



DACC

DIAMANTE ARTS & CULTURAL CENTER

Presents - Presenta

*30th Annual*

LATINO  
DIAMANTE

*Awards*

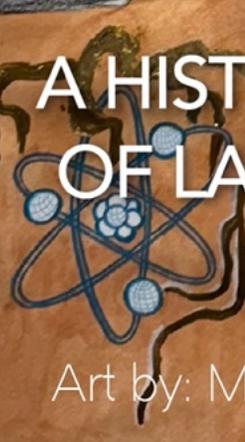
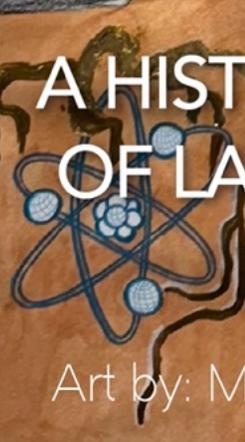
2025 PREMIOS LATINO DIAMANTE

5:30PM | November 8, 2025

Cary Arts Center, Cary, NC

A HISTORIC NIGHT CELEBRATING 30 YEARS  
OF LATINO ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT!

Art by: Miriam Ximil



*BUILDING A SMARTER ENERGY FUTURE<sup>SM</sup>*



## Energizing the arts.



The symphony, the ballet, the musical, the art show — these cultural experiences enhance our quality of life. Duke Energy is proud to play a supporting role in this thriving arts community.

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# From the Board Chair

## ¡Bienvenidos!

Welcome to the 30th Annual Latino Diamante Awards!

Tonight, we celebrate a milestone — three decades of honoring excellence, leadership, and creativity within North Carolina’s Latino/x and Hispanic communities. Thank you for joining us for this unforgettable evening of recognition, culture, and pride.

To all who nominated a community leader, we extend our deepest gratitude. And to our Honorees—thank you for your unwavering dedication and the meaningful work you do to uplift and strengthen our communities. We are inspired by your commitment to making North Carolina a more vibrant and inclusive place to live.

We also give special thanks to our sponsors for believing in Diamante’s mission and helping ensure that this legacy continues to thrive. To Miriam Ximil, thank you for crafting such a beautiful piece of art that captures how arts can heal. And to our board for your tireless work and passion to make celebrations like this possible—thank you.

If you haven’t yet visited the Diamante Arts & Cultural Center, we invite you to come experience it for yourself—a dynamic space where Latino creativity flourishes forming a community hub for Latino arts and culture in North Carolina.

As we mark this 30-year journey, Diamante renews its commitment to elevating Latino arts, heritage, and voices. To carry this dream forward for the next 25 years and beyond, we ask for your continued support—your time, talent, and treasure.

Enjoy the ceremony! ¡Disfrute la ceremonia!

## **Gustavo Schmidt**

*Board Chair*



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## Diamante Arts & Cultural Center

1312 Annapolis Dr. Raleigh, NC  
(919) 852-0075

[www.diamanteacc.org](http://www.diamanteacc.org)

Diamante is a NC 501(c)3 non profit organization

The 30th Annual Latino Diamante Awards is **Executive Produced** by Diamante Arts & Cultural Center

### Producer

Pamela Guerra Montañez

### Video Production

Monique Velasquez  
Velasquez Media

Jaime Serrano

Lizette Cruz Watko

# 8 THINGS TO KNOW

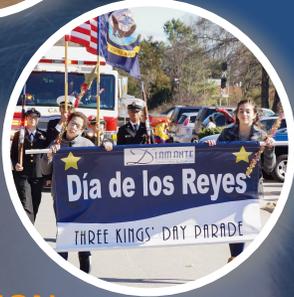
## About Diamante Arts & Cultural Center HISTORY

For more than 27 years, our organization has been an active promoter of inclusion and appreciation of Latino/Hispanic cultures, folklore, arts and artistic expressions.



## CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Creating opportunities that bring together Latino/Hispanic communities and other groups through arts education, leadership development, community service, and economic growth.



## OUR MISSION

Diamante Arts and Cultural Center is the longest standing Latino Hispanic Arts and Culture organization in North Carolina. It is dedicated to the preservation, development, and promotion of the culture, heritage, and artistic expressions of the diverse Latino Hispanic communities of North Carolina.



## EXHIBITIONS

Our gallery is a flexible exhibition spaces showcasing NC Latino artists that reflect artistic mastery, enhance awareness of current events and social issues, and catalyzes community inspiration and dialogue.

## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Organizing activities that help develop understanding and appreciation of the Latino/Hispanic community; its diversity, cultural norms, and contributions.



## ARTS PROGRAMMING

Offering educational, cultural and arts programming that represent the Latino/Hispanic experience and advance its cultural heritage, art forms, and creative minds.

## WAYS TO SUPPORT DIAMANTE

- Make a Donation
- Become an Amigo
- Take a Class or Workshop
- Visit an Exhibition
- Attend Events
- Volunteer

## VISIT US

1312 Annapolis Dr. #204  
Raleigh, NC 27606

## WEBSITE

[www.diamanteacc.org](http://www.diamanteacc.org)

## CONTACT US

(919) 852-0075 or  
[contact@diamanteacc.org](mailto:contact@diamanteacc.org)



## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Nurturing the future vision of the community through recognizing and honoring the capacity of its people as well as utilizing their skills to mentor and teach other generations.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Designing initiatives that accelerate engagement and collaboration within the broader community for greater cross-cultural exchanges, networking, and shared action.



## FACILITY

Use our galleries for meetings, workshops, networking, receptions, and other special events.

# Con la participación de...

## Edwin Pitti

Edwin Pitti is a 17-time EMMY Award-winning Panamanian journalist with over 15 years of experience. He serves as a national correspondent for Televisa Univision in Washington, D.C., covering the White House, Congress, and federal government. He is recognized as one of the most trusted political voices in Hispanic media.



## Magazine Cover by Miriam Ximil

In Mexican artist Miriam Ximil's piece, flowers emerge from a crack in cement, each symbolizing a person growing despite hardship. The concrete represents the barriers our community faces, yet from its rigidity bloom hope and resilience. Education, music, art, science, and performance nourish this growth—transforming struggle into beauty, strength, and collective flourishing.



## Mario Lara Reception Performer

Mario Lara is a Salvadoran virtuoso of wind instruments, best known for his exceptional skill on the saxophone.



## Ballet Folclórico Dominicano de Raleigh

The Dominican Folkloric Ballet of Raleigh was founded by Dania Santana on February 1, 2025, with the goal of promoting the most emblematic art, culture, rhythms, and dances of the Dominican Republic in the state of North Carolina.



## Rosalinda Folklore

Rosalina Palacios and Ubaldo Cruz are representing El Salvador with the traditional salvadoran dance "El Barreño."



## Trío Bohemio

Trio Bohemio, formed by Alex, Adrian, and Brendan, was born in 2025 with the purpose of bringing bohemian evenings filled with romantic songs, transporting you to the passionate nights of Latin American countries.



## Ballet Folclórico Orgullo y Alma Latina

The ballet began in 2008 at a school in Zebulon, featuring elementary school children. Today, they will present their interpretations of Mexico — dances from San Luis Potosí.



## Ballet Folclórico Hondureño Colibrí Esmeralda

Colibrí Esmeralda is the first Honduran folkloric ballet in North Carolina's Triangle region, dedicated to promoting Honduran traditions and culture through dance. Its mission is to elevate Honduran folklore and inspire Latino youth to celebrate and share their cultural identity within North Carolina's vibrant Honduran community.



## DJ Tino - After Party

DJ Tino heats up the dance floor with an irresistible mix of salsa, merengue, and bachata beats.

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ABIERTO

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# Program - Programa

5:30pm Cary Arts Center Lobby Tapas & Wine Reception  
Performance by: Mario Lara Saxophonist

6:45pm  
Act 1: Ballet Folclórico Dominicano de Raleigh

Welcome/Bienvenida

Edwin Pitti, Master of Ceremony, Community Relations Univision 40  
Eliazar , Deputy Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Office of Gov. Roy Cooper  
Governor Josh Stein Video Message

About Diamante and the Awards/Sobre Diamante y los Premios  
Gustavo Schmidt and Veronica Gutierrez, Chair and Secretary, Diamante Arts & Cultural Center

Act 2: Rosalina Folklore

Awards Presentation

**Arts & Culture/Arte y Cultura: Fabian Vargas Camacho**  
Presented by: Dara Silver, North Carolina Arts Council

**Business/Empresa: Yvonne Cano**  
Presented by: Simone Hardeman, *First Citizens Bank*

**Community Involvement/Trabajo en la Comunidad: Yholima Vargas-Pedroza**  
Presented by: Rosalina Palacios, Board Member, *Diamante Arts & Cultural Center*

Act 3: Trio Bohemio

**Education/Educación: Angela Alonzo**  
Presented by: Christian Ventura, *Duke Energy*

**Health & Science/Salud y Ciencia: Gilda Emma Cowan**  
Presented by: Francisco Guzman, Board Member, *Diamante Arts & Cultural Center*

**Latino Advocate/Defensor de los Latinos: Lariza Garzón**  
Presented by: Rosa Antunez Boatwright, Law Offices of James Scott Farrin

Act 4: Ballet Folklórico Orgullo y Alma Latina

**Jaime Leon Youth Award/Logro Juvenil: Lindsey Cuevas Ameca & Stacy Duran Moreno**  
Presented by: Roberto Perez, *Food Lion*

**Lizette Cruz Watko Award: Wendy Mateo Pascual**  
Presented by: Lizette Cruz Watko, Founder, *Diamante Arts & Cultural Center*

Closing Remarks/Observaciones Finales: Gustavo Schmidt, Chair, *Diamante Arts & Cultural Center*

Act 5: Ballet Folklorico de Honduras Colibrí Esmeralda

8:40 pm – 10:30 pm After Party/ Baile: DJ Tino - Marcus Dry Room

# Selection Committee

Thank you for taking on the responsibility, from the received public nominations, of selecting the recipients of this years' awards.

¡Muchísimas Gracias!

Diamante Board Liason

Veronica Gutierrez

Selection Committee

Agladee Jimenez

Sara Ortiz

Monica Morales

# What are the Latino Diamante Awards?

A public nominated award program that honors individuals and organizations that have reached excellence and are making significant contributions to the Latino/Hispanic communities of North Carolina that serve as a showcase of its cultural arts richness.

## ¿Qué son los Premios Latino Diamante?

Es un programa de premios de nominaciones públicas que honra a individuos u organizaciones que han demostrado excelencia, logrado reconocimiento, ó han contribuido en el mejoramiento de la vida de las comunidades Latinas/Hispanas de Carolina del Norte y que sirve como un medio para destacar sus riquezas culturales y artísticas.

## Special Thanks! ¡Estamos muy Agradecidos!

Thank you, Edwin Pitti, for serving as our Master of Ceremonies, and Miriam Ximil for the beautiful cover art. To tonight's performers—thank you for sharing your talent, art, and culture. Monique Velasquez and Jaime Serrano, you made us shine. To our amazing volunteers, your efforts made this event unforgettable. And to Pamela Guerra, Taty Padilla, and the entire Diamante Board—your dedication and generosity made it all possible!

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Resultados obtenidos en casos anteriores no garantizan resultados similares en el futuro. Abogado Michael Shepherd: 555 South Mangum St., Ste. 800, Durham, NC. Foto de archivo. Prior results do not guarantee similar outcomes in future cases because each case is unique and must be evaluated separately. Attorney Michael Shepherd: 555 South Mangum St., Suite 800, Durham, NC. Stock photo.

# Thank You! ¡Muchas Gracias!

The Diamante Arts and Cultural Center is deeply grateful to the following companies for making it possible to celebrate 30 years of these awards. We appreciate your commitment and support. You are contributing to having a better quality of life and success for the Latino and Hispanic communities in North Carolina.



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# La Conexión

*La Conexión felicita a los ganadores de este importante reconocimiento por sus logros a favor de la comunidad Hispana.*



RECÓGE TU PERIÓDICO CADA MIÉRCOLES EN LUGARES DE COSTUMBRE

## La ConexiónUSA.COM

Felicidades a todos los galardonados del premio Diamante, La Conexión USA les reconoce su esfuerzo y contribución para fortalecer la imagen de nuestra comunidad.



VISÍTANOS EN: [LACONEXIONUSA.COM](http://LACONEXIONUSA.COM)



hispanicfederation

Congratulates  
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**30th Annual Latino Diamante Awards**

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## Fabian Vargas Camacho

*Maestro | Dancer*

### **ART & CULTURE**

Fabian Vargas Camacho, originally from Mexico, arrived in the United States at the age of 23 with a deep love for his country's culture and traditions. Since arriving in the U.S. in his twenties, he has dedicated himself to preserving and sharing the cultural traditions of his homeland. He co-founded Ballet Folclórico Guadalupano and now directs Orgullo y Alma Latina, mentoring young dancers and ensuring every performance is authentic, precise, and vibrant. Fabian's work extends beyond the stage—he teaches workshops, deepens cultural understanding, and inspires pride in Mexican heritage throughout the

Triangle. Under his leadership, the group has grown to 50 members, blending artistry with education and promoting the richness of Mexican dance for generations to come.

## Yvonne Cano

*Entrepreneur*

### **BUSINESS**

Yvonne Cano, born in Mexico, is the CEO and founder of Yvonne Cano Image, a business dedicated to empowering women through personal brand development, styling, and professional color analysis. With experience managing top European fashion brands like Mango and Women's Secret, Yvonne launched her own company in 2023, transforming her passion for fashion into a thriving enterprise. In 2024, she founded Yvonne Cano Academy, offering the first Color Analysis Certification for Entrepreneurs, equipping women with tools to start their own businesses. Beyond her entrepreneurial success, Yvonne is committed to community empowerment, helping women build confidence, visibility, and leadership through image and self-expression.



for



## Yholima Vargas-Pedroza

*Commitment to Service*

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Born and raised in Colombia, Yholima Vargas-Pedroza is a social work and community engagement leader in Alamance County. As ESL Program Coordinator at Alamance Community College, she connects families to resources, promotes educational access, and empowers non-traditional students. Yholima is a co-founder of the MUSE Latin American Art Collective, founder of HUEPA Culture! and chairs the Alamance County

Women

Esperanza Festival, celebrating Latin culture. Yholima currently serves as a member of the Community Police Advisory Team (CPAT) for the Burlington Police Department and as a member of the For Alamance Initiative. Her work spans volunteerism, translation, and civic participation. She has been recognized as a finalist for the Governor's Volunteer Service Award, a recipient of the Women's Leading Way Award and a 2024 DALI - Diamante Arts Leadership Institute Fellow. Yholima's commitment to service, cultural pride, and community empowerment continues to create opportunities for Latin families to thrive.

## Angela Alonzo

*Builder of Futures*

### **EDUCATION**

Angela Alonzo, Principal of Thomasville Middle School, is a transformative educator and advocate for equity. With over 20 years of experience, she began as a special education teacher and has dedicated her career to ensuring all students reach their full potential. Angela has implemented innovative programs, including drone technology integration, the Ron Clark House System, and schoolwide Professional Learning Communities structures, while mentoring students through academics and athletics. A proud Puerto Rican, she is a fierce advocate for multilingual learners and historically marginalized youth. Angela's leadership combines vision, authenticity, and urgency, making her not only an educator but a builder of futures and a champion for what is possible for every child.



## Gilda Cowan

*Dedication to Community Care*

### **HEALTH & SCIENCE**

Gilda Cowan serves as a Cancer Screening Navigator at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist. Originally from Lima, Peru, she is a bilingual advocate committed to reducing health inequities and improving outcomes for diverse communities. Gilda works to dismantle barriers for timely cancer prevention and detection while empowering patients to advocate for themselves. She co-facilitates a Spanish cancer survivors' support group, participates in community coalitions, and brings expertise in outreach, case management, and patient education. A proud bicultural professional, Gilda holds degrees and certifications in exercise science, medical interpreting, and oncology navigation. Her dedication to patients and families embodies compassion, equity, and community care.



## Lariza Garzón

*A Bridge Builder*

### **LATINO ADVOCATE**

Lariza Garzón, an immigrant from Bogotá, Colombia, is the North Carolina Director for the Hispanic Federation, with more than 20 years of experience supporting immigrant and agricultural communities in the U.S. and Mexico. She leads initiatives in advocacy, capacity-building, and strategic partnerships to strengthen Latinx communities across North Carolina. Lariza serves on the boards of Toxic Free NC, the NC Rural Center and the Governor's Advisory Council on Latino and Hispanic Affairs where she serves as chair the Health and Wellbeing Committee. Her work is grounded in social and racial justice, informed by her lived experiences and bicultural perspective, making her a powerful voice and bridge-builder for Latinx communities statewide.



## Lindsey Cuevas Ameca

*Rowan Co. Community College*

### **JAIME LEÓN YOUTH AWARD**

Lindsey Cuevas Ameca is the Resource Specialist at Smart Start Rowan, connecting families to vital resources in both English and Spanish. Her journey began as a volunteer at Kaleidoscope Play & Learn, supporting bilingual families in early childhood education. Lindsey is active in community events, translation services, and advocacy, helping families have a voice and access essential programs. A proud Mexican American and first-generation college student, she is completing

Associate of Arts degree at Rowan County Community College and plans to

her study psychology with a future goal in forensic psychology. Lindsey embodies dedication, service, and a commitment to creating opportunities for her community.

## Stacy Duran Moreno

*MD Hopeful*

### **JAIME LEÓN YOUTH AWARD**

Stacy Duran Moreno, a senior at Jordan-Matthews High School, is an aspiring plastic surgeon with a passion for service. As a first-generation student from a predominantly Hispanic community, she has developed leadership skills and a commitment to helping others. Stacy was active in Health Occupations Students of America, Student Council, Link Crew, Beta Club, and Orgullo Latinx Pride, earning awards in Medical Terminology and completing over 170 hours of community service. She balances academics with work and summer programs like UNC-Chapel Hill's Upward Bound and Camp Med, deepening her love for healthcare. Stacy inspires other first-generation students to pursue their dreams with courage and determination.



# Wendy Mateo Pascual

*A Community Builder*

## LIZETTE CRUZ WATKO AWARD



Wendy Mateo-Pascual is an Afro-Latina servant leader and community advocate committed to fostering transformation, empowerment, and wellness. With over 20 years of experience working with community organizations in the Charlotte region, she has made a lasting impact through mentorship, advocacy, and leadership.

Wendy holds a bachelor's degree in Journalism, completed post-graduate studies in Community Development, and earned a Graduate Certificate in Management and Policy. As co-founder and Executive Director of Camino Community Center for 14 years, she helped establish a free primary care clinic and a bilingual, bicultural mental health center serving underserved communities.

Urban

Beyond Camino, Wendy co-founded five Latino-led organizations and launched initiatives such as the Latino Civic Engagement Program and Close the Gap, a Latino leadership program co-created with Civic Canvas. In 2017, she expanded her focus to promoting Latino civic and political participation, leading the Latino Tu Voto Cuenta campaign and hosting a weekly radio show of the same name to educate and empower voters. She is also a board member of Enlace Dominicano. Wendy continues to broaden her impact as an agricultural entrepreneur with Pascuales Farm, an urban family farm in east Charlotte. She has been married to Eliseo Pascual for 25 years and is the proud mother of three sons: Yarince, Nelson, and Marcos.

*La Tiendita*  
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