



NUESTRAS VOCES

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE AND RIGHTS THROUGH MENTORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

VOL 3, MARCH 2023

WHO WE ARE

NACOPRW is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization seeking to promote the full participation of Puerto Rican and other Hispanic women in the social, economic and political life in the United States. The Southern California Chapter (SoCal) achieves this by educating, developing leadership among Puerto Rican women and providing role models for our youth and our community.

NACOPRW-SoCal celebrates what unites all of us: our love and respect for Puerto Rico, its traditions and people.

BOARD MEMBERS:

GLORIA SAN MIGUEL, MBA, PRESIDENT
MARJORIE PATTON, MS, CPC, ELI-MP 1ST VICE PRES.
NILSA J. THORSOS, PH.D., 2ND VICE PRESIDENT
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MARIE NUBIA FELICIANO, PH.D., SECRETARY

For more information about our chapter, membership or donations visit us at:

www.nacoprwsocal.org



EDITORIAL – ENTRE NOSOTRAS

PRESENTING OUR EDITORS FOR THIS ISSUE:



Nilsa J. Thorsos

&

Gloria San Miguel



Celebrating 25 Years of NACOPRW-SoCal

NACOPRW Southern California Chapter has a long history, fueled by Puerto Rican women who love the island and its culture. These women shared a common goal to maintain and promote the Puerto Rican culture, language, and sense of identity regardless of the place of birth and upbringing. As NACOPRW SoCal celebrates its 25th year, we proudly proclaim that the original emphasis to mentor young Latinas to achieve their professional goals is stronger than ever!

NACOPRW Southern California Chapter was founded in 1998 and became the only chapter on the West Coast. Over the years, our chapter has made a significant impact on our community, from mentoring Latina girls and awarding scholarships to providing support for Puerto Ricans in the aftermath of natural disasters and the current health crisis. The Chapter is also focused on educating our members and the community about our civil rights, developing leadership skills, preserving, and promoting our cultural heritage.

Our fundraising efforts have enabled us to contribute to schools, senior citizen facilities, food kitchens, and medical facilities in Puerto Rico and the United States. Each year we generate funds with our popular event "NACOPRW SoCal Coquito Workshop." This signature fundraiser engages our members in making the traditional Puerto Rican holiday drink and generating money for our many programs. It is a fun event for the members to get together, make a coquito, and celebrate Puerto Rican traditional Christmas get-togethers.

We invite you to learn more about NACOPRW's rich past, join us as we embark on the present planned activities, and look at what we have in store for the future.



Shout out to all members on Women's History Month!

HYDEE FELDSTEIN SOTO SWEARING-IN CEREMONY

BY SAUNDRA KAYE WOOTTON, ESQ., NACOPRW SoCal MEMBER



On Sunday, December 11th, 2022, I had the great pleasure of attending Hydee Feldstein Soto's swearing ceremony as the new City Attorney of Los Angeles. Despite the rain (and the last minute need to erect a massive tent for the event), the ceremony was well attended by many prominent City leaders, including Kristin Crowley, LA's first female Fire Chief of the LA Fire Department, who welcomed attendees. Also in attendance were outgoing City Attorney, Mike Feuer, Controller Ron Galperin, City Councilmembers Bob Blumenfield, Curren Price and John Lee, and LA City Councilmember, Monica Rodriguez, who administered the oath.

I had a chance to follow up on Hydee, who was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She is proud of her background and her family's diverse culture. Her father, Stanley L. Feldstein, was a prominent Jewish lawyer who established his legal practice in Puerto Rico in the 1950s. Hydee recounted that he was a passionate lawyer who defended the rights of criminals in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Most importantly, he was responsible for the shutdown of the infamous La Princesa prison in San Juan – which was fraught with the government's egregious violence and human rights violations. Hydee added that she hopes to live the Jewish values her father had instilled in her: "justice, accountability, kindness and... healing and repairing the world." Her mother, Astrid Soto Feldstein, a 92-year-old, 3rd generation Puerto Rican Catholic, taught Hydee "to lead, as Latinas do, with heart first, with compassion, with faith and with spirit - not worrying about who gets the credit because the credit doesn't matter, but getting the job done and getting it done right – creating good for the greatest number of people." Initially, her parents were unable to find anyone to marry them because it was 1954 and there were laws that restricted intermarriage of any kind. Hydee's upbringing taught to her that equality and liberty are worth fighting for, which is something she vows to continue. According to her bio, she moved to the US when she was 17 years old to attend Swarthmore College and then Columbia University School of Law. After law school, she moved to Los Angeles and has been here ever since. She raised her family and built her career as a partner in private practice at a large international law firm.

I was happy to see that the Puerto Rican flag was on stage along with the U.S. and California flags. To honor her background, both a rabbi and a minister provided prayers. To close the event, Melissa Cha-Cha Figueroa of Yabucoa, Puerto Rico, sang the Puerto Rican National Anthem. She was one of the top finalists from Season 4 of American Idol. It was an honor for me to represent our NACOPRW SoCal chapter to witness this ceremony. We are very proud of Hydee and her great accomplishments and wish her great success in her new role as City Attorney of Los Angeles. She is an inspiration for all of us as Latina women.

Reference: [Stanley L. Feldstein, Legendary Attorney, Dies at 98](#), The Weekly Journal, March 23, 2020



Hydee Feldstein Soto and Monica Rodriguez



Hydee Feldstein Soto, City Attorney of Los Angeles and our member Sandra K. Wootton, Esquire

EL FOGÓN BORICUA

by Sonia Colón-Lamas, Treasurer

It Took Me Only 43 Years!

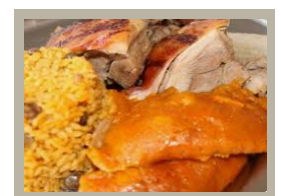
When I moved from New York to California, I never imagined how difficult it was going to be to find a Puerto Rican Restaurant in Southern California. I've enjoyed many different Latin American cuisines and I adore Spanish food, but these don't have the flavors that I missed from my Island. During my quest to find authentic Boricua food, I met Juan Rodríguez Rivera, or "Chef Juancho", as he likes his friends to call him. He is one of the most outstanding Puerto Rican Chefs in the area of Orange County and has been one of NACOPRW's allies for the last few years, providing delicious Puerto Rican food for our events.

Chef Juancho was born in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico. While helping in his grandparent's restaurant, "La Gran Viscaína " in Bayamón, he discovered his love for cooking. In 2014, he and his family moved to California. Although he has mastered a career as a Fleet Services Account Manager, his passion for cooking and adoration for his Puerto Rican culture, led him to create his successful catering business, "Buen Sabor PR". With the assistance of his wife and daughter, Chef Juancho not only delivers excellent Puerto Rican cuisine, but any other type of food you may desire. He'll cater a small private dinner party or a large event.

After 43 years of living in Southern California my quest has ended, and I can finally enjoy pasteles (similar to what my mom used to make), arroz con gandules, lechón asado, papas rellenas, pastelillos, and alcapurrias. You name it, he prepares it! All are made with authentic Puerto Rican products from scratch. This article is not an advertisement from NACOPRW SoCal, but just a humble review from a grateful and satisfied customer.



Chef Juancho can be reached at (562) 201-4603 or via email at: juanrivera1974@gmail.com



¡WEPA!

NACOPRW SOCAL BOARD INSTALLATION 2023

¡WEPA!

BY MILLY LUGO-RÍOS, CONTRIBUTOR

On February 26, 2023, the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Southern California Chapter (NACOPRW-SoCal) celebrated its 2023 Board Installation and Member Meeting. After two years of virtual meetings, we were all excited to attend our first in-person event of the year. You could feel the energy and camaraderie in the air, as well as the newly found 'primas' in the room. The installation represents the official acceptance by the new board members to serve in their roles with honor, ethics, pride, and respect for our local and national organizations.

Past president, Anaida Colón-Muñiz initiated the meeting with a brief story of the female Taíno Cacique (chief) named Yuisa as she transferred the Guanín necklace to our new president, Gloria San Miguel. The Guanín was the Taíno symbol of leadership.

After the swearing in ceremony, the new president did a recap of the 2022 year's events, including scholarships and fundraising. Right after, Anaida presented Arianna Benítez with the NACOPRW National 2022 Vivian Ortiz Youth Leadership Award. Then, Marjorie Patton presented the 2023 calendar of events and Sonia Colón-Lamas spoke about the value of membership, Nilsa J. Thorsos invited our members to join a committee with a passionate plea, and Marie Nubia Feliciano shared important forms of communications used by our chapter.

As the presentation transpired, we enjoyed delicious "antojitos Boricuas" prepared by Chef Juancho, sharing with old and new friends.

Congratulations to NACOPRW-SoCal's new board members!



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



HILDA FELICIANO

BY MARJORIE PATTON, FIRST VP



Hilda started helping our Chapter by making and selling coquito! Thank you for being a part of NACOPRW-SoCal.

Creativity is the first word that comes to mind as I think about Hilda Feliciano. When I called Hilda for this interview, she was on her way to Los Angeles to accompany her husband. He was going to pick up spare parts for his 30-year-old car, which is a passion of his. During the drive, Hilda told me about her own passions, and in her own words said, "itodo lo creativo!" She explained that from event decorating to fondant cake making and scrapbooking, she seems to always find an outlet for all the creativity that resides inside her mind. This makes sense, given her formal education in business management and marketing from the Universidad Interamericana of Puerto Rico. Interestingly, Hilda was born in North Carolina and raised in Bayamón, Puerto Rico, where she married her husband in 1999. In 2008 the family relocated to the US stateside, where they now reside in Irvine, with their two daughters attending universities in Southern California.

Hilda fell in love with education and being around children some years ago while helping her daughters' teachers in school. With this newfound passion, Hilda did not waste time and opened a Montessori Preschool, where she uses all her talents and imagination. This is not surprising, of course! During her free time Hilda also enjoys handcrafting and finds inspiration by listening to romantic, flamenco, and pop music in Spanish.

By the way, Hilda took advantage of the drive to LA and made a date out of that Sunday trip. Way to go girl!

Interested in joining NACOPRW-SoCal?

Go to www.nacoprwsocal.org/membership and complete & send us your application.



EL RINCÓN DEL COQUÍ:



WELCOME NEW CHAPTER MEMBERS!

Ana Celia Zentella	Evelyn Delgado	Mercedes S. Julián
Bella Jaikarán	Janice L. Miller	Monica Jaikarán
Ellie Costas	Joyce Álvarez	Nilsa M. Smith Scott
Elizabeth Rodríguez	Marian Hurtado	Rosie Cumming

Save the date! UPCOMING EVENTS

- May:** Mother's Day Gathering – Saturday, 5/6/23
- June:** Domino Tournament (date to be announced)
- July:** Networking Event (date to be announced)
- Sept:** 25 Year Anniversary Celebration (date to be announced)
- Nov.:** Coquito Workshop Fundraiser (11/4)
- Dec.:** Fiesta Navideña (date to be announced)

ATTENTION BASEBALL FANS!!!



NACOPRW SoCal will join House of Puerto Rico of San Diego on Friday, May 19th at 6:40 pm at Petco Park to participate in the Puerto Rican Heritage Celebration as the San Diego Padres play against the Boston Red Sox. If you are interested to join a group or our chapter contact Gloria San Miguel at nacoprwsocal98@gmail.com by Friday, April 7th. You can also buy directly at houseofpuertorico.com

DESCUBRIENDO NUESTRA ISLA

Please share with us pictures from your recent travels to our Island. We would like to hear your stories, learn about new places to visit, or even interesting anecdotes from your journeys. We would like to share them in future issues. Send them to nacoprwsocal98@gmail.com

BOMBA CONNECTION!

Congratulations to Anaida, Mac, and Marco!

Congratulations to the Morante/Colón-Muñiz family are in order! Their son Marco won a Creative Emmy in the "Outstanding Costumes for Variety, Nonfiction or Reality Programming" category for the HBO show "We're Here". The NACOPRW SoCal family is extremely proud of this great achievement and wishes Marco many more successes in the future.



Christmas at House of PR in San Diego

On Saturday, December 17th, 2022, a group from our Chapter joined the House of Puerto Rico in San Diego to celebrate the Holidays "Puerto Rican style" with great music, food, and dance. We shared the fun with our NACOPRW SoCal members, and also made many new friends. A big thanks to HPRSD for organizing such a beautiful event



First row from left to right: Anaida Colón-Muñiz, Sonia Colón-Lamas, Hilda Feliciano, Gloria San Miguel, Bella Jaikarán, Grissel Benítez-Hodge, Marjorie Patton, Monica Jaikarán and Ellie Costa. Back row: Nicole Hernández

¡BOMBA!

Meet our Newsletter Team:



Nilsa J. Thorsos
Committee Chair



Anaida Colón-Muñiz
Copy Editor



Gloria San Miguel
Contributor



Marjorie Patton
Contributor



Milly C. Lugo-Ríos
Contributor



Nicole Hernández
Contributor



Sonia Colón-Lamas
Contributor

Spring is here and the Newsletter Team is back. I love working with this amazing group of ladies that every quarter gets together to bring the latest news and information to our Chapter. This would not be possible without your help. Gracias de corazón! And to our dear members, let us know your comments and ideas for this, your newsletter. Join us!

Nilsa J