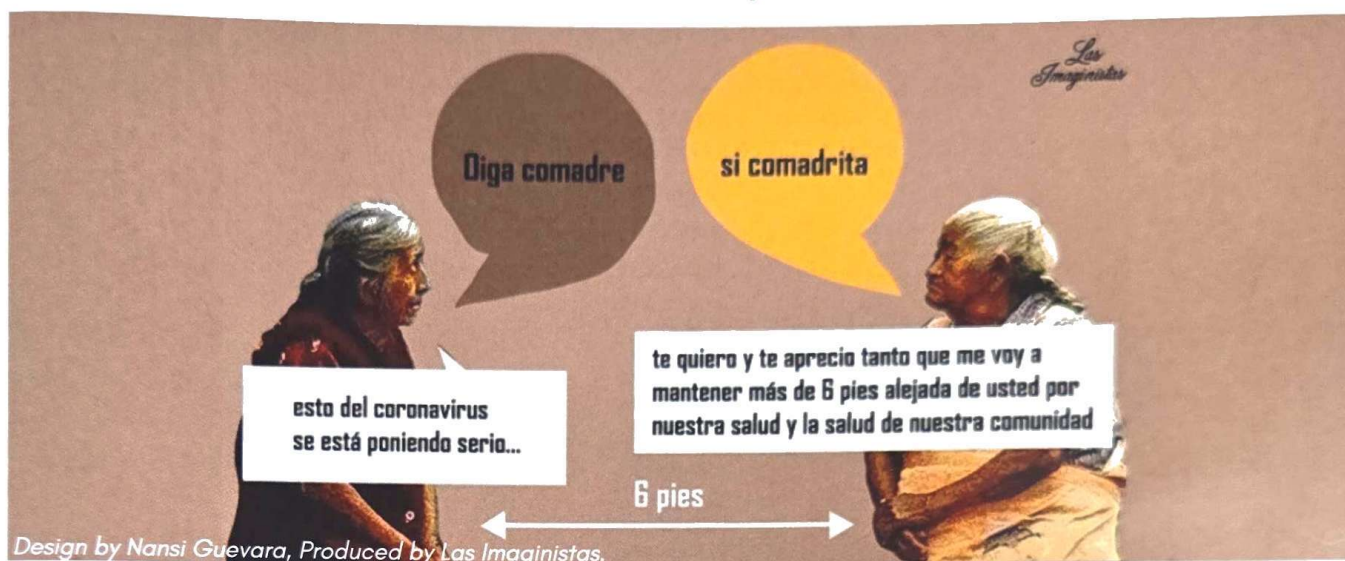


Center for Mexican American Studies

NEWSLETTER SPRING/SUMMER 2020



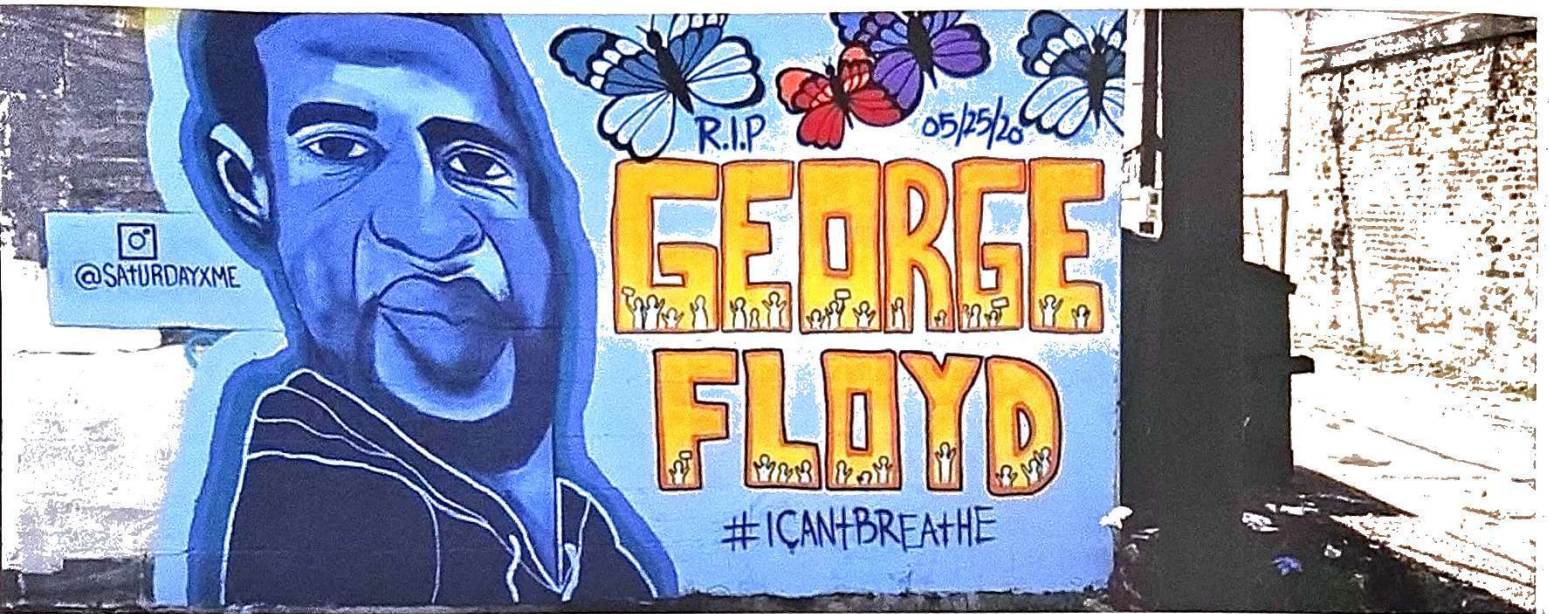
Word from CMAS Director

2020 is proving to be quite a challenging time for all in our communities. We have all had to embrace many changes in our lives while doing our best to stay healthy and vigilant for the greater public good due to the impact of COVID-19. Like all other programs at UTRGV,

CMAS has had to adapt and find new ways to reach-out to students, the broader university and Río Grande Valley communities. Since the stay-at-home orders began for the UTRGV campus, CMAS has reached out through our virtual participation in the Valley International Poets Festival and our new "Cafecito y Charla" platform. Through this new platform, we aim to hold monthly conversations on a variety of issues pertinent to Mexican

American Studies. This is in addition to our work carried out in January, February and March during which we helped to bring numerous important events to the community and launched Volume 24 of *Río Bravo: Journal of the Borderlands*. In addition to COVID-19, the #BlackLivesMatter movement is at its height after it began 7 years ago with the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer. Despite these challenging times, we find hope in #BLM and still have much to celebrate including the start of our Associate Director's, Emmy Pérez,

tenure as the Texas Poet Laureate for 2020. We also celebrate all of the Mexican American Studies students graduating this Spring and Summer 2020 and their families. A special congratulations to both our Graduate Assistant, Josue Puente, on receiving his MAIS in Mexican American Studies and our Graphic Design and Technology Specialist, Karen Ramirez, in earning her B.A. in Social Work. We wish everyone a healthy fall and remember to stay in touch with CMAS through our Facebook page.



Mural in Brownsville, TX by @saturdayxme

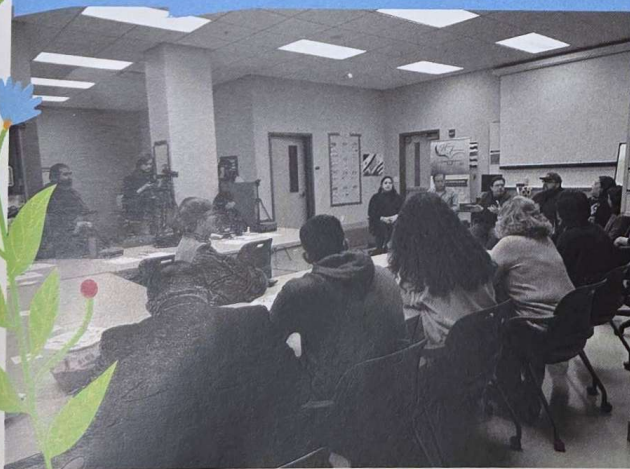
#BLM

In light of the continued institutionalized violence and recent killings perpetuated on unarmed Black folks such as George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, Sean Reed, Breonna Taylor, and too many more, CMAS stands in solidarity with #BlackLivesMatter and the liberation of all Black people. As a Center for Mexican American Studies we will not simply sit and hope for the best. We firmly commit to being anti-racist, as anything less is to be racist. We stand against the prolific racial profiling and violence perpetuated by justice officials, organizations of the state, and all people and institutions against Black lives. The Rio Grande Valley, neither historically nor today, is immune to these senseless and violent acts against Black folks and other People of Color. As such, CMAS commits to providing a safe space for continued dialogues, presentations and the sharing and creation of resources that center issues of systemic racism, its dismantling and its perpetuation. We commit to serving as advocates and facilitators of the implementation of Mexican American Studies and Ethnic Studies in K-12 and Higher Education throughout the region in an attempt to provide students and teachers greater opportunities to critically study issues of race, White supremacy, White fragility and racism. Now, more than ever, we must practice what we preach, and move from words to action. We will ensure that our work, be it teaching, creative work, scholarship or service, does not remain in the classroom but that we move to the streets to effect true social change and social justice as demanded by those who fought to create the discipline of Chicanx Studies and Ethnic Studies. We commit to be actively engaged against the continued deadly and inhumane treatment of Black folk, including AfroLatinx people, rooted in White supremacy and anti-Blackness. Black Lives Matter!

AMERICAN DIRT VS. DIGNIDAD LITERARIA: ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Friday, January 31

As part of our Trae Tu Lonchera series, **Dr. David Bowles**, Assistant Professor of Literatures & Cultural Studies at UTRGV led a discussion centered around the concerns raised by many in Latinx literary communities and beyond about the recently published novel *American Dirt*. **Priscilla "Lina" Suarez**, former McAllen Poet Laureate and co-founder of the Gloria Anzaldúa Legacy Project, took part in the discussion, blogger Nina Avila, a poet graduated from the UTPA MFA program, along with **Sara Montoya**, a representative from the McAllen Public Library. **Dr. José Antonio Rodríguez**, author of several books and assistant professor at UTRGV also took part, as well as **Edward Vidaurre**, Publisher of FlowerSong Books & former McAllen Poet Laureate. The event kicked-off the #Dignidadliteraria campaign.



COMMUNITY MEETING

Monday, February 3,

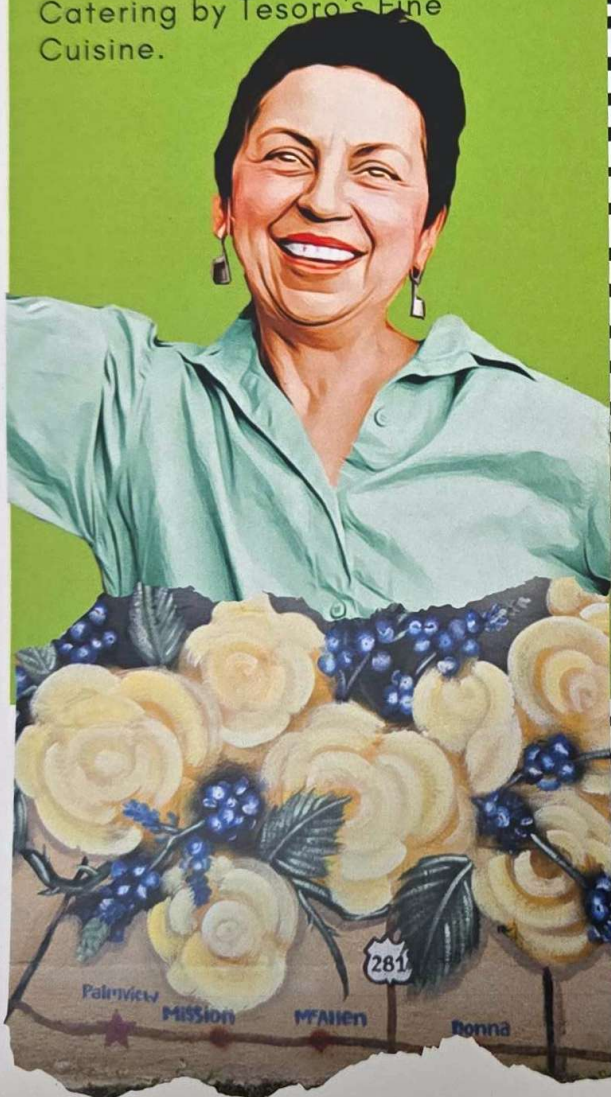
For this semester's Community Meeting students, faculty, staff and the community were invited to get to know one another and to engage in plática and discuss issues that are of importance to our community. One of the primary aims was to connect the campus community with local organizations. **Equal Voice Network**, represented by **Norma A. Herrera**, is an organization that "advocates for human rights and quality of life for historically marginalized groups in the region." **The Young Center for Immigrants**, represented by **Maitza Leyva**, is "a champion of the rights and best interests of unaccompanied immigrant children, making sure that wherever they land, whether here in the U.S. or in their home country, they are safe."



RIO BRAVO: JOURNAL OF THE BORDERLANDS: VOL. 24 LAUNCH

Saturday, February 8

This year the celebration for the publication launch of *Rio Bravo: Journal of the Borderlands*, Volume 24 took place at Llano Grande Center. The theme of the publication is *Reflecting on [Gloria Anzaldúa's] Borderlands 30 Years Later*. Editors **Amanda Tovar** and **Francisco Guajardo** introduced several of the contributors who spoke briefly about their pieces. Catering by Tesoro's Fine Cuisine.



THE YOUNG CENTER FOR IMMIGRANT CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Thursday, February 20

The Center for Mexican American Studies welcomed staff members of the **Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights** to our Trae Tu Lonchera Series. Volunteer Coordinator **Maritsa Leyva**, Director **Danielle P. Salgado**, and staff attorney **Rosemary González** discussed their work at the Young Center and how the community can get involved.

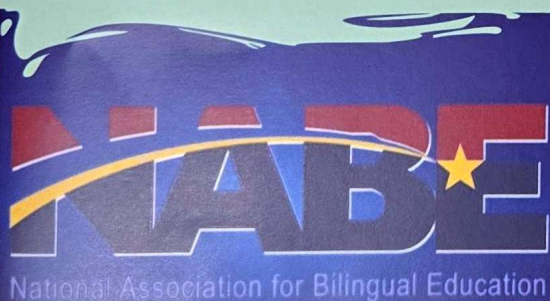
For information on volunteering visit theyoungcenter.org



ENRICHING SOCIAL STUDIES WITH AUTHENTIC AND RELEVANT CONTENT IN DUAL LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

February 25 - 28

The Center for Mexican American Studies & Center for Bilingual Studies presented "Enriching Social Studies with Authentic and Relevant Content in Dual Language Classrooms" at the National Association of Bilingual Education Conference in Las Vegas. **Yajaira Rivera** (CMAS Program Coordinator), **Josue Puente** (CMAS Grad Assistant), **Stephanie Alvarez** (CMAS Director) and **Joy Esquierdo** (CBS Director) provided participants with insights on the work they have been doing on their National Endowment for the Humanities funded grant.



POETRY & PLÁTICA WITH DENICE FROHMAN AT UTRGV

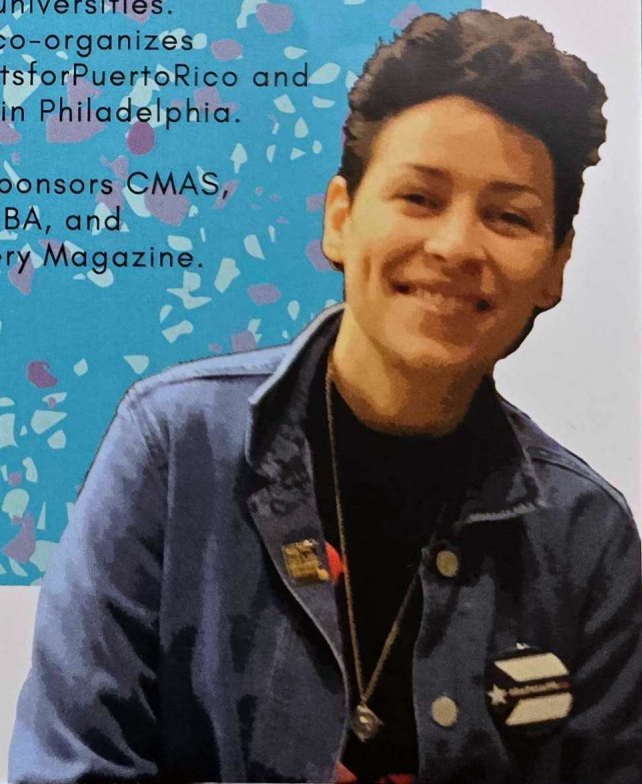
February 26 & 27

Denice Frohman is a poet, performer, and educator from New York City. On her second presentation that was held at UTRGV's library auditorium she presented to 150 high school students from Rio Grande City during FESTIBA. Frohman is a CantoMundo Fellow, she's received residencies and awards from the National Association of Latino Arts & Cultures, Leeway Foundation, Millay Colony and Blue Mountain Center.

Her work has appeared in *Nepantla: An Anthology for Queer Poets of Color*, *What Saves Us: Poems of Empathy and Outrage in the Age of Trump*, ESPNW and elsewhere. A former Women of the World Poetry Slam Champion, she's featured on national and international stages from The White House to The Apollo, and over 200 colleges and universities.

She co-organizes #PoetsforPuertoRico and lives in Philadelphia.

Co-sponsors CMAS, FESTIBA, and Gallery Magazine.



ESTEBAN RODRÍGUEZ

February 26 & 27

Visiting author **Esteban Rodríguez**, and MFA graduate of UTRGV, presented on the Edinburg and Brownsville campuses. Introduced by **César de León**. Esteban Rodríguez shared his poetry and answered questions. The author of multiple books of poetry - including *Dusk and Dust*, *Crash Course*, *In Bloom*, *(Dis)Placement*, and *The Valley* - Esteban Rodríguez works with literary journals and has editorial experience in creative writing. He currently resides in Austin, Texas.

This event was co-sponsored by the UTRGV Center for Mexican American Studies with the UTRGV Department of Literatures & Cultural Studies and took place during FESTIBA 2020.

DR. JOSÉ ANTONIO RODRÍGUEZ

February 26 & 27

Dr. José Antonio Rodríguez, Assistant Professor of Creative Writing, presented from his books to four groups of students from area schools during FESTIBA, reaching about 1200 students. Introduced by Emmy Pérez.

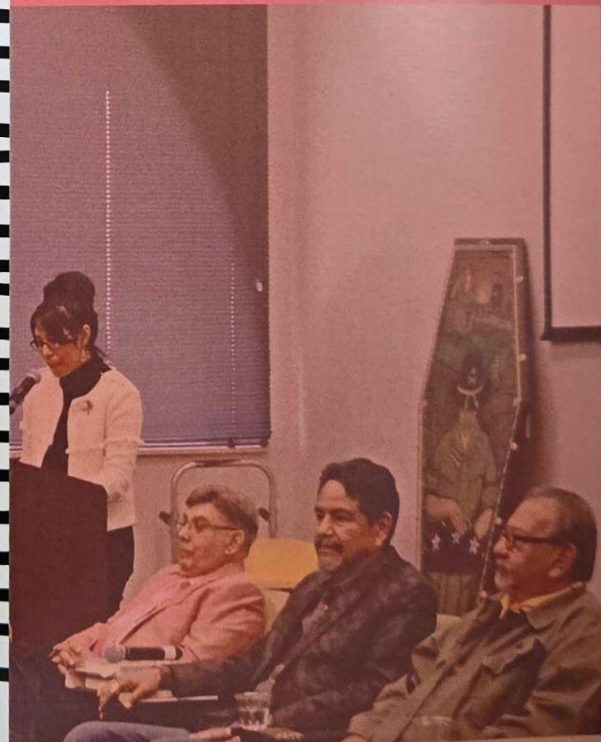
Co-sponsored by Gear-up, FESTIBA, and CMAS.

RGV VIETNAM VETERANS TALK WAR, LIFE, AND LITERATURE

Thursday, February 27

Poet **Beto Conde**, memoirist **Al Garcia**, and visual artist **Cele Castillo** discussed the impact of Vietnam on their life, culture, and creative work. **Dr. Noreen Rivera** organized this important event and moderated a question and answer session and book signing followed.

Co-sponsored by UTRGV Department of Literatures and Cultural Studies, UTRGV Center for Mexican American Studies, and UTRGV FESTIBA.



CMAS PARTICIPATES IN VALLEY INTERNATIONAL POETRY FESTIVAL

Friday, April 24

The Center for Mexican American Studies collaborated with affiliated students and faculty on a video of their original poetry and prose for the Valley International Poetry Festival 2020.

Writers included **Nataly Salazar, David Bowles, M. Miriam Herrera, Pepe García Gilling, Giovanna Pérez, José Luján, and Joaquin Castillo**. Hosted by **Emmy Pérez**.

The video can be found on the CMAS Facebook page.

13TH ANNUAL EL RETORNO: EL VALLE CELEBRA NUESTRA GLORIA

Friday, May 15

El Retorno: El Valle Celebra Nuestra Gloria is an annual event honoring the late Dr. Gloria Anzaldúa, world-renowned scholar, author, poet, and theorist. Her most cited work is *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. This book was seminal in elevating an authentic perspective from the Río Grande Valley and pushing back from the dichotomous narrative that plagued it. This event was presented by former McAllen Poet Laureate and co-founder of the Gloria Anzaldúa Legacy Project, **Priscilla 'Lina' Suarez**. The video can be found on the CMAS Facebook page.

On October 2, CMAS will release Part II of this video "Work that Matters: Jotería Celebration in the Río Grande Valley" hosted by **Veronica Sandoval**.

Presenters César L. De León, Stevie Luna, and Amanda Victoria Ramírez.



CAFECITO Y CHARLA "MONEY ATTITUDES"

Monday, April 29

CMAS Faculty Fellow **Nayelly Barrios** presented on the importance of money attitudes during COVID-19. Participants were also provided with a resource list and a budgeting form that can assist them to visualize their spending and help them become money wise during current uncertain times.

CAFECITO Y CHARLA "A BRIEF HISTORY OF WRESTLING IN THE RGV"

Monday, May 25

Barrio Historian and Pharr native **Eduardo Martínez**

CAFECITO Y CHARLA #BLM:

ANTI-BLACKNESS IN THE RGV

Monday, June 22

Alexandra Nicole Salazar, Host
Panelists: **Judy Pryor-Ramirez**,
Alexandra Hughes
and **Aimaloghi Eromosele**.

Co-sponsored with Jotxs y Recuerdos

CAFECOTO Y CHARLA "NOT MY MASCOT! REJECTING THE RANGER & RECLAIMING OUR HISTORY"

Monday, July 13

Nati Román and **Diana Flores** of
"Somos la Gente" of San Antonio
College

Cafecito y Charla "The Movement to Rename Robert E. Lee

Elementary to Gloria E. Anzaldúa"

Monday, August 24

Lina Suarez, Host

Panelists; **Noemi Martínez**,

Lupe Pardo and **Margarita González**.



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

RÍO BRAVO: A JOURNAL OF THE BORDERLANDS

DEADLINE JUNE 2, 2020

RÍO BRAVO: A JOURNAL OF THE BORDERLANDS IS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY, PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATION OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDIES CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY. THE JOURNAL PUBLISHES SCHOLARLY AND CREATIVE WORKS ABOUT MEXICAN DESCENT COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH TEXAS, THE U.S./MEXICO BORDER, AND NATIONALLY.

VOLUME 25 OF RIO BRAVO IS NOW OPEN FOR SUBMISSIONS. THIS ISSUE OF RIO BRAVO AIMS TO FOCUS ON THE HUMANITARIAN AND ACTIVIST EFFORTS ALONG THE U.S./MEXICO BORDERLANDS. WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONSIDERING INTERVIEWS, ESSAYS, REVIEWS, VISUAL ART, PROFILES, PHOTOS ESSAYS, TESTIMONIOS, POETRY, AND PROSE. SUBMISSIONS IN ENGLISH, SPANISH, AND SPANGLISH ARE ACCEPTED.

FOR SUBMISSIONS GUIDELINES, VISIT:

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/UVED5QN](https://tinyurl.com/uved5qn)

FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE EMAIL VOL. 25 EDITOR, NAYELLY BARRIOS AT NAYELLY.BARRIOS@UTRGV.EDU

UTRGV
Center for Mexican
American Studies



SCAN ME





Photo: Silvia Solis

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
EMMY PÉREZ,
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
OF CMAS AND
PROFESSOR OF
CREATIVE WRITING AS
SHE BEGINS HER TENURE
AS TEXAS
POET LAUREATE 2020.**

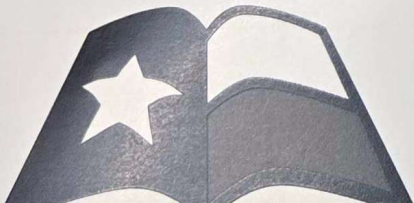




CMAS receives Humanities Texas / National Endowment For the Humanities Relief Grant

**FOR THE COMPLETION OF
DOCUMENTARY PROJECTS**

Pls: Stephanie Alvarez & Emmy Pérez



NATIONAL
ENDOWMEN
FOR THE
HUMANITI

**CMAS
CONGRATULATES ALL OF THE
MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDIES GRADUATES!**

ARACELY MONTEMAYOR LUEVANO

DORA CANTÚ

INGRID DÁVILA

ARIANA LUNA

DANIEL GUAJARDO

DANIELLE A. GUTIÉRREZ

DANIELA GUTIÉRREZ

RACHEL AMAYA

MARIA TRINIDAD SÁNCHEZ

MARIELA CEDILLO

KAYLA HERNANDEZ

MARIEL TOLEDANO

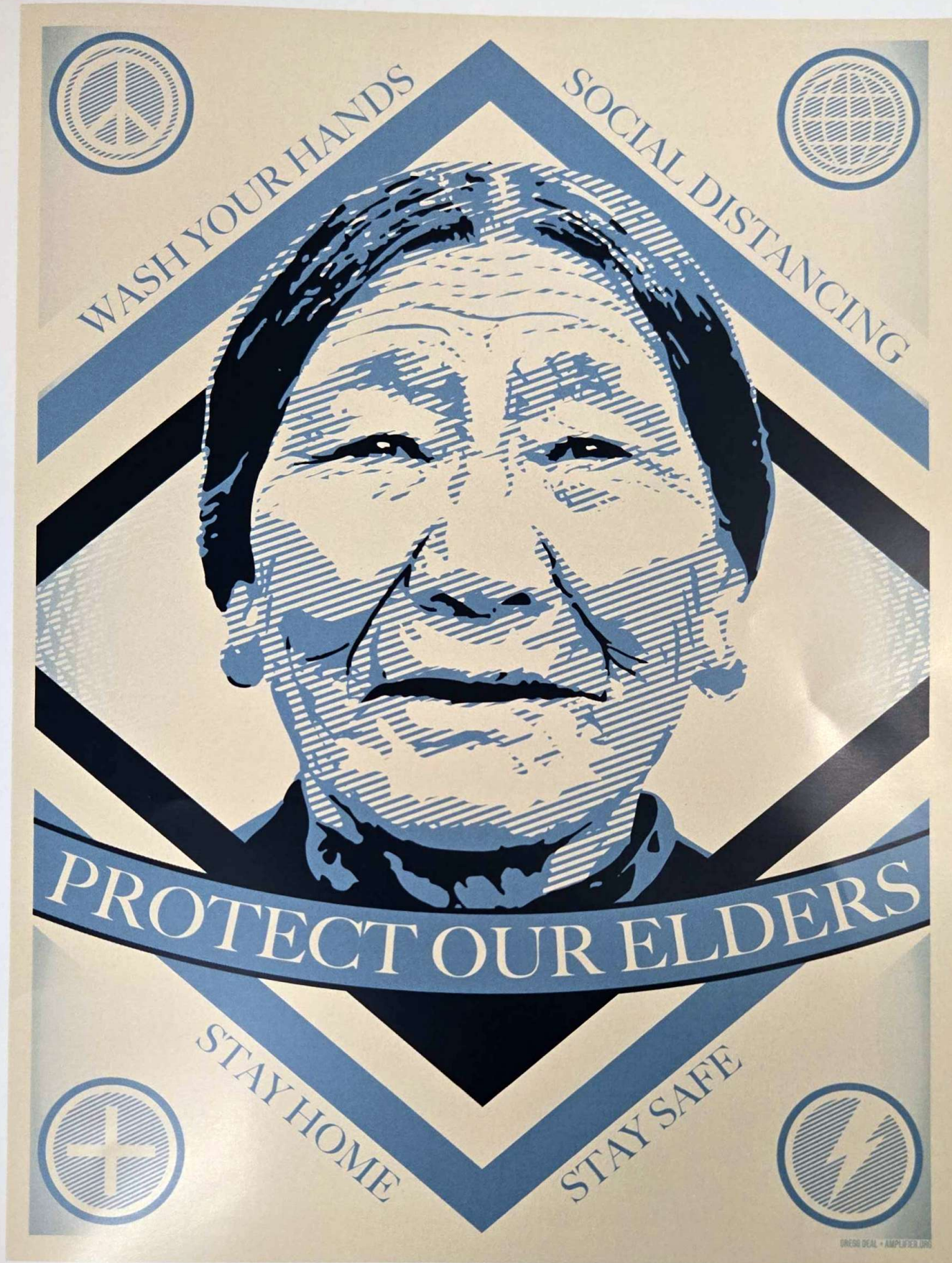
JOSE RETA

JOSUE PUENTE

JOEL VARGAS

SANTIAGO TORRES





Artwork by Gregg Deal

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SCAN ME