CHCI Announces its 2021 Alumni Award Recipients

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Washington, DC - CHCI and its Alumni Association (CHCI-AA) are proud to announce CHCI Alumnus **Isabella Casillas Guzman** (CIP, Summer 1988) as the recipient of the 2021 Medallion of Excellence for a Distinguished Alumnus, during this year's virtual Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations. In addition, CHCI will also honor **Claudia Flores** (PPF, 2015) as the recipient of the 2021 Young Alumnus Award. This recognition will take place on Thursday September 23 rd.

The Medallion of Excellence for a Distinguished Alumnus recognizes a CHCI alum who has made an outstanding contribution to the Latino Community and who has thereby achieved distinction. This prestigious annual award highlights the impact of CHCI's programs and the prominence of its alumni.

Isabella Casillas Guzman was sworn in as the 27th Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration on March 17, 2021. She serves as the voice for America's 30 million small businesses and innovative startups in President Biden's Cabinet. She has spent her entire career advising entrepreneurs, launching ventures, and creating policies and programs to advance entrepreneurship and innovation. Most recently, she served as the Director of the California Office of the Small Business Advocate where she helped small businesses and innovative startups in the world's fifth largest economy start, expand, and grow. In addition, she served as the economic recovery support function coordinator for the state, where she spearheaded the small business recovery effort during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I am honored to receive CHCI's Medallion of Excellence award, which I accept on behalf of the millions of small businesses and innovative startups who with hard work, resilience, and resourcefulness are bringing our main streets and industrial centers back to life, creating jobs, and innovating to solve problems to help us build a better future," said Guzman.

In 2018, CHCI introduced the **CHCI Young Alumnus Award**, which recognizes a CHCI alum who completed their CHCI leadership program within the past fifteen years and exemplifies dedicated civic engagement and leadership in the Latino Community.

Claudia Flores is the Associate Director for Immigration Policy and Strategy at American Progress. Prior to joining American Progress, she led the immigration policy portfolio for the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, where she worked on advancing federal and state legislation to expand health care access for immigrant children and families. She has worked with bipartisan leadership on advancing federal policy relating to matters of immigration enforcement and protections for immigrant youth. Flores has also written extensively on immigrant contributions and the positive impacts of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

"I am deeply honored to receive the 2021 CHCI Young Alumnus Award. This award is very meaningful to me because CHCI opened the doors that have allowed me to pursue a career in politics. As an immigrant from Honduras, I dedicate this award to my parents who instilled in me a commitment to issues of justice and equality and who, under the biggest adversities, remind me to choose courage over fear, and to never let hope wither," stated Flores.

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