



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
LEADERSHIP NETWORK

Leadership L.A.

Leadership Southern California

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LEADERSHIP NETWORK HONORS COMMUNITY LEADERS FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

Southern California Visionaries luncheon recognizes State Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez, Robert A. Eckert, Maria Contreras-Sweet and Peter Taylor

LOS ANGELES – The Southern California Leadership Network today honored four distinguished community leaders at its annual Southern California Visionaries luncheon, the pinnacle community leadership event in the region.

SCLN presents awards to individuals in the Southern California region who have demonstrated outstanding achievements in civic leadership, and celebrates those whose vision has inspired action, collaboration and positive community outcomes.

“Without leadership, a community lacks the ability to motivate its citizens to dream of a better future and take collective action to make it happen,” said L.A. Chamber President & CEO Gary Toebben. “Without leadership, acceptance of the status quo sets in.”

Hon. Fabian Núñez, California State Assembly Speaker, received the **Elected Leader of the Year** award in recognition of an individual who has provided outstanding leadership in the public sector. Núñez was elected to the Assembly in 2002 to represent the 46th District, which includes parts of L.A. Two years later, he became California’s 66th speaker in 2004. Núñez played a critical role in getting the infrastructure bonds— Propositions 1A-1E—on the Nov. 7 ballot, just one example of his bipartisan legislative victories over the last few years. During his time in the Assembly, Núñez has authored bills to aid small business, help the homeless and curb pollution. Núñez, a native Southern Californian, was born in San Diego and grew up in Tijuana, Mexico and San Diego.

Robert A. Eckert, chairman & CEO, Mattel, Inc., received the **Southern California Leader of the Year** award in recognition of an individual who has provided inspirational and visionary community leadership in Southern California. Eckert joined Mattel in 2000 from Kraft Foods, Inc., where he worked for 23 years. At Mattel, a company with nearly 25,000 employees, Eckert has led through a key period in the company's development and growth. Under Eckert's leadership, Mattel, Inc. relaunched its philanthropy programs, contributing about \$4.6 million in cash to the Mattel Children's Foundation. The Foundation serves children around the world, including 72 non-profit organizations domestically and 31 charitable organizations internationally.

Maria Contreras-Sweet, co-founder and president, FORTIUS Holdings, LLC, received the **Graduate of the Year** award, which recognizes Leadership L.A. or Leadership Southern California graduates who epitomize excellence and achievement in community leadership. Contreras-Sweet is a graduate of the Leadership L.A. class of 1989. Contreras-Sweet was the first Latina to serve on a governor's cabinet as the secretary of Business, Transportation and Housing for the State of California. As secretary, she managed approximately 600 projects worth \$7 billion, including the reconstruction of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. In 2006, Contreras-Sweet formed the private equity fund and commercial real estate development company FORTIUS. The fund has a Latino business focus with investments ranging from \$1 million to \$10 million. She also serves as founder and chairman of Promerica Bank, the first Latino bank in 35 years in California.

Peter Taylor, managing director, Lehman Brothers Inc. received the **Excellence in Civic Leadership** award recognizing outstanding civic leadership and public service that is a model of creativity, integrity and effectiveness. In 2004, Taylor was appointed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to the California Performance Review Commission, which was charged with reviewing and recommending ways to reform the framework of state government. Taylor is chair emeritus of the UCLA Foundation, past President of the UCLA Alumni Association, former Alumni Regent on the UC Board of Regents, and serves on the boards of the J. Paul Getty Trust, the James Irvine Foundation and the Marlborough School. In addition, Taylor is leading a UCLA African American Alumni and Community

Support Task Force that is assigned to discuss the concerns of African American alumni and make recommendations about the future enrollment of African Americans at UCLA.

“This event allows us to recognize the outstanding leaders we see in our community and gain better insights into the leadership strengths they display,” said SCLN Chair Tony Buzzelli, Deloitte. “The four honorees have distinguished themselves as managing and leading positive change and transitions in their respective careers.”

This year, the Leadership L.A. Foundation and the Southern California Leadership Network have joined forces in a new partnership with the L.A. Area Chamber of Commerce. SCLN programs at the Chamber—Leadership L.A. and Leadership Southern California—are the region’s two premier providers of leadership training.

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The Southern California Leadership Network’s mission is to train and develop a productive network of exemplary and diverse leaders in the business, government and community sectors who are capable of addressing the critical challenges facing the Southern California region. For more information, visit www.leadershipnetwork.org.