

Friday, June 17, 2011 Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego, California

# American Heritage Awards

 AMERICAN  
IMMIGRATION  
COUNCIL

**HONORING**

Somy Ali

Louis Caldera

Yousif Ghafari

Maya Young Wong

*5th Grade Creative Writing Contest Winner*

*And featuring*

Gustavo Arellano

*as Masters of Ceremonies*



*presents*

# **The American Heritage Awards**

*Friday, June 17, 2011  
Manchester Grant Hyatt  
San Diego, California*

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# American Heritage Awards

June 17, 2011

Opening Reception

Seated Dinner

Welcoming Remarks

American Immigration Council Presentation

Special Remarks

5th Grade Creative Writing Contest Winner

Awards Presentation

Closing Remarks

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# About the AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL

The American Immigration Council was established in 1987 as a tax-exempt, nonprofit, educational, charitable organization. The Council is dedicated to increasing public understanding of immigration law and policy and the value of immigration to American society and to advancing fundamental fairness and due process under the law for immigrants. Working closely with leading immigration experts throughout the country, the Council has established four core program areas.

## **Legal Action Center**

The Legal Action Center (LAC) works to advance fundamental fairness in U.S. immigration law and to protect the constitutional and legal rights of noncitizens. In pursuit of its mission, the LAC has established itself as a leader in litigation, information-sharing, and collaboration among immigration litigators across the country. The LAC conducts national impact litigation, including filing *amicus curiae* (“friend of the court”) briefs; tracks and publicizes immigration litigation through the Litigation Clearinghouse; produces Practice Advisories for immigration attorneys on a variety of topics; conducts a litigation training for immigration attorneys; organizes national and local litigation strategy meetings; and provides support for lawyers litigating immigration cases. Furthermore, we work with other immigrants’ rights, civil rights and human rights organizations and immigration attorneys across the United States to promote the just and fair administration of our immigration laws.

## **Immigration Policy Center**

The Immigration Policy Center (IPC) is the research arm of the Council and is dedicated to analysis of the contributions made to the United States by immigrants. Together, the IPC director and staff have been a major voice in the national debate on comprehensive immigration reform. Their activities include testifying before Congress and publishing timely reports to provide lawmakers, the press and the public with critically important information about the need for sensible immigration reform.

## **Community Education Center**

The Community Education Center strives to promote a better understanding of immigrants and immigration by providing educational resources that inspire thoughtful dialogue, thoughtful teaching and critical thinking. Dedicated to the American values of fairness, social justice and respect for all people, the Center is committed to making immigration an “everybody” issue. The Center also highlights the positive contributions immigrants have made and continue to make to American society through its programmatic work, including the annual 5th grade creative writing contest, teacher workshops and community grants.

## **International Exchange Center**

The Council’s International Exchange Center sponsors trainings and internships for young international professionals at American institutions and businesses. Participating American host companies benefit from exposure to ideas from around the world and international exchange visitors benefit by gaining tangible skills and learning American methodologies. The Exchange Center also provides opportunities for Americans to travel overseas and explore immigration issues on a global scale.

## **Additional Activities**

In addition to these four core program areas, the Council conducts many other activities. They include organizing the *5th Grade Creative Writing Contest* and presenting the *Immigrant Achievement Awards* and *American Heritage Awards* in conjunction with the American Immigration Lawyers Association’s (AILA) CLE conferences to honor the individual accomplishments of outstanding immigrants.



# The American Immigration Council

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# The American Heritage Awards

## *Master of Ceremonies*

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### **GUSTAVO ARELLANO**

*Award-Winning Author, Columnist of ¡Ask a Mexican!*

## *2011 Honorees*

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### **SOMY ALI**

*Former Bollywood Actress, Model and President & Founder of No More Tears Project and So-Me Designs*



### **LOUIS CALDERA**

*Former Secretary of the Army and Vice President of Projects, Jack Kent Cooke Foundation*



### **YOUSIF GHAFARI**

*Former Ambassador to Slovenia and Founder of GHAFARI*

# Creative Writing Contest Winner



## MAYA YOUNG WONG

Castelar Elementary School

*AILA Southern California Chapter*

### *“My Grandfather Ben”*

From China sailed my Grandfather Ben.  
He came to America when he was four plus ten.  
His Guangzhou village was small and poor  
And he helped his mother with farming chores.  
Every morning he gathered bits of firewood  
And drew water from the well as much as he could.  
From morning to night he slaved like an ox.  
But it was never enough to fill the rice box.  
So his parents said, “You’d better leave home  
And go to America where you can roam”.  
Until you find a great place of your own.  
America, Gold Mountain, is the place to go  
Big and wide, and high and low.  
Everything is yes, and there are never any any.  
But here in America life was hard  
And it wasn’t like a birthday card.  
Golden Mountain didn’t have jobs  
For Chinese men, and that made them sob.  
From San Francisco to Saint Louis  
Chances for Chinese were least to fewest.  
Still his heart never gave way  
‘Cause he knew hard work always pays.  
So Grandpa Ben worked hard again.  
Slaving in a laundry from five to ten.

And he lived in important USA times  
Starting from cool Jazz Age crime  
Right on down to the Great Depression’s  
Brother can you spare a dime.  
Until finally his big chance came  
To show American Chinese are the same.  
He joined the army in World War II  
And fought in Europe for the red, white and blue.  
All over he fought bringing supplies  
To American soldiers on the lines.  
Until one day he was shot in the back  
And his jeep flipped over and he got smacked.  
He didn’t win any fame or medals  
Just came back home to wed and settle.  
Still to me he is The Greatest Hero  
‘Cause he never gave up and never said no.  
He loved America both good and bad  
And taught his 5 kids not to be sad.  
Work hard, dream big, and never give up.  
And one day Gold Mountain will live up  
To what is written on the Statue of Liberty  
Chances for all and the gift to be free.  
To my Chinese Grandfather,  
Whom I love and honor.

# Master of Ceremonies



Gustavo  
Arellano

**Gustavo Arellano** is the author of the bestselling book *¡Ask a Mexican!* and the column of the same name—which has a circulation of two million-plus, Managing Editor of *OC Weekly*, and author of *Orange County: A Personal History*. Gustavo is a contributing editor to the op-ed page of the *Los Angeles Times*, and has appeared on “Today,” “Nightline,” “The Colbert Report,” various NPR programs, and elsewhere.

In June 2010, UCLA, his alma mater, bestowed the honor upon him of delivering the keynote address at its commencement ceremony, specifically for his “[exploration of] today’s issues of diversity and ethnicity with incisive commentary and a sharp wit that punches holes in traditional thinking about race and stereotypes.”

Gustavo received the President’s Award from the Los Angeles Press Club, an Impact Award from the National Hispanic Media Coalition, and a 2008 Latino Spirit Award from the California State legislature for his “exceptional vision, creativity, and work ethic.” A frequent guest on liberal and conservative talk shows, where he discusses local and national issues, Gustavo was also a finalist for the 2005 PEN USA Literary Awards for Journalism for his profile on a disabled Latino veteran of the Iraq War. He’s currently working on a socio-cultural history of Mexican food in the US, tentatively titled, *Taco USA*, to be published in 2012.

# Biography



## Somy Ali

As the founder of both No More Tears Project and So-Me Designs, **Somy Ali** draws upon her first hand experiences from living in Pakistan and working as a Bollywood actress in India during her young adult years. No More Tears Project focuses on helping immigrant women in the United States who are victims of spousal abuse. These women are sometimes brought to America via arranged marriages and are scared to speak out against their oppressor in fear of being sent back and facing the consequences in their home country. The organization works with these women by helping them with legal counsel, financial assistance and psychotherapy. So-Me designs was founded with two goals: first, to raise awareness about social issues and to raise money for global humanitarian causes.

Originally from Karachi, Pakistan, actress and model, Somy Ali moved to Bombay, India where she worked in 10 Hindi films and several commercials. She then moved to the United States to obtain a degree in psychology. She attended the Nova Southeastern University in Florida and in three years graduated with her Bachelor's degree in psychology. While working on her bachelor's degree Somy worked at a local radio station doing talk-shows on social and political issues, it was during this time that she became interested in journalism and decided to attend the University of Miami to obtain a master's degree in print journalism. During her time at the University of Miami she developed a strong interest in documentary films and left Miami to attend the New York Film Academy.

Somy Ali, since graduating, has become a human rights advocate and documentary film maker.

# Biography



## Louis Caldera

The Honorable **Louis Caldera**, the former Secretary of the Army, is Vice President of Programs for the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, an operating and grantmaking foundation whose mission is to help high-achieving, low-income students reach their full potential through education. One of the largest scholarship providers in the nation, the Foundation awards scholarships to eligible students from middle school to graduate school without regard to citizenship or status.

The son of Mexican immigrants, Louis Caldera was born in El Paso, Texas and raised in Whittier, CA. In 1974, he earned a Congressional appointment to West Point. He graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1978 and served as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army before going back to school to earn law and business degrees from Harvard University in 1987.

Embarking on a public service career, Mr. Caldera was first elected to the California legislature in 1992, representing a highly diverse, multi-ethnic community centered on downtown Los Angeles. In the legislature he was a champion for education reform, sensible gun laws, and children's health and safety measures. In 1997, President Bill tapped him to become a Managing Director and the COO of the Corporation for National Service, the agency that sponsors the AmeriCorps national service program. Less than a year later, President Clinton asked him to serve as the nation's 17th Secretary of the Army, the first and only Hispanic American ever to hold this position. During his tenure the Army sponsored path-breaking educational initiatives for soldiers, and took major steps to increase racial, ethnic and gender diversity in the Army's political appointee, civilian, enlisted, officer and cadet ranks, including Secretary Caldera recommended to President Clinton the appointment of GEN Erik Shinseki to be Chief of Staff of the Army, and the award of the Medal of Honor to 22 Japanese and Asian American World War II veterans.

Following administration service, Mr. Caldera's public service career turned to education, serving first as a Vice Chancellor of The California

State University and then as President of the University of New Mexico. In both positions he actively supported state law measures to permit undocumented students who graduated from the state's high schools to attend public institutions at in-state tuition rates.

After the election of President Obama he was asked to serve on the President-elect Obama Transition Team as a member of the Department of Defense Review Team and subsequently joined President Obama's Administration as an Assistant to the President and Director of the White House Military Office. Upon leaving the White House, he became a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress, where, among other things he worked as part of the Immigration policy team that studies the importance of, and advocates for enactment of, comprehensive immigration reform. He also worked on and is frequently interviewed in English and Spanish, at home and abroad, on issues affecting Latinos in the US, foreign and national security policy, Mexico and the Americas, and presidential and Congressional decision-making.

He has been a passionate advocate for passage of the DREAM Act – which he helped conceive – since shortly after leaving the Clinton Administration. He recently stated that:

*“The DREAM Act will materially expand the pool of individuals qualified, ready and willing to serve their country in uniform. Of the 50,000 youth coming of age every year in the terrible predicament of being ineligible to work, enlist, or receive federal financial aid to attend college, many are not yet ready to pursue full time education. For them, military service is a highly appealing way to better themselves, give back to their country and earn their residency and eventually citizenship. I have no doubt many of these enlistees will be among the best soldiers in our Army.”*

Mr. Caldera has served on numerous nonprofit boards and commissions, and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.



# Biography



## Yousif Ghafari

**Yousif B. Ghafari** is founder and chairman of GHAFARI, a full-service organization of architects, engineers, consultants, and staffing specialists serving a global client base that includes the aviation, manufacturing, government, and commercial sectors. GHAFARI has operated in 25 countries and employs nearly 860 people. Among the company's success they have been recognized as the #6 designer of manufacturing facilities and #1 designer for automotive plant in the US by Engineering News Record.

Born in Lebanon, Mr. Ghafari immigrated to the United States in the early 1970's and became an American citizen in 1978. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Mathematics, a Master of Arts in Applied Mathematics and Computer Applications, and a Master of Science in Chemical Engineering - all from Wayne State University. In 1992, Mr. Ghafari received his Master of Business Administration from the Michigan State University.

Yousif Ghafari is considered one of the Detroit area's leading philanthropists. In 2005, Wayne State University acknowledged his longtime support by renaming one of its residence buildings Yousif B. Ghafari Hall.

In 2004 and 2005, he served as Public Delegate Designate at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations for the 59th United Nations General Assembly. He was appointed by President George W. Bush to the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board in 2005. President Bush, in 2008, appointed Mr. Ghafari as the United States' Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia. However, in 2009, he resigned his position to return home.

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Honorees and the Many  
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just immigration system.



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**Your contributions are inspirational and  
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We salute AIC and thank Somy Ali, Louis Caldera, and Yousif Ghafari as immigrants for enriching our precious American heritage.

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