# American Heritage Awards

Friday, July 2, 2010
Gaylord National Hotel & Convention Center
National Harbor, Maryland



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#### **American Heritage Awards**

Friday, July 2, 2010

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 COUNCIL

The American Immigration Council—formerly the American Immigration Law Foundation (AILF)—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 Immigration Council

# American Heritage Awards

#### 2010 Honorees



Loula Loi Alafoyiannis

#### Rebecca Cammisa

Director and Producer of the 2010 Oscar Nominated Documentary Which Way Home



Nelly Rico

#### Loula Loi Alafoyiannis

Founder and CEO, Euro-American Women's Council



Mother of Olympic Gold Medalist Henry Cejudo



Julia Culbert

#### Julia Culbert

5th Grade Creative Writing Contest Winner

Special Guests

Steve and Cokie Roberts

as Masters of Ceremonies





Steve and Cokie Roberts

#### 5th Grade Creative Writing Contest Winner



Julia Culbert

#### 1st Place Winner: "America's Fried" by Julia Culbert

Monterey Hills Elementary School Saratoga Elementary School, Saratoga, CA

AILA's Santa Clara Valley Chapter

The mice gathered in their cave, lingering in the illuminated abyss. They often discussed politics and all had very definite opinions. Disagreements led to arguing, and arguing led to fighting.

Tonight they were discussing dinner, though. Anna, a girl mouse, was having fried rice. Her sister Adelaide was enjoying her steamed rice. Rice was really a fine feast, when it passed the holidays, and the mice loved it.

"My steamed rice is delicious. All one flavor, all the same. I'd never dare mix it with Vermeer's egg. How lush it is in my mouth," Adelaide whispered as the steam filled her round glasses.

Anna just had to speak up, "Now see here! Your rice is a bland mixture, all the same, like some countries in the world. My fried rice is mixed, like with each person immigrating here, and it tastes better with a little bit of each, like all the different cultures in America."

"Not true!" squeaked Mabel, "People have different ways! How could it all fit together?"

"America is how. If you add soy sauce to that rice, it will taste a little better. But you need all the vegetables in order to get the best flavor you can," explained Anna. She was now full-out ready to explain it.

She sorted out all of the ingredients into little piles, taking some of Mabel's sauce and Adelaides's rice.

"Now," she commanded to all the other mice, "try some carrot."

Each mouse took a cube of carrot, shrugged and popped it into their mouths. Their expressions didn't change, so Anna pushed further.

"Take some soy sauce," she again directed the mice. This time they all spit it out and grabbed paw-fulls of rice, gulping water and gasping.

"This is a country at war," Anna said solemnly, staring at the dirt, "For it will never come together." Anna was ready to give her final instructions.

In order to complete the fried rice, she had to ask for everyone's dinners. They reluctantly handed it over when she demanded it. Chopping, mixing, frying and scooping, she began to mix what was really an example of America. Stepping away from the stove with the bowls along her arms, she handed them out to her fellow mice.

"What is not there is what we decided not to mix," she concluded. All of the other mice stared at her, waiting for instruction. She sat down with her own bowl, looking at them. "Have a bite," she directed.

All the mice looked at their plates, but did not eat. "Why does it all look so wrong and so mixed up?" asked Mabel.

"We are all different, but isn't it more pretty when we are together?" Anna questioned. Mabel nodded, so all the mice took a bite.

"Incredible! Amazing!" "Way better than just carrots." Comments spouted from all around.

"I guess you were right," admitted Adelaide, "it's better mixed together. No wonder 25 million people immigrated here."

"So, shall I make fried rice again tomorrow?" Anna giggled. "Definitelv!"



Steve Roberts

#### Steve Roberts

Steve Roberts has been a journalist for more than 45 years, covering some of the major events of his time. from the antiwar movement and student revolts of the 60s and 70s to President Reagan's historic trip to Moscow in 1988 and eleven presidential election campaigns. After graduating from Harvard magna cum laude in 1964, he joined the New York Times as research assistant to James 'Scotty' Reston, then the paper's Washington bureau chief. His 25-year career with the Times included assignments as bureau chief in Los Angeles and Athens, and as Congressional and White House correspondent. He was a senior writer at U.S. News for seven years. specializing in national politics and foreign policy. Roberts and his wife, TV journalist Cokie Roberts, write a nationally syndicated newspaper column that was named one of the ten most popular columns in America by Media Matters. In February of 2000 Steve and Cokie published From This Day Forward, an account of their marriage, as well as other marriages in American history. The New York Times called the book "inspiring and instructive" and it spent seven weeks on the Times best-seller list. Roberts also writes a bi-monthly column, Hometown, for Bethesda Magazine; and as a life-long baseball fan, he reviews sports books for the Washington Post. His childhood memoir, My Fathers' Houses, was published in the spring of 2005 and was featured at the National Book Festival in Washington. His latest from Every End of This Earth, was published in October, 2009. The Post called it "compassionate and engaging".

As a broadcaster, Roberts appears regularly as a political analyst on the ABC radio network and is a substitute host on NPR's Diane Rehm Show. As a teacher, he lectures widely on American politics and the role of the news media. Since 1997 he has been the Shapiro Professor of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University, where he has taught for the last 19 years. His many honors include the Dirksen Award for covering Congress, the Wilbur Award for reporting on religion and politics, the Bender prize as one of GW's top undergraduate teachers, and four honorary doctorates. Steve and Cokie have two children: Lee, a real estate investor in Raleigh, NC, and Rebecca, a journalist in Washington, and six grand-children. In his spare time, Roberts is an avid gardener and tennis player, and coaches third base for his twin grandsons' Little League team.

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Cokie Roberts

#### Cokie Roberts

Cokie Roberts is a senior news analyst for NPR News, where she was the congressional correspondent for more than 10 years. In addition to her work for NPR, Roberts is a political commentator for ABC News, providing analysis for all network news programming.

From 1996-2002 she and Sam Donaldson co-anchored the weekly ABC interview program *This Week.* In her more than forty years in broadcasting, she has won countless awards, including three Emmys. She has been inducted into the Broadcasting and Cable Hall of Fame, and was cited by the American Women in Radio and Television as one of the fifty greatest women in the history of broadcasting.

In addition to her appearances on the airwaves, Roberts, along with her husband, Steven V. Roberts, writes a weekly column syndicated in newspapers around the country by United Media. The Roberts are also contributing editors to *USA Weekend Magazine*, and together they wrote *From this Day Forward*, an account of their more than 40 year marriage and other marriages in American history. The book immediately went onto *The New York Times* bestseller list, following Cokie Roberts's number one bestseller, *We Are Our Mothers' Daughters*, an account of women's roles and relationships throughout American history. Roberts histories of women in America's founding era —*Founding Mothers*, published in 2004 and *Ladies of Liberty* in 2008, also became instant bestsellers.

Cokie Roberts holds more than twenty honorary degrees, serves on the boards of several non-profit institutions and on the President's Commission on Service and Civic Participation. This year the Library of Congress named her a "Living Legend," one of the very few Americans to have attained that honor. She is the mother of two and grandmother of six.



Loula Loi Alafoyiannis

#### Loula Loi Alafoyiannis

Loula Loi Alafoyiannis is the Founder, Global President and CEO of the Euro-American Women's Council (EAWC). Founded in 1996, EAWC's mission is to strengthen the status of women in the global marketplace by building strategic alliances between women in business and prominent leaders across the United States and Europe. Through EAWC, women of diverse backgrounds and accomplishments work together to advance women's access to positions of leadership and to pave the way for the next generation of women business leaders.

Prior to EAWC, Ms. Alafoyiannis served as the Vice President of the United Hellenic American National Council, which she co-founded with Mr. John Alafoyiannis. The Council's goal was to build bridges between Greek and American entrepreneurial communities and to advance the cause of women's rights in the arenas of business and education. The Council has sponsored numerous White House luncheons for prominent and influential businesswomen throughout the United States and Greece.

In addition to her business activities, Ms. Alafoyiannis, widely recognized for her strategic planning and interpersonal skills, has been highly active in public relations, event management and fundraising activities in the political arena. She has served as an advisor to former U.S. Congressman Joseph P. Kennedy (MA) and supports Mr. Kennedy in fundraising and public relations activities for the Greek-American and other minority communities.

In 2000, Ms. Alafoyiannis served as an ethnic group public relations team leader for Former First Lady and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. She was also instrumental in planning Ms. Clinton's visit to Greece, on the occasion of the 100 th anniversary of the Olympic Games.

In 2001, Loula became Coalition Partner (Greece/Europe) of the political organization

Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP). In 2002, Ms. Alafoyiannis was instrumental in the production of the two documentaries "Visions of Greece," made on behalf of WLIW21. She was in charge of pinpointing the prominent historical places and tourist attractions for the film.

Ms. Alafoyiannis currently serves as a member of the Human Rights Advisory Council of New York. Other affiliations include the *Daughters of Roumeli* non-profit organization, which she co-founded and served as former president and the Hermes Athletic Club of New York.

Her notable background and accomplishments have granted her numerous accolades and awards. Ms. Alafoyiannis was awarded IBM's prestigious Crown Award, which was presented by Ms. Cherie Piebes, Global Market Executive Director for Women Entrepreneurs. She has earned the distinguished Honorary Citizen of Bacu (Azerbaijan Republic) award as a result of her pioneering efforts to provide entrepreneurial training to citizens of the former Soviet Union. For her tireless humanitarian efforts, she has received awards from AMMJE (Asociacion Mexicana de Mujeres Jefas de Empresa), the Village Reform Democratic Club of New York and from the United States Congress for her human rights activities in Cyprus and the former USSR.

Ms. Alafoyiannis was also named *Woman of the Year* by the Boys Club of Queens and was awarded the *Teacher of the Year* award by the Greek Orthodox Church's former Archbishop of North and South America.

Ms. Alafoyiannis holds a degree in Education and served as an elementary school director for two decades in New York.



**Nelly Rico** 

#### **Nelly Rico**

"She's such a strong woman. I've never heard her cry," Henry Cejudo recalled on the Tonight Show with Jay Leno. That is, of course, until her son won his first gold medal at the 2008 Bejing Olympics in wrestling—the youngest American to ever do so.

An undocumented immigrant from Mexico, Ms. Rico entered the United States to find a better life. Over the next decades, she would work multiple jobs in order to provide for her family of seven children. Ultimately, she would do much more than provide—she would give her family the resources and encouragement to *thrive*. Four sons, three daughters, and more than one wrestling champ. Perhaps none are more famous, however, than Ms. Rico's son Henry.

Henry Cejudo, the youngest of seven children, was born on February 9, 1987 in South Central Los Angeles, California. Cejudo's father, who was consistently in and out of the California penal system, was absent from Henry's life starting at a young age. In 1991, Nelly made the decision to move to Las Cruces, New Mexico to raise her seven young children on her own. However, as she needed to move frequently for work, Henry's early childhood was spent moving from state to state, until his family finally settled in Phoenix, Arizona.

The Cejudo children were raised in some of the poorest neighborhoods in Los Angeles, Las Cruces and Phoenix. All seven children slept on the floor and often did not know where their next meal would come from. Motivated by the hardships of his childhood, Henry immersed himself in school and athletics. Although the odds were stacked against him, he managed to stay out of trouble by focusing on sports. Henry's brother, Angel, introduced him to the sport of wrestling. From the beginning he was determined to prove himself to the world and to the father that he never really knew. Driven by desire, Henry was focused on winning the World and Olympic championships.

14 American Immigration Council

Henry and his brother dominated the competition while attending high school. Impressed by their accomplishments, the national developmental freestyle coach for USA Wrestling invited both Angel and Henry to attend the resident freestyle program at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, CO.

Henry completed his education while attending the program. Upon graduation, he took the bold and highly unusual road to the Olympic gold, foregoing the customary route of a collegiate wrestling program. Henry began training full time at the Olympic Training Center to prepare for the 2008 Olympic Games. He then went on to represent the U.S.A. in the Beijing Olympics and brought home the gold. Henry not only achieved his dream of becoming an Olympic champion, but also made history by becoming the youngest American wrestler to ever win an Olympic gold medal. Now, Henry can count successful author on his list of accomplishments. In January 2010 he released his inspirational biography, *American Victory*.

Ms. Rico's influence can further be seen in the youth mentoring that Henry participates in. As a bi-lingual spokesperson for the Latino community, as well as a number of programs for under-privileged children, Henry mentors kids across the country. As a positive role model for America's youth, Henry works with various charities, outreach programs, and notable non-profit organizations including The Special Olympics, Boy Scouts of America, and Beat the Streets Wrestling. Many of these programs are geared towards underprivileged youth and the Hispanic community.

Through these programs, he is able to offer hope and support to thousands of kids by sharing his inspirational story. Henry teaches them to stay focused, to lead by example, to be active and above all to believe in themselves.

Henry also hosts a series of his own wrestling clinics appropriately named the "American Dream." The clinics, geared toward young athletes, are held throughout the year in select cities across the country. During the clinics Henry devotes his time to young athletes of every background, providing personal instruction and guidance. Through his American Dream clinics Henry is able to mentor America's future wrestling champions while bringing awareness to the sport that he loves.



Rebecca Cammisa

#### Rebecca Cammisa

Rebecca Cammisa directed and produced the *2010 Oscar -nominated* feature documentary, "Which Way Home," which also received a *2010 Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Documentary Film*. Rebecca was recently awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship and a Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, and has been the recipient of two *Sundance Documentary Fund Grants*, two *NYFA Fellowships*, and a *2006 Fulbright Fellowship to Mexico*.

In 2002, Rebecca co-directed, co-produced, and shot the feature documentary, "Sister Helen," which won the Sundance Film Festival's Documentary Directing Award, and was nominated for both an Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Documentary Film Award from the Directors Guild of America, and an Emmy Award for Outstanding Programming.



## US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants : The National Center for Refugee & Immigrant Children

The US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) National Center for Refugee and Immigrant Children provides pro bono legal and social services for unaccompanied immigrant children as they navigate the U.S. Immigration Courts. These children, often fleeing domestic abuse, gang violence, trafficking or poverty, arrive in the U.S. without parents or resources and are often deported without having ever spoken to an attorney. Some may be seeking asylum, others may simply want to reunite with family members or seek opportunities that are not available to them in their home countries.

The Center seeks to ensure that these children receive the proper legal, social and health services that they deserve.

The AILA Chicago Chapter congratulates the 2010 honorees and the ongoing efforts of the American Immigration Council.



The Southern California Chapter of the

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Congratulates 2010 American Heritage Award Honorees

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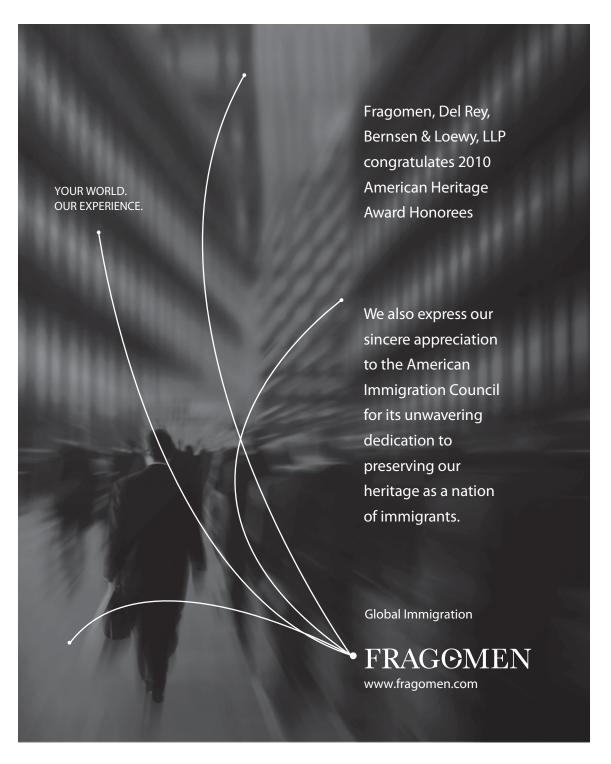
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Loula Loi Alafoyiannis, Nelly Rico, and Rebecca Cammisa.





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#### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HONOREES FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS & CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

#### AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION



Massachusetts • Rhode Island New Hampshire • Vermont • Maine New York embraces the efforts of the Council in creating a fair and just immigration system.



The AILA Northern California

Chapter congratulates the

2010 honorees and the ongoing efforts of

The American Immigration Council





#### AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

AN AFFILIATED ORGANIZATION OF THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION WASHINGTON, D.C. CHAPTER

AILA Washington, D.C. Chapter Joins with The Council in Saluting Tonight's Honorees and the Many Contributions of Immigrants.





# Microsoft<sup>®</sup>

Microsoft Corporation is deeply committed to increasing understanding in Congress, the media, the business community, and the public of the importance of immigration and immigrants to our economy and our country. Microsoft's Global Migration Group salutes The American Immigration Council for its work in highlighting the role of immigrants and in increasing public awareness of the benefits of immigration.

Lydia Tamez Suzy Hung Robin Paulino

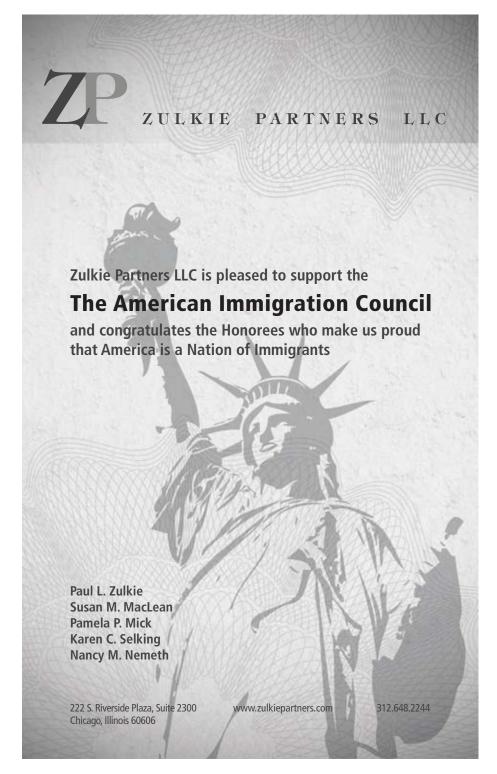
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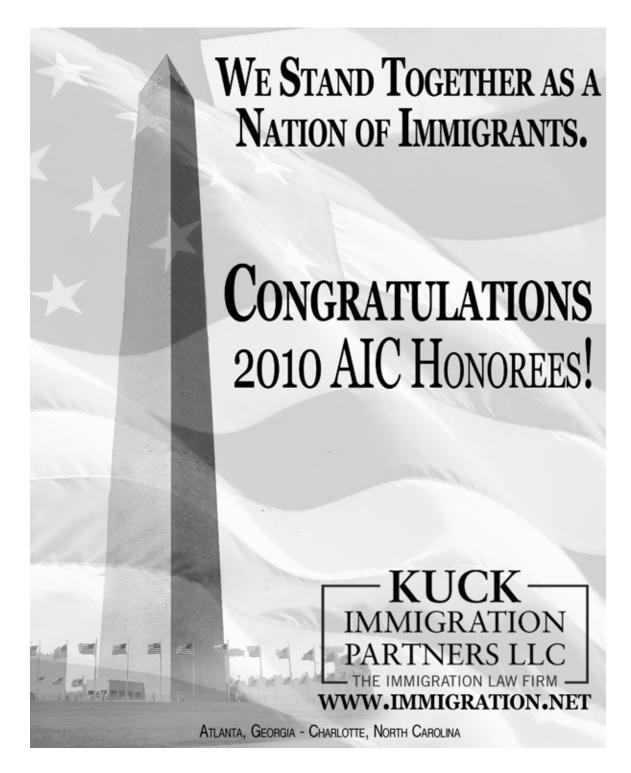
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With the help of AIC's Legal Action Center attorneys, the fight to end the "widow penalty" was successful in 2009. The following firms proudly support this year's American Heritage Awards in recognition of this invaluable support:

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#### Congratulations to this year's honorees:

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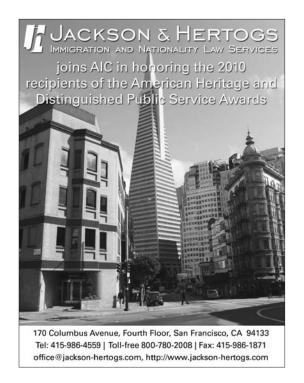


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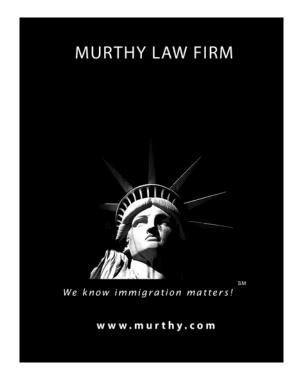
#### SALUTES THE 2010 AMERICAN HERITAGE HONORFFS

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Congratulations to
Tonight's Honorees
Rebecca Cammisa,
Loula Loi Alafoyiannis,
Nelly Rico

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