

“The *paseo* of portraits recalls the rich and diverse history found in this city and the many events that have taken place that define Houstonians today.”

Rolando Briseño

## INSPIRATION FOR THE NORTHLINE TRANSIT CENTER/HCC STATION

Artist Rolando Briseño's station design honors local Tejano heroes chosen by the community for their contribution to the culture of Houston and Texas. The design incorporates abstracted elements from the Mission Revival architectural style, such as filigree, in celebration of cherished Tejano aesthetics.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born and still working in San Antonio, Rolando Briseño received his MFA at Columbia University. His public art projects include installations at Houston Intercontinental Airport and other airports throughout Texas and across the country. Briseño's work is shown in major museums and private collections in the US, Europe and Latin America.

## COMMUNITY SPIRIT COMES TO LIFE THROUGH ARTS IN TRANSIT

METRO created Arts in Transit to celebrate the cultural and artistic diversity of the vibrant communities along the new light-rail lines. This project enlists the talents of 14 local artists and artist teams, as well as community residents and art experts, who are transforming individual stations into meaningful artistic showcases and proud reflections of the neighborhoods they serve.



**Roy P. Benavidez**  
VIETNAM WAR MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT

Master Sergeant Raul (Roy) Perez Benavidez was a member of the Studies and Observation Group of the US Army. In 1981, President Ronald Reagan presented Benavidez with the military's highest award, the Medal of Honor, for his actions in combat in South Vietnam on May 2, 1968. During the award presentation, President Reagan reportedly turned to the press and said, "If the story of his heroism were a movie script, you would not believe it."

**Carlos C. Cadena**  
JUDGE

Carlos C. Cadena was a Mexican-American lawyer, civil rights activist, law professor and judge based in San Antonio. His work in the landmark 1954 *Hernández v. Texas* case helped end the systematic exclusion of Hispanics from jury service in Jackson County. Cadena became the first Mexican-American associate justice for the 4th District Court of Appeals in 1965 and became the court's chief justice in 1977, a position he held until his retirement in 1990.



**José M. Lopez**  
WORLD WAR II MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT

José Mendoza Lopez, a boxer who fought under the name Kid Mendoza in the 1920s, was most remembered for being a United States Army soldier who served during World War II. In 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt presented Sgt. Lopez with the Medal of Honor, the country's highest military decoration for valor in combat, for his heroic actions during the Battle of the Bulge. Sgt. Lopez was solely responsible for keeping Company K from being enveloped and allowing his fellow soldiers to withdraw successfully. Sgt. Lopez single-handedly turned away a German infantry attack, killing at least 100 enemy troops.



**Dr. Hector P. Garcia**  
PHYSICIAN AND AMERICAN G.I. FORUM FOUNDER

Hector Perez Garcia was a Mexican-American physician, World War II veteran, civil rights advocate and founder of the American G.I. Forum. A 1949 incident launched Dr. Garcia and the forum into the national spotlight. A funeral home denied the widow of a fallen decorated war hero, Private Felix Longoria, use of its facilities. Senator Lyndon B. Johnson intervened and Longoria was interred in Arlington National Cemetery. President Johnson appointed Dr. Garcia alternate ambassador to the UN in 1967 and to the US Commission on Civil Rights in 1968. In 1984, President Reagan awarded Dr. Garcia the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

**Olga Y. Navarro Soliz**  
EDUCATION TRAILBLAZER

Yvonne Navarro Soliz was a Latina businesswoman, community activist and leader who volunteered time to worthy causes and created positive social change for women and minorities. Raised in Houston's sixth ward, the native Texan opened Olga Soliz & Associates, her own accounting and bookkeeping business on North Main, after graduating from the University of Houston. She was active in numerous organizations, including the American Leadership Forum, Hispanic Women in Leadership, LULAC Council #643 and Wesley Community Center. Olga Soliz devoted herself to improving the lives of all minorities and advancing the rights of Hispanics and underserved communities.



**Lorenzo de Zavala**  
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS

Manuel Lorenzo Justiniano de Zavala y Sáenz was a 19th-century Mexican politician and author. He served as finance minister under Mexican President Vicente Guerrero. A colonizer and statesman, Zavala served as Interim Vice President of the Republic of Texas under Interim President David G. Burnet. Zavala dedicated his book, *Journey to the United States of North America*, to "hard-working, active, reflective, circumspect, religious" Mexicans.



**Alfred J. Hernández**  
JUDGE

Alfred J. Hernández was a lawyer, civil rights leader and the first Hispanic judge in Harris County. He became a naturalized American citizen while serving in Italy as technical sergeant during World War II. Hernández served as president of LULAC for three terms. His work to improve the social and economic conditions of all American citizens of Spanish-speaking descent in the US included the Selma (Texas) Minimum Wage March, a two-month trek ignited by a labor strike of the United Farm Workers Association, which received national attention in 1966.

**George I. Sánchez**  
EDUCATION ACTIVIST

George Isidore Sánchez was an education pioneer, a civil rights activist and an author. He held several positions at the University of Texas from 1940 until his death. Dr. Sánchez served as president of LULAC from 1941 to 1942. He championed equal educational opportunities for Mexican-American students throughout his career. In 1982, the National Education Association sponsored the George I. Sánchez Memorial Award, which recognized him as the "father of the movement for quality education for Mexican Americans."



**Theodore W. Berenson**  
FOUNDER AND DEVELOPER OF NORTHLINE MALL

Theodore W. Berenson was a pioneering real estate developer and advocate for minority contractors. He helped develop Houston's Gulfgate and Northline malls. In 1963, Northline's 800,000 square feet made it the largest enclosed, air-conditioned mall in the Southeast and one of the largest in the country. Berenson also served on the President's Commission of Government Contracts and helped the Eisenhower administration better serve the interests of minority contractors bidding for government contracts.

## James DeAnda

### FEDERAL JUDGE

James DeAnda was an American attorney and US federal judge known for his defense of Hispanic civil rights. A Marine during World War II, DeAnda served as a plaintiff's attorney in the landmark *Hernández v. Texas* case that ended discrimination against Hispanic jurors in Jackson County. President Jimmy Carter appointed DeAnda to serve as chief judge on the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas, a position he held until his retirement in 1992.



## Raúl C. Martinez

### CONSTABLE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADER

Raúl C. Martinez was a civic leader and the first uniformed Mexican American in the Houston Police Department. He served in the US Army in World War II and entered the police academy in 1950, eventually rising to the position of Harris County Constable. His family describes him as a Tejano, a Mexican Texan and a proud American. On service, he once said, "Our dues have been higher than most, and we will continue to pay them and preserve our colorful heritage."



## Susie Sepulveda

### BUSINESS OWNER AND PHILANTHROPIST

Susie Sepulveda was a successful businesswoman known for her kindness and generosity to the underprivileged. She and her husband Gilbert opened a grocery store at Hardy and Providence in 1944, where they offered groceries and credit to many people in need. Susie was a member of several Hispanic charitable organizations, including Mexico Bello, Familias Unidas, LULAC and St. Patrick's Young at Heart Club. The couple sponsored tables at Hispanic events so members of the Northside community could attend.



## A. John Castillo

### CIVIC LEADER

A. John Castillo was a railroad car inspector and a community leader dedicated to helping elect pro-Hispanic candidates to Harris County public office. Castillo was a founding member of the Hispanic Caucus, Harris County PASO, serving as vice chairman in 1964. He served as director for LULAC Council 60, United Fund, Fiestas Patrias and Wesley Community House and was the Democratic Party precinct judge for Precinct 46, the largest Mexican-American precinct at the time, from 1966 to 1986.



## John J. Herrera

### ATTORNEY AND CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

John J. Herrera was a leading civil rights advocate for Mexican Americans in Texas. He practiced law for five decades in Houston, participating in cases that ended separate schools for Mexican-American children and the exclusion of Spanish-speaking citizens from juries. He also protested employment discrimination for Mexican Americans in Houston shipyards during World War II. Herrera held every office in LULAC at the city, state and national level, including national president and national legal counsel.

## Gustavo "Gus" C. Garcia

### CIVIL RIGHTS ATTORNEY

Gustavo "Gus" C. Garcia was a Mexican-American civil rights attorney. Garcia was best known for being instrumental in the landmark *Hernández v. Texas* case that ended exclusion of Hispanics from jury service in Jackson County. As a result of the trial, he and fellow attorneys effectively put an end to the 25-year-old practice that had kept anyone of Mexican ancestry from serving on juries in more than 70 Texas counties.



## Maria T. Reyna

### ENTREPRENEUR AND CIVIC LEADER

Maria T. Reyna was a Mexican-American journalist, businesswoman and civic leader. She organized community celebrations and donated her time and services to an exhaustive list of charities. She opened Reyna's Florist in 1947, realizing a lifelong dream. Her contributions to the community earned her recognition from several Houston mayors and the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Her success in business earned her the nickname *La Reina de los Flores*, or Queen of the Flowers.

## Felix Tijerina

### ENTREPRENEUR AND CIVIC LEADER

Felix Tijerina was a highly successful Mexican-American restaurant owner, civic leader and champion of education for underprivileged Mexican-American children. In the late 1950s, Tijerina sponsored the "Little School of the 400," which taught Mexican-American children 400 basic English words to help them in US schools. He was also involved in LULAC, serving as national president for four consecutive terms beginning in 1956.



HONOR  
**OUR PAST**  
CREATE  
**OUR FUTURE**

METRO honors the heroes who have shaped the rich culture of our proud community.

**Community Heroes Dedication Ceremony**  
Saturday, September 20, 2014  
Northline Transit Center/HCC Station

