

# Canada's Immigration Minister and CEO of Pan Am Games recognize 10 most influential Hispanics

## Hispanics: driving force behind Canada's Creative Class

Toronto, ON (Wednesday, November 27, 2013) --- The Honourable Chris Alexander, Canada's Minister of Immigration, and Mr. Ian Troop, CEO of Toronto 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games presented awards tonight to the "10 Most Influential Hispanic Canadians" 2013.

Three hundred executives, media, diplomats, past winners and community members attended this national program organized by the Canadian Hispanic Business Alliance ([HispanicBusiness.ca](http://HispanicBusiness.ca)), a private sector social enterprise. Nominations were declared opened in Saskatoon with His Worship Mayor Donald J. Atchison, Mayor of the City, in July. Prime Minister Stephen Harper met with past awardees; a similar meeting is in the works.

This year's 10 Most Influential Hispanic Canadians come from five provinces representing eight countries of origin. In alphabetical order by first name, the three woman and seven men 10 Most Influential Hispanic Canadians are:

- Alfredo Caxaj (Guatemala, ON): Founder and ED, London's Sunfest, second largest music festival in Canada
- Fernando Triana (Colombia, AB): Founder, Soy Hispano TV and Edmonton's Latin Heritage Carnival
- Guillermo Schible (Nicaragua, ON): Lawyer and co-founder, Hispanic Lawyers Association of Ontario
- Hector Vergara (Chile, MB): ED, Manitoba Soccer Association, holds FIFA record on World Cup games
- Dr. Hugo De Burgos (El Salvador, BC): Anthropologist, filmmaker, activist and professor at UBC
- Dr. Juana Muñoz-Liceras (Spain, ON): Linguist, Spanish professor and supervisor for PhD thesis, U of Ottawa
- Laura Cuner (Argentina, BC): Founder, Avafina –organic foods firm with annual sales of \$14 million in 6 years
- Mario Pochat (Mexico, BC): Founder, Vancouver Animation School and CIRA awardee for innovation
- Saul Polo (Colombia, QC): President, Liberal Party of Quebec
- Ximena Muñoz (Chile, MB): Manitoba's first Fairness Commissioner appointed by Lieutenant Governor

Copa Airlines, Ingle Insurance, York University and TLN TV were national sponsors of the event. Supporting sponsors were Andes Travel agency now offering scholarships to Hispanic families, Seneca College and award-winning private English school ILAC. The Embassy of Colombia was also a Patron of this year's event. Other countries may join in next year.

Since 2007, seventy Hispanics from eight provinces and 15 countries of origin have been selected by past winners and executives from the National Post, CBC, Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, Canadian Aboriginal & Minority Supplier Council, Canadian Council for the Americas, Diversity Business Network, Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance, the University of Ottawa and the North American Association of Asian Professionals. "As Canada's Creative Class, Hispanics continue to make history," asserted Mauricio Ospina, director of the program. Ospina advocated for the diversity policy in place for the Toronto 2015 Pan-American Games, and is implementing a home ownership plan for the Pan-American Village in downtown Toronto.

Canada's 740,061 Hispanics are five years younger and more likely to be university educated than other Canadians. Most Hispanics live in the Greater Toronto Area and over 70 per cent have arrived in the last twenty five years, according to a Statistics Canada study based on the 2006 census. A recent FOCAL study puts Spanish as the third most commonly spoken language in Canada.

The launch of nominations for the 2014 "10 Most Influential Hispanic Canadians" is scheduled for June with awards ceremonies taking place in November 2014 in two major Canadian cities. Sponsorship opportunities are now available.

# Ministro de Inmigración de Canadá y CEO de Juegos Panamericanos reconocen los 10 hispanos de mayor influencia

## Hispanos: Fuerza que empuja la Clase Creativa de Canadá

Toronto, ON (Miércoles 27 de noviembre, 2013) --- El Honorable Chris Alexander, Ministro de Inmigración de Canadá, y el Sr. Ian Troop, CEO de los Juegos Panamericanos en Toronto 2015, presentaron reconocimientos a los “10 hispanos de mayor influencia” del 2013.

Trescientos ejecutivos, periodistas, diplomáticos de la mayoría de países de habla hispana, ganadores anteriores y miembros de la comunidad atendieron este programa nacional organizado por [HispanicBusiness.ca](http://HispanicBusiness.ca). Las nominaciones de este año fueron declaradas abiertas en Saskatoon, en julio, durante un programa que contó con la participación de Su Señoría Donald J. Atchison, Alcalde de tal ciudad. El Primer Ministro Stephen Harper se reunió con ganadores anteriores; se planea algo similar para el 2014.

Los 10 hispanos de mayor influencia en Canadá” 2013 proceden de cinco provincias representando ocho países de origen. Los galardonados, tres mujeres y siete hombres, en orden alfabético por primer nombre son:

- Alfredo Caxaj (Guatemala, ON): Fundador y Director de Sunfest, segundo festival musical más grande del país
- Fernando Triana (Colombia, AB): Fundador de Soy Hispano TV y del Carnaval de Herencia Latina en Edmonton
- Guillermo Schible (Nicaragua, ON): Abogado co-fundador de Asociación de Abogados Hispanos de Ontario
- Hector Vergara (Chile, MB): Director, Asociación de Fútbol de Manitoba con récord FIFA Copa Mundo
- Dr. Hugo De Burgos (El Salvador, BC): Antropólogo, cineasta, activista y profesor en UBC
- Dra. Juana Muñoz-Licerias (España, ON): Lingüista, profesora de español y supervisora de tesis, U of Ottawa
- Laura Cuner (Argentina, BC): Fundadora de Avafina - productos orgánicos- con ventas anuales de \$14 millones
- Mario Pochat (México, BC): Fundador de Vancouver Animation School y ganador de premio de CIRA
- Saul Polo (Colombia, QC): Presidente del Partido Liberal de Quebec
- Ximena Muñoz (Chile, MB): Primera Comisionada de la Integridad de Manitoba nombrada por su Gobernador

Copa Airlines, Ingle Insurance, York University y TLN TV fueron fueron los patrocinadores nacionales del evento. Los patrocinadores regionales fueron la agencia de viajes Andes Travel que ofrece becas a estudiantes hispanos, Seneca College y la escuela privada de inglés ILAC. La Embajada de Colombia fue este año el Patrón del evento. Se esperan más países en ediciones futuras.

Desde 2007, setenta hispanos de siete provincias representando 15 países de origen han sido seleccionados por galardonados anteriores y ejecutivos de CBC, Globe and Mail, National Post, Toronto Star, Canadian Aboriginal & Minority Supplier Council, Canadian Council for the Americas, Diversity Business Network, Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance, Universidad de Ottawa y la Asociación de Norteamericana de Profesionales Asiáticos. “*Continuamos forjando historia como la Clase Creativa de Canadá,*” comentó Mauricio Ospina, director del programa. Ospina cabildeó con éxito por la política de diversidad empresarial en pie para los Juegos Panamericanos del 2015 en Toronto y está implementando un plan de adquisición de vivienda en la villa Panamericana del centro de Toronto.

Los 740.061 hispanos que viven en Canadá son cinco años más jóvenes, más propensos a tener educación universitaria, la mayoría viven en el GTA, y más del 70% llegaron hace menos de veinticinco años al país. Esto de acuerdo al estudio de la comunidad hispana realizado por Estadísticas Canadá basado en el censo del 2006. Un reciente pone al español como el tercer lenguaje más comúnmente hablado en el país.

Nominaciones para los “10 Hispanos de mayor influencia en Canadá” 2014 se declararán abiertas en Junio con ceremonia de premios el mes de noviembre en dos importantes ciudades de Canadá.

**ALFREDO CAXAJ:** Founder and ED, London's Sunfest, 2<sup>nd</sup> largest music festival in Canada **Guatemala / ON**  
Alfredo Caxaj is the founder and producer of Sunfest, the second largest music festival in Canada. Every July, Sunfest attracts more than 225,000 people contributing millions to London's economy. The Globe and Mail named the festival one of the country's 100 best summer events. Alfredo arrived from Guatemala in 1985 and worked at London's Cross Cultural Learner Centre, helping new Canadians. It was there, working with people from around the world, that he envisioned a festival featuring the world's best musicians. He joined forces with Herb Bayley and Sunfest was born in 1995. While many festivals book one or two "world musicians" each year, Sunfest specializes in world music. Performers have included international stars Céu (Brazil), Seun Kuti and Egypt 80 (Nigeria), Rokia Traoré (Mali) and Andy Palacia & the Garifuna Collective. The festival has featured a who's who of Canadian musicians, like Samba Squad, Le Vent du Nord, Amanda Martinez, and Jesse Cook.

Alfredo contributes to the JUNO Awards Global Committee; is a juror at the Ontario Arts Council, the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the Canada Council for the Arts; and was named by The London Free Press as one of the city's 150 most influential individuals - past and present. In 2012, he received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for significant contributions. Alfredo is also a musician who runs a 13-piece Latin ensemble focused on Latin jazz, a quartet, and the world fusion group, Antler River.

**FERNANDO TRIANA:** Founder, Soy Hispano TV and Edmonton's Latin Heritage Carnival **Colombia / AB**  
Jose Fernando Triana was twice mayor of Quebradanegra City, Colombia; from 1992-1994 and from 1996-2000. He arrived in Canada in 2002 and moved to Edmonton, Alberta two years later to focus on social work and to unify the Latino community in the region. There, he founded Triana Services Ltd., a small business offering legal and social services as well as "Soy Hispano", a magazine to fill a void in media for Hispanics. Today, his magazine is the most-widely read in Alberta. After the success of the magazine, he began the online television channel "Soy Hispano TV" and grouped his media ventures under a new company, Soy Hispano Media Communications Inc. In 2009, Fernando created the Latin Heritage Carnival, a two day extravaganza that brings together thousands of people to enjoy Hispanic culture. Eleven Latin American countries participated in the first edition of the Carnival.

Among his volunteer work, Fernando has directed a social program for the elderly run by the Maria Luisa de Moreno International Foundation in Edmonton. His awards include the prestigious "Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Medal" from the Governor General of Canada (2011) and a plaque from the Latino Canadian Chamber of Commerce for "Latino Media of 2012". He is an active member of the team for Peter Goldring, Member of Parliament, and was nominated to fill a seat in the Colombian Congress as a representative for Colombians Abroad. In Canada, Fernando has completed studies in Conservation/Environmental Sciences and to become a Legal Assistant.

**GUILLERMO SCHIBLE:** Lawyer and co-founder, Hispanic Lawyers Association of Ontario **Nicaragua / ON**  
Nicaraguan-born Guillermo Schible arrived in Canada in 1989 at age 12. He graduated from Osgoode Hall Law School and was called to the Bar in 2005. Despite his success as a lawyer, he has always given his free time to community causes. Guillermo is a founding member of the Hispanic Ontario Lawyers Association, later served as HOLA's second president, and now sits on the Board of Directors. Guillermo is a past vice-president, past member of the Board of Advisors, and a current member of the Board of Directors of the Toronto Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. He is finishing a one-year term as the President of the United States Hispanic National Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division. In 2013, Guillermo received the Heather McArthur Memorial Award from the Ontario Bar Association (OBA), which recognizes "exceptional contributions in law for the benefit of the profession or the citizens of Ontario". The OBA gives out only one McArthur Award each year.

He is the current Chair of the OBA's Civil Litigation Section Executive; which gives him a unique opportunity to consider and comment on proposed government legislation. Guillermo is perhaps the first and only Hispanic lawyer to have presented written and oral argument in Canada's highest court, the Supreme Court of Canada, in *Rasouli v. Sunnybrook*. In August 2013, Guillermo started his own law firm, Schible Law, where he focuses on wrongful dismissal and workplace discrimination litigation, commercial litigation, and appeals. He aims to build a leading law firm that is socially relevant.

**HECTOR VERGARA:** ED, Manitoba Soccer Association, holds FIFA record on World Cup games **Chile / MB**  
Hector Vergara has refereed in three FIFA World Cups and holds the record for most matches refereed by any referee in FIFA World Cups with 14. Hector was born in Chile, but moved to Canada in 1978 and earned a Sports Administration degree at the University of Manitoba. He began refereeing in 1983, at only 16, and has become the most prolific assistant referee in the Canadian soccer history with almost three decades in the job. He is one of the most respected soccer referees in the country. Today, he is the executive director of the Manitoba Soccer Association and member and instructor of the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), CONCACAF and Canadian Soccer Association referee committees. Previously, Vergara was a FIFA assistant referee and served at the 1999 Pan American Games.

Awards: 'Sport Manitoba Official of the Year' (2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2010); John Meachin Memorial Soccer Award (2003); CSA International Achievement Award (2002); MSA Frank Major Award of Merit (2002); and CSA Ray Morgan Memorial Award (1996). He officiated at six CONCACAF Gold Cups (including three finals), the 2004 Olympic Games, the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup, two FIFA Club World Cups Finals (2005, 2009), as well as two FIFA U-20 World Cups (2001, 2007), two FIFA U-17 World Cups (1995, 1993), three FIFA Men's World Cups (2002, 2006, 2010). In total, Vergara has officiated at nearly 150 high-level international matches. Volunteerism: Guest column writer, radio host, television commentator; motivational speaker at international and national conferences and schools.

**DR. HUGO DE BURGOS HENRIQUEZ:** Anthropologist, filmmaker, activist and professor UBC **El Salvador / BC**  
After his mother was kidnapped and disappeared in the 80s, Dr. Hugo De Burgos fled El Salvador and came to Canada, 18 years old and alone. A multiple award-winning anthropology professor/researcher at the University of British Columbia, filmmaker, and a respected international activist, his latest recognition is the Paul Farmer Award for outstanding anthropology teaching. In 2010, he won Public Anthropology's Eleanor Roosevelt Global Citizenship Award for inspiring university students to take part in the global community and act responsibly; less than 1% of anthropology professors in North America receive this award. He also received two Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Scholarships, the Government of Canada's Social Sciences Award, and is a member of both the American and the Canadian Society of Anthropology.

Education: BA (McGill University), MA (University of Toronto), PhD (University of Alberta). His research focuses on cross cultural psychiatry, Central American Indigenous healing, social inequality, and health and visual anthropology. Films: "El Sitio del Plomo" (2010), a documentary film about the catastrophic human consequences of socially irresponsible toxic waste management in El Salvador. "Holistic Healing in the Okanagan" (2013), a documentary film about medical pluralism and the importance of non-biomedical healers in the Okanagan Valley, BC. In 1998, with his wife Cecilia, he founded the "Octavio Burgos" Museum of Ethnology and History in his hometown San Sebastian, El Salvador. He has written three books, several academic papers, and has been cited in numerous international research publications.

**DR. JUANA MUNOZ-LICERAS:** Dr. Juana Muñoz-Liceras (Spain, ON): Linguist, professor, supervisor **Spain / ON**  
Juana Muñoz-Liceras is a full professor in the Department of Modern Languages and Literature at the University of Ottawa. As a member of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at the same university, Juana has supervised more than seventy doctoral and master theses on the acquisition of Spanish, English, French, Japanese, Portuguese, Arabic, German, Greek and Korean as first or second languages. A prolific researcher, she has written eight books on her subject of expertise, and has written or edited close to 100 publications and articles in international journals. A frequent speaker at international conferences, she has delivered presentations at major institutions in Spain, the U.S., Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Great Britain, Portugal, Singapore, Sweden, Germany, Turkey, Mexico, Japan, Switzerland, Greece, France, Netherlands and Canada. Her three current research projects, in Spain and Canada, are funded by the Government of Spain and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Her fields of interest range from language acquisition and linguistic theory, Spanish and general linguistics, Psycholinguistics, and Contrastive and descriptive grammar. She has a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from the University of Toronto (1983), a M.A. in Applied Linguistics from the University of Wisconsin (1977) and a Degree in Philosophy from the Universidad Complutense in Spain (1974).

**LAURA CUNER:** Founder, Avafina -organic foods, with sales of \$14 million in only six years **Argentina / BC**  
Laura came to Canada in 2007 and, in the same year, founded Avafina to sell ingredients to local manufacturers, bakeries, retail stores and restaurants. In just six years, Laura's company Avafina has become a leading supplier of niche organic ingredients and raw materials in North America and Europe. Her company benefits hundreds of small farmers in South America. By 2010, the company had grown to five employees producing \$8 million in sales; in 2011 it opened its first distribution centre, a 13,000 square foot facility. Today, Avafina has 14 staff and reached sales of \$14 million in 2012. In 2012 and 2013, the company has attended seven international trade shows in Germany, China, Canada and the U.S. In 2013, Laura will launch her own brand of raw organic super foods, "Eat Me Up".

Laura was awarded the 2013 Annual Inspirational Latin Award from LatinCouver - the leading Hispanic organization in Vancouver, BC. She was also named the 2013 New Canadian Entrepreneur of the Year by Ethno BC. Laura is actively involved in Christian charities to help educate underprivileged children in less developed countries and supports the Canadian Red Cross and the BC Food Banks. She is an active member of the Organic Trade Association, the Canadian Health Foods Association, the BC Food Processors Association and the Women President Organization (WPO). She has an MBA from the University of New York and a Bachelor in International Business from the Universidad Argentina de la Empresa.

**MARIO POCHAT:** Founder, Vancouver Animation School and CIRA awardee for innovation **Mexico / BC**  
Mario Pochat's hobby led to a career that has taken him around the world. Since 200, Mario has taught animation in Mexico, the United States, Canada and Spain. He moved permanently to Canada in 2003 to work as instructor at one of the top animation schools in Vancouver. Mario has worked on nine blockbuster feature films including Dr. Doolittle, Garfield II, Nutcracker: the untold story, Blades of Glory, Tropic Thunder, Dragon Ball Z and Twilight. He is also known for his award-winning animated short film "Bye-Bye!" released in 2007.

In 2010, he founded the Vancouver Animation School: a web, or cloud-based, animation school giving students around the world equal access to learning – at less than half the price of a traditional school. The school began with only four students and an online framework that can be accessed from anywhere in the world. In less than three years, the school is serving 70 students in 10 countries. Vancouver Animation School is the first online animation school to receive accreditation by the Private Career Training Institutions Agency of British Columbia. Also, it is the first online school to receive the British Columbia Education Quality Assurance. Last year, Pochat received the Impact Award for e-learning from the Canadian Internet Registration Authority and the 2013 Annual Inspirational Latin Award from LatinCouver - the leading Hispanic organization in Vancouver, BC. Mario is set on turning his school into a full-fledged university and on helping other brick and mortar schools expand online.

**SAUL POLO:** President, Liberal Party of Quebec **Colombia / QC**  
Named by Média Mosaïque in 2012 as one of the 20 most important immigrants in Quebec, Saul is president of the Quebec Liberal Party. Born in Colombia, Polo came to Canada in 1982 and graduated from McGill University in International Business (2002) and in Finance from HEC-Montréal (1999). He worked in the financial industry for 12 years at companies such as CIBC Asset Management and Laurentian Bank Securities. In 2012, Saul was awarded the prestigious "Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Medal" from the Governor General of Canada, the National Assembly Medal from the office of the President of the Quebec National Assembly and the award of Board Member of the Year from the Quebec Junior Board of Trade Federation (RJCCQ). His work with the community has earned him the respect of Quebec's political establishment and the warmth of the immigrants at large – especially those from Spanish speaking countries.

In 2007 he co-founded the Quebec Latin-American Chamber of Commerce and is currently its president-general director; he is also involved with the Quebec Board of Trade Federation (FCCQ), is a member of the board at the Quebec Junior Board of Trade Federation (RJCCQ) and a member of the executive committee of the Conférence régionale des élus de Montréal (CRÉ de Montréal). Saul was president of the Policy Commission of the Quebec Liberal Party from 2009 to 2012 and president of its Cultural Communities Commission from 2006 to 2009.

**XIMENA MUNOZ:** Manitoba's first Fairness Commissioner appointed by Lieutenant Governor **Chile / MB**  
Ximena Munoz came to Canada in 1978 from Chile with a degree in Agronomics and went on to obtain an Advanced Arts degree in psychology from the University of Manitoba. While a student, she worked for the provincial government helping develop a guide for newcomers to Manitoba. That work led to a 20-year passion for the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees. Today, she is Manitoba's first Fairness Commissioner, in charge of implementing fair registration practices in regulated professions. Appointed in 2008, Munoz yields an enormous influence in the Province's foreign trained professionals' field and works to ensure that registration practices are transparent, objective, impartial and fair. Prior to this appointment, she was the Director of Manitoba Settlement and Labour Market in the Manitoba government where she worked developing and funding the delivery of settlement services for immigrants. Ximena was responsible for developing and implementing two provincial strategies: the Manitoba Framework on Qualifications Recognition (2003) which was the first of its kind in Canada, and the Manitoba Settlement Strategy (2006).

The Internationally Educated Engineers Qualifications Recognition Program at the University of Manitoba is one of the many programs Ximena was instrumental in getting established. She has also served on steering committees of Engineers Canada. In 2009, she received the inaugural Champion of Engineering Education award from the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Manitoba. Ximena is committed to ensure fair processes that result in the timely integration of internationally educated professionals in their fields of education and experience.

## NATIONAL SPONSORS (winners's picture on next page)

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**Seneca College** ([www.senecacollege.ca](http://www.senecacollege.ca)) offers more than an education. With campuses throughout the Greater Toronto Area, Seneca's size and diversity give students the advantage of partnerships with industry leaders, the latest in hands-on computer technology, a variety of class sizes, and full-time, part-time and continuing education options. Education should be flexible and accessible, so Seneca also employs various methods of teaching – from in-class lectures and online learning to co-op and field placements – in programs related to applied arts, business, financial services and technology.

**TLN En Español** ([www.tlntv.com](http://www.tlntv.com)) is a 24-hour all-Spanish channel available across Canada offering exclusive top programming from the Latin world, including daily news, acclaimed movies, soap operas, talk shows, live music specials, and top soccer coverage including the FIFA World Cup™. Available on Rogers 780, Bell 699, Shaw 508, MTS 517 and Videotron 248.

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The **Canadian Hispanic Business Alliance** is a private sector social enterprise that promotes entrepreneurship opportunities and development. Since 2007, it also runs the only Hispanic national program '**10 most influential Hispanic Canadians**'. In 2010, the Prime Minister of Canada, Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, met with past winners at his private office in Ottawa. The association successfully advocated for a business diversity program for suppliers to the 2015 Pan-American Games in Toronto. Visit us at [www.HispanicBusiness.ca](http://www.HispanicBusiness.ca)

**"10 most influential Hispanic Canadians" 2013 (Left to right)**



Hon. Chris Alexander (Canada's Minister of Immigration), Alfredo Caxaj, Fernando Triana, Guillermo Schible, Hector Vergara, Dr. Hugo De Burgos, Dr. Juana Muñoz-Liceras, Laura Cuner, Mario Pochat and Ian Troop (CEO Pan Am Games). Not present Saul Polo and Ximena Muñoz.