



Governor Terry E. Branstad
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds
San Wong, Director

Latino Affairs Commissioners - BIOs Fiscal Year 2012-2013

Sal Alaniz – Henry County **CHAIR**

Term 5/1/2012-4/30/2016



Background info -Sal Alaniz, Jr.

Mt. Pleasant, Iowa 52641

Age: 62

Mexican American

Wife, Rosalee Terzo Alaniz (Italian, Irish, German, Polish)

3 Children - Cassie Ann Gerst, Director of Mentoring program, Kristi Ann Adkinson, self employed, Jessica Ann Snyder, soon mom to be in April.

former Red Cross Staff and volunteer.

2 Grandchildren, Julianna. 4 1/2 year old; Max, 4 months old.

Birth: Chicago, Illinois to parents, Salvador Alaniz & Thomasa Orozco Alaniz

Salvador Alaniz Senior born in Chicago, Illinois

Thomasa Orozco Alaniz born in Horton Kansas

5 children in family. Sal Alaniz Jr. is oldest of five. 4 boys, 1 girl.

Children reside in Iowa, Colorado, Florida, Washington

Alaniz and Sons, Chicago, Illinois

Alaniz and Sons, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa (family business sold to investors in mid-90s. now world-wide operation and large employer in S.E. Iowa. Still carries family name - Alaniz LLC)

PrintGroup USA, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. Currently self-employed

Learning Tree Child Care and Preschools of Mt. Pleasant (child care center - recently closed. served over 250 families).

Economic, Community Development and Community Service:

Chair, Latino Affairs Commission-State of Iowa

Chair, Human Rights Commission-City of Mt. Pleasant

Former Chair, Diversity Action Team-Healthy Henry County Communities, Henry County, Iowa

Former Advisory Member, Strategic Planning Committee, Mt. Pleasant School District

Advisory Board, Office of Minority & MultiCultural Health, Dept. of Public Health, State of Iowa

Advisory Committee, Targeted Small Business, State of Iowa

Commission of Latino Affairs

Entrepreneurial Committee, Mt. Pleasant Area Alliance
Tri-State Entrepreneurial Committee, Quincy, Illinois
American Red Cross, Des Moines Iowa County Chapter - DSHR and DAT Disaster Services, Instructor, Volunteer, and Strategic Planning
Center for Cultural Initiatives, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. Resource for community needs and to non-profit organizations
Grow Henry County - community and economic development blog.
www.GrowHenryCounty.com

Grandpa Alaniz was born in Santa Elena, Guanajuato (a rural farm in the state of Guanajuato, close to the state of Michoacan) on February 24, 1900. His full name was, Matias Alaniz Zaragoza. His parents were, Francisco Alaniz and Heginia Zaragoza. His father died in some freak accident working on the railroad rails somewhere in Texas in the early 1900's.

Grandpa Matias was 13 when he got the nickname "La Coneja" (The Rabbit) because he was a fast runner as he was trying to stay alive during the many revolutionary uprisings taking place in Mexico during his youth. At nearly age, he and some of his older siblings started to join their father in Texas, but did not migrate permanently there until he married grandmother a few years later. At 19 he married grandmother. She lived with his mom sometime before grandpa and she migrated to the states in the early 20's. They first worked as farm workers someplace in Michigan. They worked from sunset to sundown. Grandpa's oldest brother Santiago, died there from heat stroke. Grandma also lost her first born named Benigna; probably as a result of the intense physical labor they all did picking fruit in heaven knows what circumstances. They then migrated to Chicago probably in the early to mid 20's. Grandpa became a U.S. Citizen in 1938. However, when they went to Michigan at first, they were there under a government program that welcomed immigrants to work the farms.

Salvador Alaniz Sr. and Frank, his brother, served in WW II and Raul during the Korean War. Sal Senior served on an Admirals ship in the Pacific fleet, and in communications. Frank was wounded toward the end of the war and was briefly held as a prisoner in Germany in some field improvised warehouse. He and his fellow colleagues were left behind and cared for by a German Dr. and a few German soldiers. As the allied forces were approaching, a battalion of German soldiers were retreating as they approached this warehouse. The retreating officer gave an order to the German doctor in-charge to shoot all of the injured solders and retreat as well. Thankfully, the Dr. ignored the order and left all of the soldiers behind, and thus were shortly rescued by the allied troops. Frank was flown to some island to recover from his wounds and was still there when the end of the war was officially over.

In the meantime, grandma told the story how she remembers all the jubilation when they heard the war was over, people were singing and dancing in the streets but she could not because she still had no word of her son. She had received the first telegram about how Frank was missing in action.

The Orozco family, grandparents, came to U.S. at a young age as well and ended up in Horton, Kansas before migrating to Chicago, Illinois in 1940 due to an accident at work. Bernard Lopez Orozco and Maria Chavoya Orozco. 10 children. Mother, Thomasa was the seventh born. In Chicago, my parents met. Bernard was born in Degollado Jalisco; Maria was born in La Piedad Michocan (once center of Mexico pork industry.)

Rebecca Jackson – Crawford County
Term 5/1/2011-4/30/2014

Rebecca lives in Denison, Iowa, with her husband, two children and foreign exchange student. She was born and raised in Des Moines. She attended college at Iowa State University in Ames where she majored in political science, international studies and Spanish and minored in math, history and

economics. In 2009, she moved to Denison to work for Iowa Workforce Development's New Iowan Center. In that position, she was responsible for helping newcomers find employment and resources, providing training and services to community organizations and employers, and outreaching to migrant and seasonal farm workers. After her office closed, she did outreach and admission and career transition for Denison Job Corps. Rebecca also taught Adult ESL classes at Western Iowa Tech. She currently works in Human Resources at Farmland Foods, Inc.

Rebecca is actively involved in her community. She is a member of Denison's Cultural Diversity Committee, the Southwest Latino Association, Zion Lutheran Church and the Crawford County Republican Party. She has taught Spanish and English classes and helped organize numerous educational and cultural events. For the past two years, her family has hosted high school foreign exchange students.

Joan Jaimes – Marshall County
Term 7/8/2008-4/30/2014

Joan Jaimes is originally from Brownsville, Texas and has lived in Iowa since 1995. She was born Joan Julisa Rodriguez to Aurora and Juan Rodriguez, both from Matamoros, Tamaulipas, México. Her family travelled the United States as migrant farm workers and she worked in the fields since the age of 13. She got married to Eliesar Jaimes of Guatemala in 1995, and they now have three children. She attended college at Marshalltown Community College and graduated with an AA in 2000. In 2003, she graduated from Buena Vista University with a Bachelor in Human Services with focuses in Psychology and Spanish. She worked as a Mortgage Loan Officer for Affordable Housing at F&M Bank Iowa from 2003 to 2007. In November of 2008, she joined Marshalltown Community College as an Outreach Counselor for the Marshalltown Education Partnership and is currently serving in this role. In 2010, she obtained her Master of Public Administration Degree from De Vry University.

Joan has been volunteered in many capacities for several years in Central Iowa. She has served on various boards and committees including chair of the Marshall County Human Rights Board, Iowa Rivers Chapter of the American Red Cross, Woodbury Elementary Bilingual Education Advisory Committee, State of Iowa Board of Education, State of Iowa Human Rights Commission, State of Iowa Commission on Latino Affairs, New Iowan Welcoming Committee, Secretary for United States Commission for Latino Affairs. She is a minister at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Marshalltown. Joan is currently pursuing her Ph. D. in Educational Leadership at Iowa State University.

Maria Lara – Warren County
Term 5/1/2012-4/30/2016



Maria was born, raised and received her high school education in Mexico. She received her GED Diploma in Des Moines, IA. She has occupied professional positions where she has acquired experience in finance and managing personnel in the production area, as well as in human resources. She served as secretary for the Productos Rago de Sabinas Company. In that capacity she assisted potential job candidates in completing the job application forms. In addition, she assisted the hired personnel completing the health and benefit paperwork. She also was involved in giving new employees the proper orientation related to their job functions in the production floor including the responsibilities in completing the final product quotas. The six years that she worked with this company have giving her the skills and knowledge to manage personnel to understand the work performance needs and health concerns.

As a volunteer in her church, Iglesia de Cristo Puente de Vida (Lifebridge Church of Christ), she has been involved in the children's ministry. The activities pertaining to this ministry include serving as a Sunday School Teacher, coordinating the Easter Program and Christmas Program, as well as the Jesus' Club. Also she leads of the worship team.

Alejandro Pino – Johnson County
Term 4/20/2011-4/30/2014



Mr. Alejandro Pino was born in Lima, Peru to a Peruvian father and a mother from the United States. At the age of 10, his family made the difficult decision to leave Peru and move to the United States. Much of this decision was due to the political and economic instability of Peru, particularly during the time of the Shining Path terrorist group. While in the United States, Mr. Pino has lived in Dubuque (IA), Maquoketa (IA), Bettendorf (IA), and Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He graduated from Loras College (Dubuque, IA) with degrees in International Studies and Political Science. After graduation, he worked at Jefferson Davis Associates in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, as a Marketing Research Analyst. After gaining valuable experiences as an Analyst, his alma mater (Loras College) called him to become the International Recruiter and Head Men's/Women's Tennis Coach. During this time, Mr. Pino expanded the college's international student population and improved the tennis programs. After three years, he became the

Director of Intercultural Programs, with the responsibilities of advancing the college's diversity initiatives and supporting students of diverse backgrounds.

He was fortunate enough to serve on many Presidential appointment committees and was co-creator of DuTalk, a civil discourse program. Additionally, Mr. Pino was a founding member of IDEA (Impacting Diversity through Educational Alliances). Above all, Mr. Pino's most cherished moments involved his work with students and with the community. His most profound accomplishment was being presented with the Father Naumann Award, an award presented by students to a faculty or staff member that has provided exemplary service to students. In late 2011, Mr. Pino relocated to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he currently works at Premier Staffing Incorporated. His passion continues to be ensuring all people are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of background or situation. He is honored to be part of the Latino Affairs Commission.

Juan Rodriguez – Polk County

Term 5/1/2012-4/30/2016

Born on a small farm in rural Colombia, Juan Rodriguez was the thirteenth child of fourteen. He and his parents and siblings grew coffee beans, corn, beans, bananas, strawberries, grapes, sugar cane, and pears, as well as raising dairy cows, pigs, chickens, and horses. While most of what was grown and raised was used to feed his large family, Juan also helped sell their products at a market in nearby Gacheta, which was four hours from Bogota. Juan was called “John” or “Johncito” by everyone and didn’t become known as Juan until moving to the United States.

Juan’s mother taught him how to read and write before he began school at age six. He walked 2.5 miles barefoot to and from school along a horse trail. He put his shoes in a backpack so they didn’t get dirty or wear out. Juan’s school was atop a mountain, next to a huge statue of the Virgin Mary.

Childhood offered Juan little opportunity to be a child. While at school, he was responsible for sweeping the school with tree branches with leaves woven through them. After school, he took care of the cows at home. Week-ends promised more work; Juan had to fish to help feed his family.

Poverty was a fact of life. Juan’s family ate beef just once a week, with his mother dividing one or two pounds among her fourteen children. He did not eat all day at school, as he was too embarrassed to take food from home in Colombia’s classist society.

Juan’s mother offered him as a virtual slave to a friend of hers when Juan was just nine years old. He was sent to work for a woman in another town, having to clean out cow intestines from slaughterhouses and scrape dead calves out of dead, pregnant cows. He was also made to sell ice cream bars in the town plaza and polish college students’ shoes. Juan’s nights were spent sleeping on the floor of his “employer’s” house. This gig ended when Juan escaped and was able to return home.

Juan’s fondest childhood memories include inventing his own guns, getting electricity in his house in 1985, a 12 inch black and white TV in 1988, and racing bicycles as part of a team. He trained daily and was chosen to compete in Bogota.

Juan was a diligent student and used to get up at 4:30am to walk to school, which started at 7am. Despite his father passing away during his last week of high school, Juan was one of just three of the

fourteen children in his family who finished high school. He was one of just two to finish college, even though his mother passed away when he was in college. Juan paid for his school books by working in his brother's bakery and graduated from college with a degree in computer technology in 2002. Juan's daughter, Maria Paula, was born in 2000.

With military service mandatory in Colombia, Juan was sent to the Amazon jungle with the Army right out of high school. He lived in the jungle for a year and obtained the rank of lieutenant.

Pay was just living wages even for professionals in Colombia and for twelve years Juan anxiously waited the day he would get an appointment for a visa. One of his older sisters was a U.S. resident, then citizen, who applied for her siblings to come to the U.S. Finally, in 2003, Juan's appointment for a visa came through and was approved.

One month later, Juan stepped on American soil for the first time. He stayed with his sister in Chicago for a while, then came to Des Moines to visit, liked it, and stayed. Not knowing a word of English, Juan began his English language journey by taking classes in Illinois. He later purchased a course on an MP3 player, which he listened to while working as a janitor for Drake University. Juan moonlighted at Gloria Mendez Insurance Agency, becoming a partner. He resigned from Drake in 2005 when his son, Juan Pablo, was born.

Learning English has been a continual process over the years – listening to 98.3 FM for six years, watching TV and movies, and studying for his insurance license, which he was granted in 2007.

Juan began working for Allied Insurance, as well as Viking Insurance as a partner in the Gloria Mendez firm. 2008 saw Juan opening Diversity Insurance and transferring his business to Diversity. He branched out, selling for Travelers, Victoria, Mexican Insurance, Viking Insurance Foremost and some other companies.

Major turning points in his life were becoming a U.S. citizen in 2008 and being recognized as the top minority business in Central Iowa. The insurance business was good, with Diversity Insurance ranked in the top ten in sales for Victoria, the top 30 for Allied, and the top producer for Viking. Diversity has continued to rank among the top three agencies in sales in the nation for the last three years.

Juan met his future wife, Laura Montalvo, in 2009 and became a father for the third time in 2010 when his son, Oscar, was born. Juan and Laura purchased the restaurant Fiesta Cancun in 2010 and renamed it 5 de Mayo, then purchased Spanish-language radio station (call letters KDLF) in 2011.

In his leisure time, Juan enjoys spending time with his family, reading, race cars, and studying politics. Juan attributes his success and zest for life to an insatiable thirst for knowledge and drive to “always learn.”

Ramon Rodriguez – Polk County
Term 5/1/2012-4/30/2014
Deputy Director, Iowa ESGR



After retiring from the United States Marine Corps in February 2009 with twenty one years of active duty service Ramon “Ray” Rodriguez began his civilian career working as a Production Manager for Hormel Foods in Osceola, Iowa. In October 2010 Ramon was invited to interview and offered the position of State Deputy Director for the Iowa Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). As the Deputy Director for Iowa ESGR Ray supports and assists approximately 165 ESGR volunteers across the state that provide free education and consultation services to service members and employers regarding the employment and reemployment rights of military personnel. Ray also assists the ESGR Ombudsman Program in consulting with service members and employers whenever there is a problem in the workplace that might be a violation of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Ray’s is also responsible for developing and steering the new Iowa ESGR Employment Initiative Program (EIP) Program. The mission of this program is for Iowa ESGR to identify and enhance employment opportunities for both service members and their spouses. Through ESGR’s partnerships with organizations such as Hero2Hired and the Job Connection Education Program (JCEP) Ray is able to assist many service members, spouses and veterans across the state in making connections with resources that can help them find meaningful employment.

Ray also developed an Employment Assistance Training (EAT) workshop in partnership with IowaWorks and the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM). The EAT course is a free one day training course designed to teach service members and spouses basic job search skills such as resume’ writing and job interviewing techniques that are needed in order to be successful in finding meaningful employment.

For more information about employment assistance available through ESGR contact Ray at 515-252-4192.

Last updated on 5/1/2013 by Alba Perez