



2010
top
lawyers
under
forty

2010 “Top Lawyers Under Forty”

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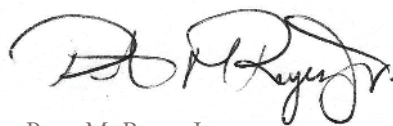
The HNBA Proudly Announces Its 2010 “Top Lawyers Under 40” Award Recipients.

THE HNBA BOARD OF GOVERNORS CONGRATULATES

Carlos Cruz, Ernestina R. Cruz, Niza M. Motola, Monica C. Sanchez, and Luis F. Vilarin on their notable achievements and wishes them continued success. These award recipients stood out among an impressive and accomplished pool of nominees because they embody professional excellence, integrity, leadership and commitment to the Hispanic community. As their biographies reflect, they are among the best and brightest young attorneys in the United States. They have distinguished themselves in the legal profession and within their communities at a relatively early stage in their careers by collectively winning major trials, fighting for human rights and employment rights, managing their own firm while paving the way for other women and Latino business owners, handling complicated commercial and corporate transactions, and by fighting for diversity in the profession. Each of the HNBA’s 2010 “Top Lawyers Under 40” has given back to the Latino community and serves as an extraordinary role model. We thank them for their commitment to excellence, their service, and look forward to their continued leadership as part of the HNBA.



Román D. Hernández
HNBA National President



Peter M. Reyes, Jr.
HNBA National Vice President for Regions
Chair, 2010 HNBA Top Lawyers Under Forty Selection Committee.

ABOUT THE HNBA “TOP LAWYERS UNDER 40” AWARD:

The HNBA’s “Top Lawyers Under 40” Award was awarded for the first time in 2009. The Award was created to celebrate and highlight the accomplishments and contributions of younger HNBA members. It honors lawyers who have demonstrated professional excellence, integrity, leadership and commitment to the Hispanic community. The 2010 selection committee was comprised of Peter M. Reyes, Jr., HNBA Vice-President of Regions (Cargill, Inc.); Lillian G. Apodaca, Former HNBA National President (Bingham, Hurst & Apodaca, P.C.); Miguel A. Pozo, HNBA Region III President (Lowenstein Sandler PC); Jacquelyn Ruiz, HNBA National Vice-President of Membership; Helen Santana, HNBA Region XVII President (Law Offices of Santana & Hart).

Carlos Cruz

CARLOS CRUZ IS THE OWNER AND MANAGING ATTORNEY OF THE LAW OFFICES OF CARLOS A. CRUZ AND ASSOCIATES. In 1981, Mr. Cruz fled El Salvador to the United States at the onset of civil war. After arriving in the U.S. at the age of ten, not speaking a word of English, Mr. Cruz has managed to follow a trajectory of success. In law school, he led his moot court team to victory and was twice awarded the title of best overall advocate for the entire competition. By 2001, Mr. Cruz had started his own practice and owned his own building. To date, he has represented over two thousand immigrants at every level of the judicial system in cases involving immigration law. His work has been published by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Mr. Cruz has been a speaker on complex immigration law issues at community forums and through various media outlets, including radio and television. He serves on several boards and has received numerous awards for his involvement in the community, including Alum of the Year at Loyola Law School. Currently, Mr. Cruz coaches the HNBA moot court team at Loyola Law School. He looks forward to remaining involved with the HNBA and giving back to his community.

A portrait of Ernestina R. Cruz, a woman with dark hair and a slight smile, looking directly at the camera. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The background is a solid orange color.

Ernestina R. Cruz

ERNESTINA R. CRUZ IS A PARTNER AT THE NARVAEZ LAW FIRM, P.A., A CIVIL DEFENSE FIRM IN ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO. With over eight years experience in civil defense litigation, her law practice has concentrated in the areas of employment law, civil rights, education law, and insurance defense. She represents public entities and corporations in New Mexico's federal and state courts and employers at the administrative level before the New Mexico Human Rights Bureau, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the City of Albuquerque's Human Rights Office. She is a graduate of the University of New Mexico (B.A. in Political Science/ Spanish and J.D.) and the University of Notre Dame (M.A. in Government and International Relations). Among other activities, she serves the community as Vice-President of the New Mexico Hispanic Bar Association and co-chair of the NMHBA Summer Law Camp, a week long program designed to introduce seventh and eighth grade students from throughout the state to the practice of law. Ms. Cruz hails from El Valle, a rural village in northern New Mexico's Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

A black and white portrait of Niza M. Motola, a woman with dark hair, smiling slightly. She is wearing a pearl earring and a necklace. The background is dark and out of focus.

Niza M. Motola

NIZA MOTOLA IS AN ASSOCIATE IN LITTLER MENDELSON'S MIAMI OFFICE. Her practice includes representation of employers in the entire spectrum of employment and labor litigation, appeals, and administrative proceedings. In addition to her litigation practice, Ms. Motola regularly provides advice to clients concerning daily personnel issues and compliance with the full range of federal, state, and local laws in all facets of employment related matters. Prior to joining Littler in April 2003, Ms. Motola practiced at a national labor and employment firm in Miami, Florida. Before moving to Florida, she was an associate in the Labor and Employment Group of Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, in Philadelphia. Ms. Motola also served as a law clerk to the Honorable Vanessa Ruiz, District of Columbia Court of Appeals. She earned a B.A. degree from Columbia University and her J.D. from George Washington University Law School, where she was President of the Hispanic Law Students Association.



Monica C. Sanchez

MONICA C. SANCHEZ IS THE MANAGING PARTNER OF THE SANCHEZ FIRM, COCHRAN LATINO, L.L.C., A SISTER FIRM TO THE COCHRAN FIRM - METAIRIE. Ms. Sanchez was born and raised in Panama, Republic of Panama in 1973. She is fluent in both English and Spanish. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in three years from Ohio University, with a double major in Economics and Political Science. She attended Loyola University School of Law from which she obtained her Juris Doctor degree. Monica obtained an L.L.M. (Master of Law) degree in International and Comparative Law in 2003, from Tulane University School of Law. Ms. Sanchez has more than twelve years of experience practicing law in the area of personal injury. She has represented victims of automobile accidents, medical malpractice, products liability, premises liability and other forms of personal injuries. Ms. Sanchez has twice won the prestigious Leadership in Law Award recognizing the Top 50 Lawyers in New Orleans, and has been recognized as an innovative leader with outstanding energy, ideas, achievements and commitment to excellence in the New Orleans area. Ms. Sanchez is the Vice-President of the Louisiana Hispanic Lawyers Association and serves on the LSBA Language Access Subcommittee.

A black and white portrait of Luis F. Vilarin, a man with a shaved head and a slight smile, wearing a white button-down shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

Luis F. Vilarin

LUIS FELIPE VILARIN IS THE ASSISTANT GENERAL COUNSEL FOR REGULATORY, COMMERCIAL AND TRANSACTIONS FOR BRISTOL-MYERS SQUIBB COMPANY. Mr. Vilarin is responsible for all aspects of legal counseling relating to the manufacturing operations for his company, which presently includes 16 manufacturing facilities around the world. He is also responsible for supporting the String of Pearls transactions and providing operational expertise to the company's strategic transactions, including a number of highly complex international outsourcing transactions. Mr. Vilarin serves on his Law Department's Diversity Committee, which sponsors traditionally underrepresented law students each summer and provides them with substantive legal experience as one way to help them refine their educational and career goals. Mr. Vilarin graduated from Duke University with a degree in Economics, received his J.D. from Rutgers-Newark Law School and is currently a master's degree candidate in Biotechnology at Johns Hopkins University.



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ABOUT THE HNBA

The HNBA is an incorporated, not-for-profit, national membership organization that represents the interests of the more than 100,000 Hispanic attorneys, judges, law professors, legal professionals and law students in the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. territories. For more information about the HNBA, please visit www.hnba.com.

For nearly four decades the HNBA has acted as a force for positive change within American society and the legal profession. It does so through non-partisan advocacy on policy issues relevant to Hispanic lawyers and the Latino community and by encouraging Latino students to choose a career in the law and promoting their advancement within the profession once they graduate and begin practicing. Through a combination of issue advocacy, programmatic activities, networking events, and educational conferences, the HNBA has helped generations of lawyers succeed.

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