acro serves large and small companies throughout the Fortune 500, and public sector organizations. Acro has more than 4,900 employees and maintains over 40 offices in the United States and additional offices in Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, India, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom.

Staffing Industry Analysts (SIA) ranks Acro among the 50 Largest Staffing and Talent Engagement Firms in the U.S., among the Top 5 Diversity Staffing Firms, and among the fastest growing U.S. Staffing and Talent Engagement Firms. Acro is also named among the Top MSP companies by the industry authority, HRO Today. Acro has been named among the National Best and Brightest Companies To Work For for the past four years running.

Ron has received the Minority Professional Services Firm of the Year Award from the U.S. Department of Commerce, as well as Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year Award, and the Detroit Regional Chamber's Emerging Global Leader Award. He was also a recipient of Houston Business Journal's Emerging Ten (E-10) Award. Ron and his story were featured in a documentary film selected for the East Lansing Film Festival featuring immigrants from India. Ron is a past Chairman for the Board of the Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce and serves on the board of several civic and charitable organizations. Ron and his wife, Chris, live in Northville, Michigan and have two sons, Rajiv and Sanjeev.



GOVERNOR'S NEW AMERICAN LEADERSHIP AWARD

Mary Shaya
J & B Medical Supply

Nominated By:



Mary Shaya is the President of J & B Medical, a family owned medical distribution company that carries over 50 years of industry experience. J & B Medical, the parent company of Health Net Connect and Pietas project, was founded in 1996 and since has become one of the fastest growing and most successful medical supply distributors. J & B Medical is a privately held global health care consortium and is also one of the largest national women certified business enterprises in the country. It remains privately held and based in Wixom, Michigan. J & B has sixteen different business units and has customers in 48 states and 28 countries. This innovative company has brought many new ideas and solutions forward to the delivery care and continues to strive to improve patient access and quality.

Ms. Shaya has received many recognitions in the past, including most recently becoming the Global Humanitarian American Woman of the Year awarded at the United Nations in 2016 and the Timeless Hope award by the Chaldean American Ladies of Charity also in 2016.

Ms. Shaya came to the United States from Iraq in 1966 and was married in 1969. She has four children and five beloved grandchildren. Ms. Shaya currently spends her free time helping the Iraqi refugees, traveling the world to visit religious sites, and participating in various charities.



GOVERNOR'S NEW AMERICAN LEADERSHIP AWARD

Mohamed Sohoubah, RPH
BioMed Specialty Pharmacy

Nominated By:



Mohamed Sohoubah, R.Ph., is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of BioMed Specialty Pharmacy, and PharMor Pharmacy (chain of independently operated pharmacies); currently operating twenty-five locations.

Mohamed was born in 1974, in Yemen. He came to the United States at the age of 14. Mohamed attended Wayne State University and graduated in 1998 with a pharmacy degree at the age of 23. He spent the first 5 years of his career as a pharmacist, pharmacy manager, and a pharmacy trainer for CVS Pharmacy before forming his chain of pharmacies in 2003.

Mohamed has expended both PharMor Pharmacy as well as BioMed Specialty Pharmacy to a multistate operation that continues to grow. In the "Specialty Pharmacy" area, Mohamed's interest includes prescription topical formulations for the treatment of conditions such as chronic pain, cancer, psoriasis, hormone deficiency, rheumatoid arthritis, and other pain conditions.

Mohamed is well-versed in many areas of business management, business growth and development, as well as health care law. He is a proven result driven administrator and effective developer of business plans; a skillful negotiator; an expert on building capacity and value. As a proven record of achievements, success, and leadership, he has been recognized by several organizations, such as Crain's Detroit Business as an "American Dreamer" in the year of 2014.



GOVERNOR'S NEW AMERICAN LEADERSHIP AWARD

Frank Venegas
Chairman and CEO of the Ideal Group

Nominated By:



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Frank is a Detroit entrepreneur and the grandson of Mexican Immigrants. Early on, he capitalized on a winning raffle ticket by using the proceeds of a new Cadillac and following his grandfather's sage advice – "Do what your boss does not want to do!" – to launch his first company in 1979.

Today, The Ideal Group, a family-owned company, has evolved into eight nationally recognized companies with annual revenues approaching \$300 million and employing more than 700 people. Over the years, family members Loren (brother), Linzie (daughter), and Jesse (son) joined the Ideal leadership team as owners.

Based on the Venegas family core values, Ideal companies continually meet and exceed customer needs in construction, facilities management, manufacturing, indirect material management and surplus sales. Recently, General Motors awarded Ideal its 13th Global Supplier of the Year Award.

Two of Frank's notable commendations are from Dartmouth College: an honorary doctorate degree in humane letters (2016) and the Martin Luther King Social Justice Award for Ongoing Commitment (2015).

In 2012, the government of Mexico recognized Frank Venegas with the Ohtli Award; it's the highest award to a foreign citizen.

These degrees and awards are tributes to Ideal's corporate culture of membership, advocacy and philanthropic contributions to southwest Detroit schools and organizations that provide pathways for educational and career opportunities. The awards illustrate the Venegas family values: "Take care of your community and your community will take care of you."



*Asian Pacific American
Chamber of Commerce*

HONORABLE MENTION

Nominated By:



APACC

Asian Pacific American Chamber
of Commerce

APACC was established in the year 2000, and is a not-for-profit membership association governed by a 20-member Board of Directors and headquartered in Livonia, MI. With over 5,500 members including its Strategic Partners, APACC is Michigan's largest organization of its kind, consisting primarily of members with origins in the Asia Pacific region.

APACC's mission is to facilitate business relationships among Asian and U.S. based companies and to promote the economic advancement of Asian Pacific Americans. APACC is committed to serve as a catalyst for expanding business opportunities for companies that desire to connect with Asian American businesses and the global Asian consumer markets.

APACC regularly holds events to create business opportunities and create jobs. One example is the annual Business Match Maker Conference which connects minority business enterprises with corporation procurement opportunities.



HONORABLE MENTION

Nominated By:



Rasha Demashkieh
CVS Pharmacy

Rasha Demashkieh received her formal education in Damascus, Syria. She moved to Detroit with her husband Walid in 1975 and attended Wayne State University. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in pharmacy. Rasha works at CVS Pharmacy in Port Huron, where she and her husband, who is a physician, reside.

Over the years she has volunteered and fundraised for many organizations: the National Arab American Medical Association, the Ibn Sina fund to benefit medical students at Wayne State University and the American Heart Association, to name a few.

Rasha is very involved in her adopted community of Port Huron, where she sits on the boards of several organizations. She was elected as a trustee of the Port Huron Area School District Board of Education in 2003. Rasha was reelected in 2007 and again in 2011. She also sits on the board of the Saint Clair County Community Foundation and CAAP the Center for Arab American Philanthropy.



HONORABLE MENTION

Nominated By:



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Irma Elder Elder Automotive Group

Irma Elder died Tuesday, September 30, 2014, at the age of 84. A woman with the true immigrant entrepreneurial spirit, she is missed by all of us who knew and loved her. Ms. Elder was a supporter of Global Detroit and participated in and spoke out at the meeting Global Detroit hosted with the Chicago Council on Global Affairs for the Midwest Immigration Task Force.

A Syrian immigrant from Xicotencati, Mexico, she could not speak a word of English when she arrived in the U.S. in 1946. After growing up in Miami, she married James Elder in 1963 and moved with him to Michigan where he opened a Ford dealership in Troy, Michigan.

With no experience and three young children, this reluctant pioneer took over the business after her husband's sudden death in 1983. She defied the odds and built it into one of the largest woman-owned businesses in the country.



HONORABLE MENTION

Nominated By:



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Jose Pedro Galaviz Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

Jose Pedro Galaviz is a Migrant Program Worker for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Mr. Galaviz provides assistance to migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Allegan County. Jose services clients in the application process, by determining eligibility, while also providing outreach services to families in the community.

Jose and his family worked the fields of Michigan, Texas, and Montana. It is what encouraged Jose to become an advocate for anyone in need. He loves connecting with people, understanding their needs. He understands respect and honesty is vital to providing human services. Jose's work has never been an 8 to 5 job, because the service he offers comes from the heart.

Jose has worked as a Teacher's Assistant/Recruiter for Project NOMAD and Bilingual Teacher Assistant - Covert Public Schools. Inspired by the work his wife, Isabel "Beth" Galaviz, was doing with the Michigan Department of Human Services.



HONORABLE MENTION

Nominated By:



Minerva (Minnie) Morey West Michigan Asian American Association (WMAAA)

Minerva (Minnie) Morey is the President of the West Michigan Asian American Association (WMAAA), a nonprofit organization based in Grand Rapids. Under her leadership, WMAAA is the connection to the diverse subgroups in West Michigan and strives to make life better for Asian individuals and families with access to quality healthcare, educational scholarships, civic engagement workshops and cultural programs. Minnie has worked to improve communication among Asian leaders and to raise community awareness of the needs of underserved Asian groups by collaborating with community service agencies. WMAAA's programs include health navigators to assist individuals to enroll for healthcare coverage, an annual summer program for children affected by grief or cancer, college scholarships and educational workshops. Minnie serves on community boards such as the Arbor Circle organization which provides mental health programs and a shelter for homeless youths and the Community Inclusion Group of Grand Rapids - Kent County Convention/Arena Authority to bring diverse entertainment to Grand Rapids.



HONORABLE MENTION

Nominated By:



Salim M. Sessine MA Engineering

Salim Sessine is the Owner and President of MA Engineering, a consulting engineering firm offering professional mechanical and electrical engineering services in Birmingham, Michigan. Throughout the dynamic growth of MA Engineering, Mr. Sessine has always been a cornerstone for the firm, specifically in areas of government and healthcare facilities.

Mr. Sessine serves as the Vice President of the Lebanese American Council for Democracy (LACD), a Trustee for Christian Lebanese Foundation of the World (CLFW), and an active Member of the American Task Force for Lebanon (ATFL) in Washington D.C. He has been a strong supporter of ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Hospital along with numerous local, national and international causes.

Salim Sessine was born in Lebanon and immigrated to the United States in 1980. He is a graduate of Wayne State University with a Masters of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering.

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This is Who We Are...

BUILDING UNITY AND CREATING OPPORTUNITY

Over the last fifteen years Michigan's immigrant population, today totaling 650,000 foreign born residents, has grown 24.5%, while native born population has declined 1.5%.¹

In Michigan, 31,000 immigrants are self-employed, and immigrant-owned businesses employ over 150,000 other people.²

Immigrant owned businesses generated \$608 million in business income, putting more people to work and creating new jobs.³

76% of all patents issued to top research universities are owned or co-owned by an immigrant.⁴

¹ US Census as reported by Migration Policy Institute. www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/migration-data-hub

² Project for a New American Economy. "The Contributions of New Americans in Michigan." Project for a New American Economy. Last 11 modified 2014. Accessed May 30, 2017. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/ona/PNAE_Michigan_Final_Report_531020_7.pdf.

³ The Contributions of New Americans in Michigan," New American Economy, August 2016, pp. 6-7.

⁴ Ibid