

October 23, 2009

Induction inaugurates banner week at Lanier HS



William C. "Nemo" Herrera would be so proud! Three days prior to the legendary Lanier HS coach being the posthumous guest of honor for his contributions to the West Side community (see story below), the

son of one of Herrera's former players was receiving his own recognition: the current Voks basketball coach.

Rudy Bernal – whose father, the late Ramiro Bernal, was a member of the 1943 state championship team – was inducted into the Hispanic Sports Hall of Fame on Oct. 9

where he is in good company there as well.

In 1995 Herrera became the first and that year's only inductee.

The connections between their two lives are quite satisfying for the man who grew up hearing stories about the coach from his father.

"It is very inspiring to coach at my dad's alma mater as well as where the legend of Nemo lives," Bernal said.

"It makes me appreciative of all of the accomplishments of coach Herrera and inspires my players as well."

Also like coach Herrera, Bernal has led the Voks to success. During his 26-year tenure, Lanier has advanced to two state tournaments. Other highlights

include 11 playoff appearances, three district championships, eight bi-district championships, three area championships and two regional championships.

The 1973 Lee (NEISD) grad began his coaching career in 1978 at Antonian HS, followed by three years at South San Antonio ISD's West Campus.

Bernal played baseball for a year at the University of Houston prior to graduating from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

When not on the court, he has taught health biology and currently teaches PE.

The National Hispanic Sports Hall of Fame was established by Latinos in Action, a San Antonio-based non-profit organization.



Alumni Center honors the past, celebrates present and future

A new era in Lanier HS athletics has dawned, with the Voks' storied history providing the firm foundation.

Marking the beginning of that new era was the Oct. 12 grand opening ceremony for the state-of-the-art Alumni Center and gymnasium, during which center court was dedicated in honor of the legendary coach William C. "Nemo" Herrera.

Named to recognize Lanier's loyal and active alumni, the center represents the model athletic facility the District aspires for all its high schools.

It includes a 26,120 square-foot gymnasium with a spectator seating capacity of 962 to

host evening and weekend sports events.

The adjacent conditioning room (left) features brand new circuit training weight machines and other equipment specially designed for the physically challenged, including those who use wheelchairs.



About coach 'Nemo'

While his tenure at Lanier lasted 17 years, coach Herrera's legacy remains through the Alumni Center and in the lives of those he touched.

Not only did Herrera coach his basketball teams to dominance, he also helped his players to develop character, discipline and other winning traits for successful adulthood.

On the court, his teams were renowned for their speed, quick passing and rapid-style playing. Under his guidance, they won state championships in 1943 and 1945, and made the state tournament in 1931, 1939, and every year between 1942 and 1945.

Herrera also coached all major sports at Lanier, and required his players to give their total effort to both their athleticism and to their academics.

The Brownsville, Texas, native was a 1918 graduate of Brackenridge HS.

He was inducted posthumously into the Hispanic Sports Hall of Fame in 1995 and the San Antonio Sports Hall of Fame in 1997.



Cutting the ribbon at center court are School Board President James Howard, Secretary Tom Lopez, Charles Herrera, David Rodriguez, Assistant Secretary Olga Hernandez and Superintendent Dr. Robert J. Durón.



Charles Herrera unveils plaque in his father's honor in the Alumni Center's foyer.

Longfellow's Ruvalcaba among the Lone Star State's top 'T.E.A.C.H.'ers



An educator who represents excellence and enthusiasm in all he does will be honored next week by the Texas ASCD, the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Roland Ruvalcaba of Longfellow MS is among three teachers – and the only from San Antonio – to receive the association's T.E.A.C.H. (Texas Educators Achieving Classroom Honors) award. He and his principal, Liz Solis,

will be recognized during Texas ASCD's Oct. 25-27 annual conference in Frisco.

"He is an excellent teacher. When you walk into his classroom, you can feel the excitement and passion for teaching," Solis said of the four-year veteran educator who makes 8th-grade science and AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) classes relevant and fun.

Ruvalcaba (pictured showing his students the parts of an atom) was nominated by his school's administrative assistant and Campus Instructional Coordinator Caroline Elizondo.

"Roland Ruvalcaba exemplifies the qualities of the passionate professional you seek to recognize," she wrote in her nomination letter.

"His commitment and dedication to his students and his profession are commendable."

When not in the classroom or coaching football, soccer, and track at Longfellow, he can

be found taking his students to visit college campuses, expanding their horizons on field trips such as to the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi, arranging for guest speakers to inspire them or coordinating their community service projects. These include walks to benefit the March of Dimes and volunteering at the annual Raul Jimenez Thanksgiving Dinner.

"The relationships he forms with his students and the drive he instills in them toward excellence are what make him successful," Elizondo wrote. "His actions and instructional decisions are always based on doing what is best for kids. I wish every student on our campus could have the benefit of being taught by Mr. Ruvalcaba."

Each year Texas ASCD presents the T.E.A.C.H. award to outstanding educators like Ruvalcaba to honor their pioneering efforts that greatly impact student learning.

Baskin and Briscoe academies make 2009 'Honor Roll'



Two SAISD campuses are among only five in Bexar County selected for inclusion on the Texas Business & Education Coalition's 2009 Honor Roll. Less than 4 percent of the state's public schools qualify for this annual list compiled to recognize academic performance.

They are the perennially high-performing Baskin and Briscoe academies, making the list for a combined nine times during the award's 10-year history.

"Being named a TBEC Honor Roll school is

the most prestigious academic award given in Texas," said Jack Lowe, the organization's former board chairman.

"Schools get on our Honor Roll the old fashioned way, they earn it."

This year Texas campuses were graded under more stringent qualifications. In order to be considered for Honor Roll, schools must be rated commended, the state's highest standard for academic achievement.

TBEC next evaluated those schools based upon grades served, student demographics

and levels of improvement from 2008 to 2009.

Additionally, every school was required to have a minimum of 20 percent of its students tested performing at the commended level on all exams for 2009.

In addition to this year, Baskin qualified for the TBEC Honor Roll in 2003, 2006 and 2007, while Briscoe made the list in 2002, and three consecutive years from 2006 through 2008.

The 2009 honorees will be recognized during a Nov. 9 awards reception and dinner here in San Antonio.

SAISD 'FIRST' in finances for seventh consecutive year

Once again the District has received the Texas Education Agency's highest rating for fiscal accountability.

SAISD has earned "Superior Achievement" from Schools FIRST– Financial Accountability Rating System of Texas every year since the

ratings began.

"Superior Achievement" acknowledges the level of quality in financial management by the Department of Finance/Business in conjunction with the superintendent and Trustees.

The rating system is designed to encourage

Texas public schools to manage their financial resources so that the most money possible is allocated for direct instructional use.



Customer Service Corner

Show customers you care by quickly addressing their concerns

Too often, mildly unhappy patrons are allowed to become majorly angry ones because their needs are not promptly addressed.

Primarily, your timely response lets customers know they are important. Secondly, in doing so you also may prevent a routine situation from escalating into a more serious one.

While this seems so obvious, most of us respond to calls and requests according to our own priorities. As a result, many of them fall to the bottom of the pile.

This can be remedied by



each person at every school and department committing to a "first contact resolution" culture.

That way courtesy will always be your guide, and your prompt response will show that you care!



'Gifted' parent
Magaly Chocano (left) accepts congratulations from SAISD administrator Carol Frausto for her selection as a Texas Association of Gifted and Talented Parent of the Year for the South Texas-area Region 20. Her daughter Tatiana Sigg is a 3rd-grader at Bonham Academy.



Ninth grade collegiates
Travis Early College HS freshmen embark upon a history-making event as they leave their campus (left) bound for their first day of higher education. Through classes at San Antonio College they have opportunities to earn an associate's degree and up to 60 hours of credit there by the time they graduate high school.



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