

HHM Banquet Award Descriptions and Criteria for Voting

Rev. June 2026

The Carolina Angela de la Garza Dewitt Legend Award

This esteemed recognition pays tribute to an extraordinary individual of Hispanic heritage who has significantly contributed to the development and cultural richness of San Angelo, Texas. Named after Carolina Angela de la Garza Dewitt, the wife of the city's founder and the visionary behind its name, this award acknowledges those who embody her legacy of innovation, community dedication, and lasting positive impact. This honoree has the accomplishments of a true legend, whose spirit continues to shape and inspire our city's identity.

The Captain Albert Tijerina Jr. Trailblazer Award

This esteemed accolade is dedicated to honoring the outstanding contributions of a rising Hispanic individual who is making a significant impact on the fabric of San Angelo, Texas. The award is a tribute to the legacy of Captain Albert Tijerina Jr., a trailblazing figure who exemplified determination, leadership and unwavering commitment to both his community and country. This honoree exemplifies courage, dedication, and a pioneering spirit.

The Eva Camunez Tucker Service Award

This distinguished accolade is dedicated to recognizing the remarkable volunteerism of a Hispanic individual within the San Angelo Hispanic Heritage Museum, whose efforts stand as a beacon of commitment to honoring and preserving the rich Hispanic culture in our beloved San Angelo, Texas. We celebrate the Eva Camunez Tucker Service Award, a fitting homage to a woman whose legacy radiates through every act of kindness and compassion. Through this award, we honor those who, like Eva, have dared to care, who have dedicated their time, energy, and passion to elevate the Hispanic culture in San Angelo. This honoree embodies the spirit of stewardship, kindness, and community-building.

The Carol Santry Educator Award

On August 1, 2025 our community lost a San Angelo legend, educator and former HHM awardee Ms. Carol Santry. To honor her memory and legacy in our community and in educating many about our culture it is only fitting to create a new award that honors the best of our culture in

education. The award goes to an educator who embodies the best of us, an inspiration in overcoming obstacles and leading by example

The Carolina Angela de la Garza Dewitt Legend Award

(Lifetime Achievement & Enduring Legacy)

Ideal candidate profile: A well-established leader whose long-term contributions have shaped San Angelo's identity.

Required Criteria:

- **Sustained Impact:** Minimum of 15–20 years of meaningful contributions to the San Angelo community.
- **Citywide Influence:** Demonstrated impact that extends beyond a single organization— affecting the broader community, culture, or development of the city.
- **Legacy Creation:** Established programs, institutions, or initiatives that continue to benefit the community today.
- **Cultural Preservation & Advancement:** Played a significant role in promoting, preserving, or integrating Hispanic heritage into the cultural fabric of San Angelo.
- **Recognized Leadership:** Widely respected as a mentor, leader, or figure of influence across generations.

Distinguishing Factor:

This award is **not about recent activity**—it honors someone whose *impact is already proven and enduring*.

The Captain Albert Tijerina Jr. Trailblazer Award

(Emerging Leader & Future Impact)

Ideal candidate profile: A rising individual who is actively building momentum and breaking new ground.

Required Criteria:

- **Early-to-Mid Career Stage:** Typically under 40 *or* within the first 10–15 years of their career or community involvement.
- **Demonstrated Initiative:** Has launched or led innovative efforts, programs, or movements that address current community needs.
- **Forward-Thinking Leadership:** Shows clear potential for continued growth, leadership, and long-term impact.
- **Barrier-Breaking Achievement:** Has overcome obstacles or is creating new pathways/opportunities for others in the Hispanic community.
- **Active Engagement:** Currently involved and making measurable contributions within the past 1–5 years.

Distinguishing Factor:

This award is about **trajectory and promise**—recognizing someone *on the rise*, not at the peak of a long career.

The Eva Camunez Tucker Service Award

(Community Service & Cultural Stewardship)

Ideal candidate profile: A dedicated servant-leader whose hands-on efforts uplift the community and actively elevate Hispanic culture in San Angelo.

Required Criteria:

- **Demonstrated Volunteerism:** Actively engaged in volunteer or service-based efforts that benefit the San Angelo community (through organizations, grassroots work, or informal service).
- **Consistent Commitment:** Shows sustained involvement over time (typically 2+ years), not just one-time or short-term contributions.
- **Community-Level Impact:** Contributions directly improve the lives of individuals or groups within the community, particularly within the Hispanic population.
- **Cultural Advocacy in Action:** Plays an active role in celebrating, promoting, or preserving Hispanic culture, traditions, or voices through events, outreach, education, or service.

- **Service-First Mindset:** Recognized for humility, compassion, and a willingness to serve others without seeking recognition or personal gain.
- **Alignment with Mission:** May support or collaborate with your organization's efforts to build and promote the Hispanic Heritage Museum, but impact is not limited to it.

Distinguishing Factor:

This award honors those who **do the work on the ground**—individuals whose impact comes through *service, presence, and care for others*, rather than formal leadership titles or long-term legacy.

Carol Santry Educator Award

(Community Legacy Leader)

The ideal candidate is someone who:

- Is deeply rooted in Hispanic culture and actively integrates it into their teaching or outreach
- Has a proven track record of impact—not just in the classroom, but in the broader community
- Leads with integrity, resilience, and authenticity, especially in the face of challenges
- Is seen by others as a mentor, role model, and inspiration
- Goes beyond their job description to uplift, advocate, and create opportunities for others

Required Criteria:

1. Commitment to Hispanic Culture & Education

- Active involvement in teaching or promoting Hispanic culture, history, or values
- Engagement extends beyond the classroom (community events, programs, mentorship, etc.)

2. Leadership Through Service & Example

- Demonstrates leadership through **actions**, not just titles
- Consistently models **perseverance, integrity, and accountability**

3. Impact on Students & Community

- Evidence of **measurable or visible impact** (student success, programs created, community initiatives, etc.)
- Has helped create **inclusive, growth-focused environments**

Distinguishing Factor:

The strongest candidate will:

- Show a **powerful personal story of overcoming obstacles** that aligns with the spirit of the award
- Have a **ripple effect of impact**—their influence extends beyond direct students to families, peers, or the broader community
- Be someone people naturally point to and say: *“They represent the best of us.”*

NEW AWARDS

The Hispanic Heritage Emerging Leader Award

(Youth Leadership & Community Impact)

Purpose:

This award honors an emerging Hispanic youth who is already demonstrating exceptional leadership, service, and commitment to uplifting the Hispanic community in San Angelo, Texas and surrounding communities. This individual represents the next generation of changemakers—setting a powerful example for their peers and those who follow.

Ideal candidate profile: A young leader who is actively engaged, service-driven, and already influencing others in meaningful ways.

Required Criteria:

- **Youth Status:** Typically between the ages of 13-30
- **Active Community Involvement:** Demonstrates meaningful participation in service, school, or community-based initiatives that benefit the Hispanic community.
- **Proven Leadership:** Holds leadership roles *or* clearly leads through action, initiative, and influence among peers.

- **Positive Role Model:** Sets a strong example through character, responsibility, and commitment—someone others look up to.
- **Cultural Pride & Advocacy:** Promotes Hispanic culture, identity, or awareness through their actions, voice, or involvement.
- **Future Potential:** Shows strong promise for continued leadership and long-term impact.

Distinguishing Factor:

This award focuses on **youth in action right now**—not just potential, but *already making a difference early in life*.

The Arte y Cultura Impact Award

(Artistic Expression & Cultural Advocacy)

Purpose:

This award recognizes an artist whose creative work serves as a powerful vehicle for educating, promoting, and celebrating Hispanic culture in San Angelo, Texas and surrounding communities. Through their artistry, they amplify stories, traditions, and voices that enrich and inspire the community. This award is about impact through creativity—recognizing cultural leadership expressed through art, not traditional service or organizational leadership. We are looking for artists of all kinds - painters, sculptors, digital artists, musicians, photographers, mixed media artists, actors - to name a few!

Ideal candidate profile: An artist or creative whose work actively contributes to cultural awareness and community engagement.

Required Criteria:

- **Artistic Practice:** Demonstrates involvement in an artistic discipline (e.g., music, visual arts, theater, dance, writing, design, film, etc.).
- **Cultural Expression:** Work intentionally reflects, explores, or celebrates Hispanic culture, heritage, or identity.
- **Community Engagement:** Shares their art in ways that are accessible to the community—performances, exhibits, workshops, public art, publications, or outreach.
- **Educational or Awareness Impact:** Uses art as a tool to inform, inspire, or spark dialogue about Hispanic culture and experiences.
- **Active Contribution:** Currently producing or sharing work within the past 1–3 years.

- **Authenticity & Voice:** Demonstrates originality and a genuine connection to cultural storytelling.

Distinguishing Factor:

This award is about **impact through creativity**—recognizing cultural leadership expressed through *art*, not traditional service or organizational leadership.

Full Award Set

- **Legend Award:** Lifetime achievement and lasting legacy
- **Trailblazer Award:** Emerging adult leader creating new pathways
- **Service Award:** Hands-on community service and cultural uplift
- **Mi Amigo Award** – Honors Organizations or Individuals that have shown outstanding support, collaboration, and dedication to the SAHHM
- **Educator Award** – Honors an educator who is an inspiration and leader
- **Rising Star Award:** Youth leadership and early impact
- **Arte y Cultura Award:** Cultural influence through artistic expression