

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Joaquin Castro District 125

March 20, 2006

Presidential Award Selection Committee
St. Mary's University
One Camino Santa Maria
San Antonio, Texas 78228

Re: Presidential Award Nomination of Cynthia Chapa

Dear Presidential Award Selection Committee Member:

Please accept my highest recommendation for Cynthia Marie Chapa as you consider nominees for the 2006 Presidential Award. I have known Cynthia for several years. We first met in 2001 when Cynthia was an undergraduate at St. Mary's University. Originally from Corpus Christi, Cynthia came to San Antonio and immediately jumped into community projects. In addition to carrying a full academic load in college, she committed herself to getting involved outside the classroom. Cynthia was the president of the Delta Sigma Epsilon, a Catholic Honor society for the School of Humanities and Social Science, the President of the College Democrats, President of Alpha Sigma Tau and AIDS Awareness Chair for Alpha Phi Omega, and Senator for Student Government Association. She also worked two jobs and participated in community organizations such as San Antonio Young Democrats. Cynthia has continued her involvement on and around the St. Mary's Community. She was the Vice-President for The Hispanic Law Students Association, continues to serve as the President for the Democrat Law Student Association and has actively participated in various political campaigns.

I have always been incredibly impressed with Cynthia's hard work and sincerity. In 2003, she was the first person I hired after being elected state representative of the area that includes St. Mary's. After graduating from college that spring, she entered St. Mary's Law School. As a law student, her commitment to community has not wavered. While most law students eschew outside work, Cynthia has continued to reach out.



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In this office, she has helped mothers collect child support from errant fathers; organized a book drive to raise 20,000 books for local school libraries; gathered thousands of items of clothing for the San Antonio Children's Shelter; and helped neighbors come together to have a voice in local government.

Cynthia treats everyone respectfully without regard to their station in life. For instance, last fall Cynthia helped organize a job fair for the victims of Hurricane Katrina through our office. She spent hours on the phone getting employers to join the event. She also circulated flyers through each of the housing facilities to get the word out to evacuees about the fair. In the end, dozens of our city's new residents found the jobs they needed to support their families. Watching Cynthia work, I realized that good things don't just happen; it takes people like her to make them happen.

One final story says it all about Cynthia. At the job fair, one gentleman from New Orleans wanted desperately to work and was offered a job by a restaurant downtown. His only problem: he didn't have a car or know his way around town. The restaurant wanted him to start right away. Cynthia volunteered to take him to work in the afternoon and drive him home from work past midnight until he was able to find a way to work. And she did it. That's Cynthia Chapa.

In these missions, Cynthia exemplifies the Marianist tradition of compassion, concern for community and dedication. The tradition really does live through her.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss my recommendation further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joaquin Castro".

Joaquin Castro
State Representative Joaquin Castro
District 125 - San Antonio

