

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

2009 *Distinguished Alumni Dinner*

Thursday, April 2, 2009

The Bells of St. Mary's

*The bells of St. Mary's
Ah! Hear they are ringing
They sing out the bright hope
Of hearts firm and true
And while they are ringing
Our young hearts are singing
The praises of, the glory of,
The Gold and Blue*

Welcome and Introductions

Jim Forkenbrock (B.A. 1963)
President
St. Mary's University Alumni Association
Master of Ceremonies

Comments

Charles L. Cotrell, Ph.D. (B.A. 1962, M.A. 1964)
President
St. Mary's University

Invocation

Fr. Bernard Lee, S.M. (B.A. 1954)
Vice President for Mission and Identity
St. Mary's University

Dinner

Awards Presentation

Charles L. Cotrell, Ph.D.
Jim Forkenbrock

Honoree Remarks

Colonel (USA, Ret.) Leopoldo "Leo" R. Vasquez, Jr.
B.A. 1964, M.A. 1974

Ramiro A. Cavazos
M.P.A. 2003

John R. "Rick" Aleman
B.B.A. 1973

Closing Remarks

Jim Forkenbrock

But St. Mary's wasn't all work and no play for Rick. He still found time to participate in regular college activities.

A member of Rho Beta Gamma fraternity, Rick served as President his junior year and was named the fraternity's Man of the Year his senior year. It was his sophomore year, however, that gave Rick his first chance at servant leadership.

"When I was a sophomore, the fraternity put me in charge of their annual Easter project. We would put together Easter baskets for the children at Santa Rosa Hospital downtown. Someone would dress up like the Easter Bunny and we'd go hand out baskets. I think we handed out 150 baskets that year. That was the first time I got to do something that benefitted somebody else," Rick recalls.



Rick has never stopped giving back to the community since that time. His philanthropic interests include Holy Cross High School, St. Philip of Jesus, St. John the Evangelist, his high school alma mater Central Catholic High School, KLRN, the Lymphoma Society, the Susan B. Komen Cancer Project, Blessed Sacrament Academy, Alzafar Shriners Burn Center, YMCA, Museo Alameda and St. Mary's University. He most recently spoke during the 2008 Bill Greehey School of Business's Business Week.

You would think that with a philanthropic list like that he would let others run his successful business but not so. Rick is a very hands-on business manager, and he knows exactly what drives him.

"There are a lot of role models from St. Mary's; previous graduates that are highly successful. When I was going to St. Mary's I would look at what they were achieving and I knew I wanted to be one of them," Rick says.

Successful he has been. His selected projects include facilities services BOS, Naval Support Activity, Bahrain; constructing the largest dining facility (Camp Bob Hope) and providing food services for that facility in Baghdad, Iraq; obtaining the largest State Department award given for full food services and providing food services to the Jordan International Police Training Center; 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics food services; full food services at Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan; providing food and construction services at Chakalala Air Base in Pakistan for NATO DFAC following an earthquake; Stryker maintenance support and up-armoring at various FOBs in Iraq; providing Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Feeding and Life Support in Louisiana, Florida and Mississippi and feeding refugees of Hurricane Rita taking shelter here in San Antonio. The list goes on.

Besides feeding the troops, Rick has been where they are. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant into the United States Army upon his graduation from St. Mary's in 1973. He served his country for four years.

All his hard work and dedication has not gone unnoticed. Rick and Selrico Services, Inc. have won countless awards including the Hennessey Award which he has won twice. That is the highest award given by the U.S. Air Force for excellence in food service. Selrico is also a six time recipient of the Edward Ney Award which is the highest award given by the U.S. Navy for excellence in food service. He was named the CYO Man of the Year in 1998 and an Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year Finalist in 1998.

In 2006, Inc. Magazine recognized Selrico for the fifth time as one of the Top 100 Inner City Companies. That achievement placed Selrico in the Inc. Magazine's Hall of Fame.

"I was really proud of that award," says Rick, "because we got it when we were already established in business. We weren't a start up company so that was a great achievement. We were nominated for our first award from Inc. Magazine by then San Antonio Mayor Ed Garza. We are one of only 10 companies in the magazine's 20 year history to make it into the Hall of Fame."

And despite the success and the recognition, Rick says Selrico will stay "inner city."

"We're from here and we are going to stay here. One of my companies, Lambert Street Packaging, is named after the street where I grew up. My aunt still lives on that street. This city is where we started and this is where we belong," Rick says.

Through it all Rick says he has carried the influence of St. Mary's with him.

"You're not just a number at St. Mary's. You play an important part in the St. Mary's story and that plays an important part in your story. The dedication of the teachers that are there speaks for itself. They could go anywhere but they choose to be there. They teach, but they also influence. I took that with me when I graduated," he says.

Rick and his wife Christina have two children, Kameron and Koby, who attend Blessed Sacrament. Rick's son Richie graduated in 2008 from St. Mary's University with a degree in Business, and Rick's daughter Selena is a graduate of St. Edward's University with a degree in Communications. The most recent addition to the Aleman family is 9 month old granddaughter Sasha.

The St. Mary's University Alumni Association would like to extend our sincere appreciation to this evening's corporate partners:

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ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

2009

Distinguished Alumni Dinner





Colonel (USA, Ret.) Leopoldo “Leo” R. Vasquez, Jr.

B.A.—Government, 1964

M.A.—Political Science, 1974

**Federal Security Director, South Texas Airports-
Transportation Security Administration**

Area Director, Central Region-Transportation Security Administration

“Your St. Mary’s experience and what you are getting from it is not something you realize when it is happening to you. You’re not sitting there during four years of undergraduate work saying ‘I

wonder how this is going to carry me through life.’ You soak it up in bits and pieces. You don’t know you’re being shaped but you are and when you leave St. Mary’s you are engrained with her values and those values do go with you wherever you are.”

Retired U.S. Army Colonel Leopoldo “Leo” Vasquez, Jr. says he wasn’t sure what to expect when he set foot on the St. Mary’s University campus for the first time. As a high school graduate of the now closed Peacock Military Academy in San Antonio, Leo says all he knew back then was that when he went to college it would be St. Mary’s.

“It was just a natural progression. At the time St. Mary’s was still all male so my older sisters went to Our Lady of the Lake and I was headed for St. Mary’s. I could actually see the school from Peacock Military Academy just up Cincinnati Avenue,” Leo says.

Still, making that leap from high school to college was something daunting for this Texas native, the son of Leopoldo Rangel and Conseulo Villarreal Vasquez, who was born and raised in Asherton, Texas.

“The apprehension of going to a university setting is significant first of all. To me, making that leap to the big time was a heck of a wake-up call when you’re taking these courses that are so different from high school,” says Leo.

But Leo says the transition was made easier because he had chosen St. Mary’s.

“There were a number of people whom I recall very well at St. Mary’s who helped me. I think perhaps at the time I was in awe and a little bit intimidated by it all, but over time you really learn to admire and appreciate the dedication of the professors and the Marianists and just what they really, really knew,” he says.

One Marianist professor that made an impact was Bro. John Donohoo, S.M. Leo says he thought he already knew a lot going into Bro. Donohoo’s Zoology and Biology classes. He soon came to find out there was a lot he didn’t know...but Bro. Donohoo changed all that.

Leo says it was another Marianist brother that also taught him some very valuable lessons not just about the subject at hand but about perseverance.

“I had Bro. Ralph Thayer, S.M. for English. I never thought I’d ever be able to write a satisfactory essay under him, but eventually I finally pulled out a B+. I thought that was heaven,” Leo recalls, “You know, it’s classes like those that mean the most. You learn so much from those kinds of experiences.”

It wasn’t only the classroom where Leo says the brothers excelled.

“I remember Bro. Ed Rohrbach, S.M. (‘36). He used to run circles around all us young guys. We couldn’t believe it. He beat us in tennis...in anything really. We were just in awe,” Leo recalls.

The non-Marianist instructors made just as much of an impression on Leo. He remembers one in particular he had for European History.

“He was a retired Army colonel. He would come into class and pull out these copious notes and talk for the entire 50 minutes of class. He might...MIGHT...refer to his notes but rarely. I do remember thinking ‘How am I going to learn all this stuff?’”

He also credits professors Bill Crane and Ken Carey for giving him a strong background in Political Science. That background would come to serve Leo well in his professional life.

Leo didn’t spend all his time in the classroom. He says he has some fond memories of his college activities.

“I did the usual college stuff. I was a member of the Rattler Club (Rho Chi) fraternity and served as president in 1963. I played flag football and was actually a flag football All Star. We had some great times at St. Mary’s when I was a student,” Leo says.



Leo returned to St. Mary’s 10 years after getting his Bachelor’s degree in Government to seek a Master’s degree in Political Science. He says he found nothing had really changed...it was the same family atmosphere with the same high quality education.

“At the time (current St. Mary’s University president) Charles Cotrell, Ph.D. (‘62, ‘64) was on the faculty. He was just a remarkable professor for me. He was probably the greatest instructor I had in the graduate program. He had this unique ability to facilitate great discussions and then really listen to those discussions,” Leo says.

By this time, Leo was well into his military career in the United States Army. A career, he says, he never expected would turn into one that would last nearly 30 years.

Leo was commissioned upon his graduation from St. Mary’s in 1964 at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. His 28 year combat arms Army career included assignments in Vietnam, Germany, Nicaragua, and Panama and at several installations in the United States, culminating at the Army Staff in Washington, DC.

His military service has certainly been distinguished. He is the recipient of the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (two awards), Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal (two awards), Army Commendation Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Medalha do Pacificador (presented by the Brazilian government) and Vietnam Campaign and Service Medals.

Even in the midst of a very busy career and raising a family, St. Mary’s was not far from Leo’s attention. He, along with fellow alumnus Armando Falcon (‘83), is credited with establishing the Washington, DC chapter of the St. Mary’s University Alumni Association.

Never one to sit on the sidelines, Leo began a new career as a civilian consultant after retiring from Army life. He has served as the Security Coordinator for the UN Mission to Haiti and the project manager to revamp the Anti-Terrorism Program for the Department of State. He has also conducted security risk assessments and compliance audits for large domestic and

multi-national corporations such as General Electric, international banks, port facilities and marine terminals, mining companies and a variety of cash-in-transit businesses.

In 2002 Leo was selected as the Federal Security Director for the San Antonio International Airport and was charged with implementing the full range of airport security, regulatory and law enforcement mandates for the San Antonio International Airport. Since then, his area of responsibility has expanded to include seven other airports in South Texas and an intermodal mission area covering approximately 60,000 square miles.

Three years later his government would call on him again. In 2005 Leo was appointed Central Area Director for the TSA. Under his supervision were 14,000 personnel in 170 airports across a 19 state area. He was responsible for overseeing the Federal Security Directors within the Central Area of responsibility and to manage and coordinate issues affecting airport security operations and efficiency. In 2007, he was also named by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as the pre-designated Principal Federal Officer for pandemic influenza/BIOThreat in DHS Region D, comprising FEMA Regions 6 and 7.

But as much as Leo does for the safety and security of others, he and his wife have made sure to pass along values that will ensure the safety and security of the future of their children. It’s something Leo says he got at St. Mary’s.

“You take the academic and religious values you learned at St. Mary’s and you pass them along to your children. You do what you can to try to make them successful. I think that’s what St. Mary’s has done for me. It’s helped me to help my children,” Leo says.

Leo and his wife Olga have reason to be proud. Their eldest son, Leopoldo Vasquez, III, graduated from Yale and went on to complete a MBA at the Graduate School of Business at Columbia University. Their middle child, Daniel, is a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force and graduated from the Air Force Academy. Youngest son David received his Bachelor’s degree 30 years after his father...from St. Mary’s University in 1994.

Leo and Olga are also proud grandparents. Daniel and his wife Yoko have two children, Dylan and Hanna. David and his wife Claudia are the parents of Sofia and Victoria.



Ramiro A. Cavazos

M.P.A.—Public Administration, 2003

President & CEO, San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

“St. Mary’s University is a special place. My experience there was a vast difference from my undergraduate experience at the University of Texas at Austin. Being at St. Mary’s was like being part of an extended family for me made up of friends, professors and people from my hometown who opened a lot of doors for me. I owe St. Mary’s a lot.”

Most students seeking a degree take longer than the usual four years for an undergraduate degree or in some cases two years for their Masters degree. In Ramiro Cavazos’s case...it would take a bit longer than that before he would finally be able to say he was a full fledged alumnus of St. Mary’s University. It would, in fact, take him 16 years.

“I started my Master’s program in 1984 and went to classes through April 1987. My advisor at the time was Dr. Henry Flores, Ph.D. (‘74). He’s now Dean of the Graduate School but back then he was my professor. It was around this same time that I applied and became the Executive Director of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce for the first time. I was close to being finished. I had taken my written and my oral exams and passed them both,” Ramiro explains.

But there was just one thing keeping him from that diploma...a paper.

“I left one paper off my list of things that needed to be done. It was the paper describing my internship at the City of San Antonio. I never got around to submitting it and as time went by I was working and getting on with my life. It was just never something I got around to,” says Ramiro.

Someone who wouldn’t let Ramiro forget about it was his former professor, advisor and now friend...Dr. Henry Flores, Ph.D. (‘74). Ramiro says it was Dr. Flores who kept prodding him to put things in order.

Ramiro recalls, “As time went by I’d run in to Henry and he’d say ‘You owe me a paper. You’re not going to finish (your degree). You owe me that paper.’”

Ramiro says he thought about it but by this time he was solidly entrenched in his career and busy with civic responsibilities. It was those career and civic ties that would eventually bring Ramiro back to St. Mary’s to lecture and to finish the academic work he started 16 years beforehand.

In June 2000 Ramiro went to work as the Director of Economic Development for the City of San Antonio. At the time Alex Briseno was the City Manager and Ramiro’s boss. Mr. Briseno retired a year later and took a position running the M.P.A. program at St. Mary’s. That’s when everything came together.

“Alex asked me to come speak to one of his classes one night. As he was reading my bio he noticed it said I attended the Master’s program at St. Mary’s. I never said I got my Master’s only that I attended. So I gave my speech to his class and afterwards, Alex asked me if I had, in fact, gotten my Master’s degree. I told I hadn’t and the story about the paper and he gave me this look like ‘You’re crazy.’ He told me I needed to finish and so I reenrolled, completed what I needed to do and in December 2003 I got my Master’s degree...16 years after I left the program,” Ramiro says.

But that’s not the end to this story. Ramiro not only got his Master’s degree...he decided to walk the stage in full regalia.

“I had never been through a graduation ceremony before. I finished at UT-Austin in three years and just went home to help my father run for reelection as county commissioner in Hidalgo County. When it came time for graduation in December 2003 I decided I was going to do the whole thing-cap and gown, the whole deal,” says Ramiro.

Even his walk across the stage had a twist for this sixth generation Texan and Weslaco native. At the time of his graduation Ramiro was a sitting member of the St. Mary’s University Board of Trustees.

“So, here I am on stage with the rest of the trustees as happens at every graduation. Vice President for Academic Affairs Dave Manuel, Ph.D. was filling in for Dr. Cotrell at that ceremony. He gets up and says in the course of his speech ‘In fact one of our trustees is getting his Master’s degree today, proving that it is never too late to get an education,’” Ramiro says.

Ramiro walked the stage and he did so with fellow St. Mary’s alumnus and friend, the now Bexar County Commissioner Kevin Wolff (‘91/‘03).

Why did Ramiro choose St. Mary’s in the first place? There were lots of reasons, he says, but primarily it was because the people he knew who had attended thought so highly of it that he felt like there was a place for him there.

“A lot of my friends from my hometown of Weslaco attended St. Mary’s and they were always talking about it. I would stop and visit with them traveling to and from Austin so I kind of felt like part of the St. Mary’s family even then. I worked for State Representative Irma Rangel (JD’69) and she loved St. Mary’s. I knew retired Congressman Kika De La Garza (‘52). I had even gotten the chance to meet Charlie Cotrell informally at his home one Christmas when I was an undergraduate. Those people and how they were and how they felt about St. Mary’s made an impression on me,” say Ramiro.

Charles Cotrell, Ph.D. (‘62/‘64) along with Henry Flores, Ph.D. (‘74), Tom Hoffman, Ph.D. (‘73) and Roy Robbins (‘76) are the professors Ramiro credits with making his experience at St. Mary’s memorable, saying each had their own style but at the core their knowl-

edge and the quality of the education they provided is without comparison.

Ramiro says that education has stood him in good stead professionally.

Before becoming President & CEO of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in August 2008, Ramiro served as Director of Research and Development for the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. There he managed strategic efforts to connect local, state, federal and private resources in economic development.



Ramiro lead the Economic Development Department for the City of San Antonio for six and a half years prior to his position at UTHSCSA. During his tenure, Ramiro led unprecedented economic growth for the nation’s 7th largest city by recruiting Toyota, Microsoft, Maxim Semiconductors. He also led the efforts to expand DPT Labs, National Security Agency and Rackspace.

He was selected as a delegate to The American Assembly, a national public policy forum; was appointed to the U.S. Department of Education’s Secondary School Recognition Program and was one of 15 Americans selected to participate in the U.S.-Japan-China Association for the Communication of Transcultural Study Seminar.

Politics being in his blood, he has remained active in that arena as well. He successfully managed Nelson Wolff’s (‘66/

JD ‘66) mayoral campaign in 1991; served as the first administrator for the City of Helotes and worked for former U. S. Senator Lloyd Bentsen.

Recently, current San Antonio Mayor Phil Hardberger asked him to chair the San Antonio Housing Authority, co-chair the 2007 City Bond campaign and serve on the new P-16 Plus Council task force. He is on the Executive Boards of Brooks Development Authority, the Alamo Academies and is on the board of Project Quest.

Ramiro chairs the St. Mary’s University Neighborhood Revitalization Committee. Under his leadership the committee has, to date, been able to secure nearly \$300,000 in City NCR designation funds over the next 5 to 6 years. Additionally the Hispanic Chamber annually contributes between \$30,000 and \$50,000.

With all his involvements, including a wife and two young sons, why does Ramiro still make a point to give back to St. Mary’s?

“That’s just something that’s in me. I learned it from my family and from my extended family at St. Mary’s. There’s no comparison to the education St. Mary’s provides to a young person. The quality of the education and the professors is the best. St. Mary’s also has a great group of alumni that are great contacts for career advancement. There’s a spirit among us of brother and sisterhood. It’s very much a ‘How can I be a resource?’ system. We tend to advocate for each other and support each others’ businesses. We’re a family,” Ramiro says.

And he still keeps in close touch with the friends he made at St. Mary’s particularly Gilbert Hernandez (‘85/‘88), Javier Oliva (‘87/JD ‘90) and Tristan Castaneda (‘85).

Ramiro is married to Christa and they have two wonderful boys...3-year old Ramiro Antonio and 3-month old Roberto Carlos. His parents are Emma and Ramiro Cavazos.



John R. “Rick” Aleman

B.B.A.—Accounting, 1973

President & CEO, Selrico Services, Inc.

“It was a great experience being at St. Mary’s University. I never missed a day there. St. Mary’s is not just a college. It’s an experience. It’s a daily, life changing experience. I am forever thankful for having had the opportunity to be there.”

He’s fed everyone from presidents to prisoners in innumerable locations across countless continents during the course of his very successful professional life. John R. “Rick” Aleman says he was able to do that with the knowledge he gained at St. Mary’s University.

As President and CEO of Selrico Services, Inc. Rick puts his business and accounting education to work every day. Founded in 1989 and named after his two eldest children-daughter Selena (Sel) and son Richie (Rico), Selrico Services provides food, construction, facilities maintenance, operations and maintenance and other infrastructure support to public and private sectors in over 20 U.S. and international locations. Since 2003, Selrico Services has supported the U.S. efforts on the international war on terrorism through support contracts in Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Jordan and Bahrain.

But it was here in San Antonio where the son of Adelaide and Alfonso Aleman got his start-with a solid, Marianist-based education starting at Central Catholic High School. After graduation, according to Rick, St. Mary’s just seemed the next logical step.

“It was just the next piece of the puzzle,” says Rick “After being taught by the Marianists at Central Catholic, St. Mary’s was the logical choice. Marianist education has been a tradition in my family. Between myself, my brothers and my nephews we have over 70 years of education at Central Catholic High School.”

That didn’t mean St. Mary’s was going to be easy for Rick to attend.

“My parents didn’t have a lot of money at the time. When I told them I wanted to go to St. Mary’s my parents asked if I was really serious about going to college. I said that I was. My parents wanted me to have an education, and they paid for my first year at St. Mary’s. My dad was a butcher and I worked my way through St. Mary’s as a butcher to help pay for tuition and books and things like that. Without my parents’ help though, there is no way anything would have happened for me. I wouldn’t have gone to St. Mary’s, and I wouldn’t have been able to become a successful entrepreneur,” Rick says.

Rick was running in all directions, literally, his first year of college, trying to make the most of his experience.

“I ran track my freshman year for Coach Herman “Buddy” Meyer (‘65). Buddy was very instrumental in my life at St. Mary’s and really, in my life period. He knew my background and that money was an issue for me at the time. While I was running track for him, he gave me a job to help make ends meet. He made me the statistician for the basketball team so that was extra income coming in. That kind of interest in me made a difference,” says Rick.

The coach/athlete relationship turned into a life long friendship for Rick and Coach Meyer. Rick says he considers Coach Meyer one of his dearest friends.