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CELEBRATING TWO STRONG FILIPINAS

The Children's Warrior: Meet Charisma De Los Reyes



Charisma De Los Reyes

BY ADAM BEHAR

SAN DIEGO, CA -- "She's a warrior on the front lines of our region's fight against sex trafficking and a fierce protector of some of our most vulnerable and traumatized children."

That's State Senator Toni G. Atkins explaining why she selected Charisma De Los Reyes, a first-generation Filipina-American, as the 2019 Woman of the Year for the 39th Senate District.

She is a policy analyst and program coordinator for Child Welfare Services -- specifically, the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children program operated by the County of San Diego.

Charisma, who earned her Master of Social Work degree from the University of Southern California (USC), has been an activist and advocate in the anti-trafficking movement as well as the gender-based violence movement for over 20 years.

She currently teaches at Point Loma Nazarene University, where she received her undergraduate degree.

"My early work," she says, "involved raising awareness and advocating for the protection of mail-order brides from the Philippines."

When she was with the USC School of Social Work, she and other graduate students went to the Philippines "to engage and learn from local organizations working with trafficked victims."

The most effective strategies, she says, are to address the demand for buying sex and accessing pornography. It's not just a law enforcement issue but also a public health issue. "Trafficking impacts entire communities and generations," she says.

The oldest of three daughters, fondly known as the tres marias, Charisma says her identity as a Filipina-American is "central to who I am and how I live my life. I proudly carry and share my Filipino heritage, culture and values in everything I do."

With her father in the military, Charisma was born in Honolulu. The family lived in Hawaii until she was five, when her father was transferred to San Diego. Her mother was also a dedicated public servant who worked for the County of San Diego for 30 years.

As a 12-year-old junior high school student in Paradise Hills, she and six fellow students advocated for the first Filipino class to be part of the San Diego Unified School District's

See **CHARISMA** on **10**

Adrenaline Junkie, Top-Tier Athlete, and Successful Business Executive: How does Pamela Price do it all?

BY ADAM BEHAR

LOS ANGELES, CA -- Pamela Price is a high-octane, Filipina-American woman who wears many hats, including elite athlete and dancer, Hollywood award-show producer, online media executive, Obstacle Course Racer, and American Ninja Warrior.

The Energizer Bunny's current obsession is Obstacle Course Racing (OCR), in which competitors, traveling on foot, must navigate and overcome physical barriers -- with the clock ticking.

OCR athletes are considered by many to be some of the best athletes in the world.

After being scouted in October, Pamela was cast on season 11 of NBC's "American Ninja Warrior," which is based on OCR and features contestants in a

grueling short race to complete an imposing obstacle course.

Pamela has been a runner and dancer since she was a child. She credits her experience in dance, cross-country and track and field with giving her a foundation to become an OCR athlete.

"I compete monthly and sometimes tri-monthly in trail races, Spartan Races, Tougher Mudder, Epic Series, and various hybrid races," she says.

In December, she placed 3rd in the bronze medal in her age group at the USA OCR National Championships

If that's not enough, Pamela is also vice president of the daily news site, LATF USA (LA TV FILM,



Pamela Price

LATFUSA.com) as well as the executive producer of the annual Hollywood Beauty Awards, known as the 'Oscars of beauty.'

The Early Years

Pamela was raised on the East Coast -- in Virginia and Maine -- and attended Marymount Manhattan, a small liberal arts college in New York, where she studied art history and theater arts.

Being a Filipina-American is part of her identity and a source of great pride, in spite of growing up in a family that didn't feel very Filipino.

"I'm actually mixed," she tells

me. "My dad is a white guy who was raised Jewish," while her mother is an American born Filipina; she was a nurse who became a business owner and he a psychiatrist. Both support Pamela in all of her endeavors.

After college, Pamela decided she wanted to be a writer or journalist; she was convinced this was her calling.

Meeting Michele

Moving to Los Angeles proved to be a pivotal point in Pamela's journey, because this is where she

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LOCAL EDUCATION PRESIDENT WINS LEADERSHIP AWARD FOR INNOVATION

San Diego Continuing Education President Turner Cortez Humbled with Recognition



SAN DIEGO, CA — Carlos O. Turner Cortez, Ph.D. started a career in education 20 years ago, a decision he pursued due to mentorship and support during some of his earliest years as a faculty member with Teach for America (TFA). Now, two decades

later, he is honored with an award from the same organization that lead him to develop his true passion—educational leadership that propels disadvantaged students into educational success.

"This is the most meaningful and significant recognition I have

received as an educator," said Turner Cortez. "I am both honored and humbled by the recognition."

Carlos O. Turner Cortez, Ph.D. is a longtime educational leader with a strong commitment to social justice. He was named President of San Diego Continuing Education (SDCE) in 2015. SDCE is the largest noncredit community college educational organization in the state, serving some of San Diego's most disadvantaged student populations. More than an innovative leader and effective administrator, Turner Cortez is a passionate change maker who has brought innovative programs and initiatives to SDCE that include supporting students socially and emotionally beyond the classroom.

"When I first started teaching in a disadvantaged community in New York City, I recognized vital needs lacking in the educational process," said Turner Cortez, "and that is when I discovered a true passion in leadership that could make a difference for the most vulnerable student populations."

Teach for America (TFA) is nationally known for confronting inequity in education through teaching. The McGrory Award for Innovative Leadership is given annually to a TFA alum who is committed to finding solutions that make education more accessible to some of the most underserved populations.

See **CORTEZ** **7**

Company Spotlight: Economico Construction Inc., Obie Sibug

SAN DIEGO, CA -- These days, practically everyone is doing something to improve the curb appeal of their home, like renovating their kitchen or bathrooms.

If you're seeking a general contractor who has tons of experience and speaks Filipino, then you need to know about Economico Construction Inc.

With headquarters located in the Miramar area of San Diego,

Economico Construction has more than 15 years of experience as a custom home builder and general contractor serving all of San Diego County. They have an extensive and impressive project portfolio -- ask to see it.

Economico, which began as a company in 2007, is operated by Obie Sibug and his partner Joe Geniza.

Obie, who came to the U.S. in 1978 from the Philippines, has many clients from the local Filipino community.

"You can count on Economico Construction, says Obie, "for quality kitchen cabinets, appliance repair, electrical work, plumbing, drywall, painting, roofing, and more."

Kitchen Design

The team at Economico Construction Inc. will work with you to determine your design preferences and get the job done in a timely manner.

Customized kitchen services include cabinets, countertops (tile, granite and quartz), backsplash, tile, flooring, and appliances.

They also provide free consultations for 3-D kitchen

designs!

Bathroom Designs

If your bathroom has seen better days, it may be time for a bathroom upgrade.

Let your friends at Economico Construction design it for you.

They can handle everything including cabinets, flooring, showers and tubs, and toilet installation.

Flooring Services

They install flooring from top brands such as Mohawk Flooring, Tecsun Flooring and Elegance Exotic Wood Flooring.

Flooring services include laminate, hardwood, and tile.

Masonry Services

Economico Construction is known for high-quality masonry work, which transforms any space, no matter the size or complexity.

Masonry services include keystone, rock, repaving, artificial grass, and concrete.

Plumbing Services

You can consider economico as your local plumbing experts. They are dedicated to completing every job with such professionalism, that your expectations are sure to be surpassed.

Call them next time you have a leak or a problem with your garbage

See **ECONOMICO** on **7**

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