Dra. Sylvia Garcia-Navarrete is a remarkable woman with a remarkable story. As a girl growing up in the Encanto neighborhood of San Diego, she was erroneously labeled as having a learning disability, making her feel as though she was not smart or capable enough to succeed academically. Discouraged but still determined, she ignored the naysayers in her community to earn an associate's degree and then a bachelor's degree while working many hours in a low-paying job, then a Master's degree, then a Doctorate in higher education leadership.

Today Dra. Garcia-Navarrete is a professor at Southwestern College in Chula Vista, where she teaches reading, English composition, and analytical thinking and writing. Her achievements and accolades are virtually endless. She is a recipient of the Chula Vista Champions' Award 2020 as National Latina Professor of the Year, the Salute to Women Leaders Award from Assemblymember Dr. Shirley Weber, and the Teaching Excellence Award from the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (two consecutive years). She has also been honored as Outstanding Latino(a) Faculty in Higher Education by the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education, has twice received the Southwestern College Outstanding Adjunct Teaching Excellence Award, and was a finalist for the San Diego Union-Tribune's Latino Champions Award.

Believing that inclusive and diverse environments can advance student success, she also serves as a member of the school's student equity and achievement programs. Dra. Garcia-Navarrete is co-author of a revolutionary curriculum, “Our Reading Toolbox,” to develop higher-level critical thinking skills in disadvantaged students. She teaches the curriculum for free in inner city schools, in Mexico. SDSU has afforded her opportunities to also teach this curriculum in developing countries in the Pacific Rim such as Palau and FSM. She is also a renowned speaker, presenting her novel curriculum at national and international conferences. A warrior for restorative justice, Dra. Garcia-Navarrete has taught reading at Donovan Prison, and adult programs for refugees and migrants.

Dra. Sylvia Garcia-Navarrete is a kind, generous and humble intellectual powerhouse in our community, and we are beyond grateful for everything that she does to strengthen the 40th Senate District.
HONOREES

ADELA GARCIA
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Philanthropy

Adela Garcia is a retired IBM Senior Business Design Consultant and 30-year member of MANA de San Diego. As an immigrant to this country, Adela knows first-hand the challenges facing Latinas. For over 40 years, she has been determined to find solutions to help them advance their professional careers.

ALETHEA ARGUILEZ
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Non-profit

Alethea Arguilez is the Executive Director at First 5 Commission San Diego. For years, she has demonstrated a history of working with all families in the non-profit organization management industry.

BARBARA AVALOS
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Education

Barbara Avalos has served on the Governing Board of the National School District for nearly 12 years. During that time she has made a tremendous difference in the lives of the children of National City.

BARBARA BACHMAN SCOTT
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Education

While Barbara Scott is known in the South Bay as a woman of innumerable achievements, she is best known for being the impetus and unchallenged leader in the development of the Bonita Museum and Cultural Center.

BARBARA JIMENEZ
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Public Health

Barbara Jimenez volunteers with MANA de San Diego, serves on the South Bay Family YMCA, has led binational efforts supporting border communities and, over her 30-year career with the County of San Diego HHSA, has been recognized as a leader in serving her community.
HONOREES

**BLANCA E. MORALES**  
*40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Advocacy*

Blanca Morales is the founder and CEO of Calexico Wellness Center, a nonprofit community clinic. Through her hard work and advocacy, the center serves thousands of underserved and uninsured residents of the Imperial Valley.

**BRITTANY CRUZ-FEJERAN**  
*40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Journalism*

Brittany Cruz-Fejeran is Editor-in-Chief of the national champion Southwestern College Sun student newspaper and the Society of Professional Journalists National Collegiate Sports Writer of the Year.

**CLAUDIA CARDENAS**  
*40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Public Health*

Claudia Cardenas has a passion for providing healthcare and health education to people of all ages and backgrounds in an effort to empower diverse groups of patients to cultivate their wellness. She has organized and led numerous community health awareness events, inspiring the local community by giving back to the place where she grew up and wanted to improve.

**CRYSTAL CORTEZ**  
*40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Education*

Crystal Cortez is a Career Technical Education instructor working through the Imperial Valley Regional Occupation Program at the Central Union High School District. Her focus on civic engagement and sustainable development has increased the agency and professional capabilities of her students, helping them feel empowered to change our district.

**CYNTHIA DENISE GILLIAM**  
*40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Advocacy*

Cynthia Denise Gilliam has worked diligently for years with local youth forming the Southeast San Diego Kids and Youth for Peace, promoting non-violence and violence prevention. Because she sees a culture of peace as the way forward she has worked with the Federal Government to create legislation for a Department of Peace, HR 1111, introduced on February 8, 2019.
ELLIE BURGUEÑO
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Journalism

Ellie Burgueno is a resident of El Centro who has made an impact in journalism in the Imperial Valley. Ms. Burgueno is the publisher of Beyond Borders Gazette, the only binational-bilingual gazette that has a circulation in San Diego, Imperial Valley, Tijuana, and Mexicali.

DR. EMERALD RANDOLPH
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Community Service

Dr. Emerald Randolph’s volunteer accomplishments began in 1993 when she retired as Director of Student Welfare and Attendance for the Chula Vista Elementary School District. Dr. Randolph received two Channel 10 Leadership Awards from the local ABC station and she also received the Governor’s Award for Assisting Victims of Crime.

FANNY MILLER
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Business

Fanny Miller has been the Publisher of El Latino Newspaper and— for 3 years— Celebrando Latinas Magazine. Her work has provided access to information in Spanish for the Latino communities in all of San Diego County, thus helping eradicate the language barrier for immigrants.

GABY MILLAN
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Youth Development

Gaby Millan began serving as the Executive Director in 2018 for Border View Family YMCA (BVY) where she works every day to meet the needs of the San Ysidro and Otay Mesa communities. Within her first eighteen months, Gaby increased the impact of the BVY branch in those neighborhoods.

GLORIA CORRAL
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Education

Gloria Corral knows first-hand the challenges and barriers first-generation students and families face in enrolling and finishing college. For the last 20 years, she has helped improve access to quality education for all children and their parents by dedicating her career to education policy, program development and advocacy working for Federal and State agencies.
HONOREES

HAYDEE RODRIGUEZ
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Public Service

Haydee Rodriguez, a National Board Certified Teacher, teaches at Central Union High School in El Centro, CA. She was selected to represent the Department of State in Brazil and served in the Commission for Teacher Credentialing after being appointed by Governor Brown. In 2016, Haydee Rodriguez was selected Stanford University GSE Alumni of Excellence.

DR. HELINA HOYT
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Education

Dr. Helina Hoyt has improved the educational opportunities for the health care field in the Imperial Valley. Dr. Hoyt’s work at San Diego State University-Imperial Valley has brought numerous grants and helped many new nurses become trained, thereby improving health care in the Imperial Valley.

JANICE MARTINELLI
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Historical Preservation

Janice Martinelli has been the President of the National City Historical Society for 20 years. In that role, she has worked to renovate and refurbish 16 historic homes in National City.

KATY STEGALL
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Journalism

Katy Stegall was Editor-in-Chief of the Southwestern College Sun student newspaper in 2018-19 when it was named National College Newspaper of the Year and earned the Associated Collegiate Press Pacemaker Award, the Pulitzer Prize of collegiate news media.

DR. KELLY O. ELMORE
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Public Service

Kelly O. Elmore, MD, is a board-certified Obstetrician Gynecologist, health care executive and chief wellness officer for clients across the globe. She is a 17-year active duty member of the United States Navy and was recently promoted to Captain. Dr. Elmore has financially contributed to create the Future Achievers Preschool and the Logan Heights CDC Small Business “University” in order to help build and strengthen families.
Kieler Muller
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Performing Arts

Kieler Muller is a 14-year-old musical genius who is a gifted singer, songwriter, and guitarist. She is a regular performer at professional musical venues throughout the region. Kieler is also a standout performer in the nationally-renowned Bonita Vista High School Music Machine.

Laila Aziz
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Public Service

Laila Aziz is the Director of Operations for Pillars of the Community, where her work focuses on civic engagement, criminal justice reform, and community-building. Laila is also an active organizer and member of several community groups related to these same advocacy areas: the DeDe McClure Bail Fund, Moms of Black Boys United, Amend the 13th, and F.R.E.E. S.D.

Leslie Wolf Branscomb
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Community Service

Leslie Wolf Branscomb led the re-establishment of the beloved Chula Vista Starlight Christmas Parade. She raised money, coordinated public safety, built coalitions, recruited volunteers and attracted participants to the Christmas Parade that is enjoyed by all of our Chula Vista community.

Linda Pennington
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Public Service

Linda Pennington has tirelessly devoted time and energy into cleaning up not only Azalea Park but every other community and canyon land in all of City Heights. Linda has aggressively tackled every issue that arose: from drugs/crime, to a glut of garbage, to illegal dumping in our canyons, and homelessness.

Maribel Padilla
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Advocacy | Social Justice

Maribel Padilla is the cofounder of the Brown Bag Coalition, a non-profit that actively seeks to better the living situations of low-income families and those experiencing homelessness in Calexico.
HONOREES

MARTHA ROBLES
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Public Health

Martha Robles is a Peer Navigator at Christie’s Place, a non-profit organization for women, children, and families impacted by HIV/AIDS. Martha has made it her life’s work to educate the community about HIV/AIDS, encouraging people to get tested and be informed.

MARTHA SULLIVAN
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Social Justice

Martha Sullivan was a co-founder of Women Occupy San Diego, which led her to become a fierce proponent for affordable housing and help for unsheltered people. Martha offers shelter and showers to homeless people in her home, and offers them rides to agencies for assistance. Over the past 4 years, Martha has housed about 30 unsheltered San Diegans in her home.

NADIA NUÑEZ
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Arts & Culture

Nadia Nuñez is a San Diego - Tijuana bicultural woman who has focused her efforts on promoting art as a healing and empowerment tool. She is a licensed architect in Mexico. Her love for creativity and community building led her to A Reason to Survive (ARTS), a youth development organization in National City that inspires the next generation of San Diego designers, inventors, and creators.

PATRICIA ALVAREZ DE LOS COBOS
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Business

Patricia Alvarez de los Cobos founded Energy Communications Corporation and has since exclusively represented Televisa’s Spanish Television Stations in local and national markets throughout the United States. Patty has focused on promoting local government and non-profit services to the Hispanic community, and has helped expand advertisers’ knowledge in reference to Hispanic culture, education, and values.

RAQUEL MORAN
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Community Service

Raquel Moran is a long-time community advocate in San Ysidro. She has served on planning, Parks and Recreation, and PTA committees. Currently retired due to a cancer diagnosis, Raquel seeks to recover quickly and return to doing what she loves, helping her community through Hearts & Hands Working Together and other efforts.
HONOREES

**REBECCA EUSEY**  
*40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Health*

Rebecca Eusey works tirelessly to support the under-served justice involved residents of San Diego. Rebecca leads an intensive 120-hour training program as Workshop Facilitator for Second Chance. The participants she works with face learning disabilities, anger issues, substance use disorder, broken families, institutionalization, and more.

**ROSA DIAZ**  
*40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Philanthropy*

Rosa Diaz is the CEO of the Imperial Valley LGBT Resource Center. Rosa’s hard work and dedication to the community of the Imperial Valley has inspired others to battle through their own adversity, talk more about the stigma facing the LGBT community and confront it.

**DR. RUTH M. COVELL**  
*40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Health*

Dr. Ruth M. Covell is the Associate Dean Emeritus of UC San Diego’s School of Medicine and a member of the San Ysidro Health’s Board of Trustees. Over the years, she has supported countless causes and participated in other organizational boards such as the Epilepsy Foundation and Mental Health America, among others.

**HON. RUTH MONTENEGRO**  
*40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Law*

Hon. Ruth Bermudez Montenegro was appointed as a United States Magistrate Judge in 2018 and she is the first female to hold this position in Imperial County. She is the sole Magistrate Judge in the County. Judge Montenegro previously served as a Superior Court Judge – the first Latina in the history of Imperial County. She is widely recognized for her community service supporting youth including mentoring high school, college and law students.

**SANDRA SCHELLER**  
*40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Public Service*

Sandra Scheller has put her heart and soul into raising awareness for South Bay Holocaust survivors and their experiences. She is a tireless advocate for making sure future generations know about Nazi atrocities and how people survived and thrived in spite of the horrors of the Holocaust.
SARA SANDOVAL  
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Philanthropy  

Sara Sandoval sits on the Logan Avenue Consortium Board and serves as their Secretary, facilitating many crucial Town Hall meetings. Additionally, Ms. Sandoval gives countless hours of her time to bring events to Barrio Logan, like La Vuelta End of Summer Festival and La Vuelta Cruise Nights.

STEPHANIE MARTINEZ, M.S.W.  
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Public Safety  

Stephanie Martinez is a Child Welfare Worker and Supervisor of the Imperial County Department of Social Services Court Unit. Ms. Martinez is the representative for the Inter-County Transfer Committee for Southern California, and she also coordinates Letters Rogatory (Treaty Notice) for parents across the border.

THUY MASCORRO  
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Public Service  

Thuy Mascorro was born in Quy Nhon, Vietnam, one of six children whose father fought against the Communists on behalf of the United States. In 2009, she joined the Chula Vista Veterans Home as Human Resources manager, holding a series of executive positions until 2016, when she was appointed Home Administrator by Governor Jerry Brown.

ZENAIDA ROSARIO  
40th Senate District | Women of the Year | Education  

Zenaida Rosario has served the community of San Ysidro, where she resides as an educator and advocate for children, during the past 38 years. She is a very committed educator who has continuously made great connections with the parents of the community she serves.