

USC Latino Alumni Association Honors Dr. Richard Zapanta with Legacy Award

LOS ANGELES, Calif., March 22, 2012 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – A sold-out crowd of more than 750 Trojans, USC trustees, faculty and administrators, honored guests, alumni and students gathered at The Beverly Wilshire Hotel to celebrate the 38th Annual USC Latino Alumni Scholarship Gala on March 2. Executive Director Domenika Lynch announced that the dinner raised an estimated \$300,000, which through USC's two-to-one matching program will add a total \$900,000 to USC Latino Alumni Association's scholarship fund.

Dr. Richard Zapanta was honored with the 2012 USC Latino Alumni Association Legacy Award. Erica Suzanne Silva (B.A. '12) received the Dr. John R. Hubbard Award and Michelle Munoz (M.D. '12) received the Dr. Edward Zapanta Outstanding Medical Student Award.

U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis (MPA 1981), surprised the audience when Ruben Smith, chair of the Corporate Advisory Council introduced her.

She said to Dr. Zapanta and his wife, Rebecca, "Finally, I have to say thank you – 14 million 'thank yous' – to the USC Latino Alumni Association for what you're doing. I'm absolutely blown away to learn that this organization has raised \$14 million to help Latino youth pursue their education. It's caring folks like you who made my story possible."

USC Trustee Frank Cruz presented Zapanta with the Legacy Award. Zapanta recalled the first scholarship dinner held at Town and Gown in 1974. "We raised \$16,000 that evening and with the university matching us two-to-one, our total was \$48,000," he said. "Dr. Hubbard always said how proud he was of that decision to match our fundraising and since his passing, his legacy lives in with the annual recognition of one of our outstanding scholars."

Dr. Zapanta earned his B.A. in psychology from USC in 1954 and completed his M.D. at the Keck School of Medicine of USC in 1973. He completed his post graduate training at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center. He has been in private practice since 1979 and is the senior partner at Eastside Orthopedic Medical Associates and Plaza Surgical Center.

Dr. Zapanta with his wife, Rebecca annually give a scholarship to a deserving Garfield High School student and sponsor a student from the Keck School of Medicine at USC of USC MedCor Summer Work Program.

His brother, the late Dr. Edward Zapanta was the first Latino appointed to the USC Board of Trustees in 1984.

"My proudest achievement is the founding of the USC Mexican American Alumni Association that now continues as the USC Latino Alumni Association," Zapanta said. "I'm honored to have played a small role in the support and nurturing of our Latino students."

Jovana Lara of ABC7 Eyewitness News was the mistress of ceremonies and Father Lawrence Seyer, pastor of Our Savior Parish and USC Caruso Catholic Center said the invocation.

About the USC Latino Alumni Association:

The USC Latino Alumni Association is a legacy of the USC Mexican American Alumni Association that was founded in 1973 to develop programs that provide tuition assistance grants to students attending USC who show a commitment to the Latino community. Since then, the USC Latino Alumni Association has awarded over \$14 million in scholarships to more than 7,000 deserving students. For more information please visit: <http://www.usc.edu/latinoalumni>

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