CASA CORNELIA
LAW CENTER

DEFENDING DIGNITY, ADVANCING JUSTICE

19th Annual
La Mancha
Awards



Thursday, October 15, 2026
The Conrad Prebys
Performing Arts Center

CASACORNELIA.ORG

The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus
extend our prayers and
best wishes to

Casa Cornelia Law Center's 2026 La Mancha Awards

We congratulate and thank
this year's award recipients
for carrying forth our
Law Center's mission with
Actions Not Words!

SHCJ

Society of the Holy Child Jesus
AMERICAN PROVINCE

CASA CORNELIA
LAW CENTER

Dear Friends,

Welcome to Casa Cornelia Law Center's 19th Annual La Mancha Awards!

Tonight, we come together to recognize extraordinary individuals whose service reflects the heart of our mission and this year's theme: Defending Dignity, Advancing Justice. Our honorees remind us that dignity is more than an ideal—it is something we are called to uphold through compassion, service, and a steadfast commitment to justice.

For more than three decades, Casa Cornelia Law Center has provided quality pro bono legal services to individuals whose human and civil rights have been threatened.

Through compassionate legal advocacy, we help asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, and survivors of serious crimes navigate complex legal processes while ensuring their voices are heard, their rights are protected, and their dignity is respected.

This work is especially meaningful because it is never accomplished alone. Every client served and every step toward justice is made possible by a community of dedicated staff, volunteer attorneys, interpreters, translators, board members, legal partners, community allies, donors, and friends. Together, you help transform our commitment to human dignity into action and strengthen our ability to advance justice for those who need legal protection and cannot afford representation.

As we look to the future, we remain steadfast in our mission. We will continue to stand alongside those seeking safety and protection, defend due process and fundamental rights, and respond with compassion to the evolving needs of the communities we serve. Defending dignity requires action. Advancing justice requires all of us.

Tonight, we celebrate those who answer that call. We honor their service, recognize the lives touched through their commitment, and reaffirm the values that have guided Casa Cornelia since 1993: justice, compassion, and respect for the dignity of every person.

Thank you for joining us and for your enduring friendship and support. Together, we are Defending Dignity, Advancing Justice—and helping ensure that those seeking justice do not have to face that journey alone.

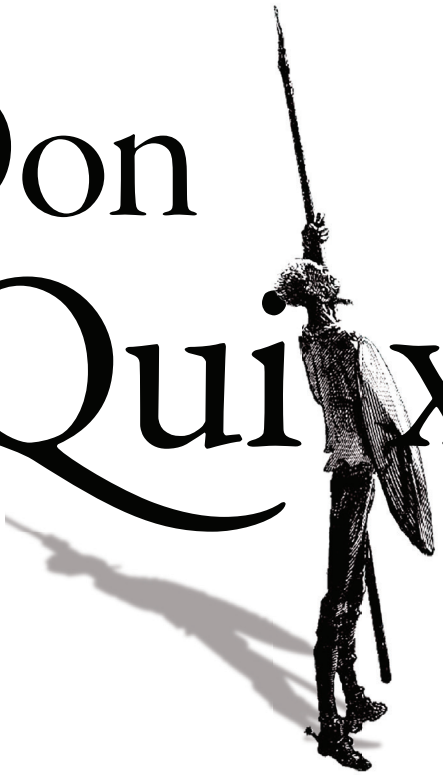
With gratitude,





Carmen M. Chavez, Esq.
Executive Director

Don Quixote



Don Quixote, Man of La Mancha, has made his appearance at many of Casa Cornelia Law Center's events and publications. Lifting his lance to evoke images of tilting at windmills and dreaming impossible dreams, this knight-errant has served as a silent honor guard for the many staff members and volunteers who, for over 32 years, have persevered in representing victims of human and civil rights violations. His presence reminds us that what may appear impossible can be achieved through steadfast commitment, resilience, and compassion.

In this spirit, the La Mancha Awards each year recognizes the outstanding contributions of those who join Casa Cornelia on this journey—walking with us in the pursuit of justice, dignity, and hope for the most vulnerable among us. This year's theme, Defending Dignity, Advancing Justice, calls us to honor that collective resolve and to celebrate the many hands and hearts that make our mission possible.

Mission & *Spirit*

OUR MISSION

Casa Cornelia Law Center (CCLC) is a 501(c)(3) public interest law firm providing quality pro bono legal services to victims of human and civil rights violations. Casa Cornelia has a primary commitment to indigent persons within the immigrant community in Southern California. It seeks to educate others regarding the impact of immigration law and policy on the community and the public good.



Casa Cornelia is a sponsored ministry of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus (SHCJ) and its spirit is rooted in the tradition of service of the SHCJ and that of its founder, Cornelia Connelly. It encompasses the belief that God has chosen to need men and women at any age to reveal God's love and to make known the reality of God's saving presence through their service to others. Casa Cornelia seeks to foster a spirit of simplicity, honesty, kindness, and cheerfulness among colleagues and with those served. It has chosen Thomas More as the exemplar of these qualities to mark its practice of law.

Founded in 1993, Casa Cornelia Law Center emerged from the vision of Sister Ann M. Durst, a member of the Society and an attorney, who recognized the urgent need for legal services along the Mexican American border. Joined by Sister Mary Wayne Gradon, they established the Law Center in San Diego to provide direct assistance to immigrants navigating complex legal and humanitarian challenges.

Since its founding, Casa Cornelia has supported unaccompanied children, asylum seekers, and survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, and other serious crimes. By combining professional legal experience with a compassionate approach, CCLC guides clients through the immigration process while protecting their rights, dignity, and safety.

Through this work, Casa Cornelia continues to embody the values of service, justice, and human dignity—ensuring that every individual seeking help finds not only legal guidance but also respect, understanding, and hope.

Carrying Our Mission Forward

Casa Cornelia Law Center provides quality pro bono legal services to individuals who have experienced human and civil rights violations. Since 1993, thousands of children, women, and men have turned to Casa Cornelia for compassionate legal support and access to justice.

In 2025, Casa Cornelia responded to 2,542 individuals through representation, support, and referrals, helping individuals navigate the U.S. immigration legal system and pursue safety, stability, and legal protection.

1,646

Asylum Program
Individuals seeking protection from persecution, torture, systemic violence, and other serious harm.

504

Victims of Crime Program
Survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, and other serious crimes pursuing safety and legal protection.

392

Children's Program
Unaccompanied children and youth receiving legal guidance as they navigate the immigration system and pursue available protections, safety and legal support.

500+ Calls

Received by Casa Cornelia's Community Legal Response Project through our main intake line and the ILSC Hotline, connecting individuals and families to trusted immigration legal support.

286

Community Legal Response Project (CLRP) Consultations
Providing timely, limited-scope legal guidance to individuals facing urgent immigration needs.

As we carry our mission forward, Casa Cornelia remains steadfast in our commitment to compassionate justice, human rights, due process, and quality legal support for those who need it most.

THE MORRISON FOERSTER FOUNDATION

We are proud to support

Casa Cornelia in its compassionate pursuit of justice.

Casa Cornelia's attorneys and staff are dedicated advocates who go above and beyond in service of their clients.

Congratulations to all of this year's honorees, including our colleague, Alex M. Schroth, on this well-deserved recognition.

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19th Annual La Mancha Awards *Committee*



Arezoo Jamshidi
Co-Chair



Elena Perez
Co-Chair

- **Pedro Anaya Jr.**
- **Carmen Chavez**
- **Beth Davidson**
- **Paola Gutierrez**
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- **Mia Walter**
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Proud Supporter of

Casa Cornelia Law Center's 19th Annual La Mancha Awards

Representing victims of human rights violations provides inspiration and hope to the Sheppard community. It is a privilege to work alongside dedicated Casa Cornelia team members in the pursuit of justice on behalf of vulnerable individuals, children, and families.

Sheppard congratulates associates John Mysliwiec and Abigail Sharkey on Pro Bono Publico recognition and celebrates the dedication of all the awardees.



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Jonathan Vega
Finance & Administration Director

Chantal Venter, Esq.
Staff Attorney, Litigation Program

Mia Eadington Walter
Philanthropy Director

Jerry Webber
Development Officer

2026 Distinguished Pro Bono *Attorney* of the Year

Rita E. Kuckertz, Esq.

DLA PIPER LLP (US)



Rita E. Kuckertz has been recognized for her exceptional service and commitment to Casa Cornelia's clients in 2025. Through her work with Casa Cornelia, Rita has demonstrated an extraordinary dedication to using her legal skills in service of others, helping ensure that vulnerable individuals have an advocate by their side and a meaningful opportunity to be heard.

We honor Rita for her compassion, dedication, and deep respect for the dignity of those we serve. Her service reflects the profound difference one attorney can make when professional excellence is joined with a commitment to justice and protecting the rights of others.

Partners in excellence.

We are proud to recognize the incredible contributions of Rita Kuckertz for her work on behalf of Casa Cornelia Law Center.

DLA PIPER

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2026 Pro Bono *Law Firm* of the Year

ASHURST PERKINS COIE

Ashurst Perkins Coie US LLP has been selected to receive the 2026 La Mancha Pro Bono Law Firm of the Year Award in recognition of the firm's extraordinary partnership, commitment to pro bono service, and dedication to advancing access to justice in 2025. Its attorneys have generously shared their legal expertise, time, and resources in service of Casa Cornelia's clients, helping individuals navigate some of the most consequential moments of their lives.

We honor Ashurst Perkins Coie US LLP for fostering a culture that encourages and supports pro bono service, helping expand Casa Cornelia's capacity to serve and strengthening our network of volunteer advocates. The firm's commitment demonstrates the powerful role the private bar can play in protecting rights, upholding dignity, and advancing access to justice.

LATHAM & WATKINS LLP

LATHAM PRO BONO

19th Annual La Mancha Awards

Honoring the individuals, organizations, and community leaders whose compassion and commitment help advance justice and protect human dignity.



LW.com

2026 La Mancha *Humanitarian Award*

The La Mancha Humanitarian Award recognizes individuals and organizations whose service advances humanitarian relief, uplifts the dignity and rights of vulnerable people, and reflects our shared responsibility to one another.

This award honors those who turn compassion into action through humanitarian relief, advocacy, faith leadership, community service, and other efforts that respond to the needs of people experiencing hardship and injustice.

Imam Taha Hassane

Director, Islamic Center of San Diego

For more than two decades in San Diego, Imam Taha Hassane has dedicated himself to serving others, building bridges across communities, fostering interfaith understanding, and promoting peace and respect for the dignity of every person.

A longtime friend and community partner of Casa Cornelia Law Center, Imam Taha has demonstrated his commitment through meaningful acts of compassion. When Casa Cornelia has sought assistance for clients in need of support, Imam Taha has opened the doors of the Islamic Center and welcomed individuals into its care—responding to a moment of vulnerability with dignity and humanity.

Throughout his leadership in our region, Imam Taha has brought people together across faiths and communities to promote dialogue, understanding, collaboration, and peace. In moments of hardship and tragedy, he has called communities toward healing, prayer, unity, and peace.

For his decades of humanitarian service, commitment to interfaith understanding and peace, steadfast support of vulnerable people, and support of Casa Cornelia Law Center, we are honored to recognize Imam Taha Hassane with the 2026 La Mancha Humanitarian Award.



Imam Taha Hassane
Director, Islamic Center of San Diego

Pro Bono Publico *Awardees**

The Pro Bono Publico Award recognizes outstanding volunteer attorneys whose dedication and professional expertise strengthen Casa Cornelia's ability to provide quality pro bono legal representation in 2025.

In 2026, Casa Cornelia honors 13 exceptional volunteer attorneys whose service demonstrates the extraordinary impact of putting their legal skills and talents in service of others.



Damani Taye Fields Baron, Esq.
Ashurst Perkins Coie US LLP



Ana Alicia Bordallo, Esq.
Cooley LLP



David Clarence Doyle, Esq.
Solo Practitioner



Aleksandr Gelberg, Esq.
Fish & Richardson P.C.



Vivienne Goldschlag, Esq.
Cooley LLP



Bridget Gramme, Esq.
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Runkun (Justin) Jiang, Esq.
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Mitchell Malachowski, Esq.
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Foley & Lardner LLP



Alex M. Schroth, Esq.
Morrison & Foerster LLP



Abigail Sharkey, Esq.
Sheppard

*Affiliation at time of donated service performed in 2025

Special Recognition *Awardees**

The Special Recognition Award honors outstanding non-attorney volunteers whose dedication significantly supports Casa Cornelia's mission in 2025. Recipients include volunteer interpreters and translators who help ensure language is not a barrier to understanding one's rights and being heard, as well as student volunteers whose service supports Casa Cornelia's legal programs.

In 2026, Casa Cornelia recognizes eight exceptional volunteers whose time, talents, and commitment have strengthened our ability to provide quality, compassionate legal support to the clients we serve.



Maria Bukhonina
Russian



Betsy Echagarrua
French, Haitian Creole, Italian, and Spanish

Alexandra Gutierrez Cardenas
San Diego City College, Spanish



Dr. Freddy Lanuza, Ph.D.
Spanish



Katie Lee
San Diego State University



Jesus Clemente Magana Estrada
UC San Diego, Spanish



Beatriz Lopez Moreno
Spanish

McKenzie Richard
California Western School of Law

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2026 LA MANCHA AWARDS

In the spirit of justice, dignity, and compassion, Gerard A. Trippitelli and Tessa P. Yutadco proudly support Casa Cornelia Law Center's mission.

Wiley W. Manuel Certificate for Pro Bono Legal Services

2025 Awardees

CALIFORNIA LAWYERS ASSOCIATION



Issued by the California Lawyers Association, the Wiley W. Manuel Certificate for Pro Bono Legal Services was created in 1989 to recognize the contributions of the many lawyers, law students, paralegals and others in California who volunteer their time and expertise on behalf of low-income clients. Justice Wiley W. Manuel (1927-1981) became the first African American Justice of the California Supreme Court in 1977. Efforts to provide legal services to California's poor honor the memory of Justice Manuel and exemplify the legal profession's commitment to pro bono services. These are defined as the voluntary provision of or enabling the delivery of legal services without expectation of compensation, other than the reimbursement of expenses, to indigent individuals or to not-for-profit organizations with a primary purpose of providing services to the poor or on behalf of the poor or disadvantaged, improving the law and the legal system, or increasing access to justice.

Providing at least 50 hours of pro bono service via Casa Cornelia Law Center last year, the following volunteers were recognized:

Yvette Aguilera
Erin Marie Allione
Zayrha Arambula
Nicholas A. Asaad
Sofya Asatryan
Sarah Anderson
Gloria E. Bader
Tariq Baha
Elizabeth S. Balfour
Nathan Barbara
Adolfo Cesar Baños
Damani Taye Fields Baron
Nachiketa A. Baru
Maggie G. Baruffi
Nitasha Bennett
Soraya Bolandgray
Ana A. Bordallo
Maria Bukhonina
Monique Caron
Luz Castañeda
Mayra Cerezal
Gia L. Cincone
Arielle Ilda Civil
Melissa Cizmorris
Kathryn (Kathy) Clenney
Kilian Taay Colin
Jenna Crawford
Janice Deaton
Ashlee C. Difuntorum
Mary Dollarhide
Yun Dong
David Clarence Doyle
Margaret Doyle
Iryna Dunets
Lily Sing Duong
Lynn Eddy-Zambrano
Jonathan J. Elia
Julian Ellis
Jesus Clemente Magaña Estrada
Marion Froehlich
Saige G. Gallop
Michelle Jeanne Ganotis
Tiana Camille Garbett
Ann Gary
Lilian Gaspar
Aleksandr Gelberg
Karim Gilyazov
Vivienne Goldschlag
Carlos Gonzalez
Bridget Gramme
Lily Harper
Michael Karl Heins
Anna Hoskins
Volha Hurskaya
Arezoo Jamshidi
Runkun (Justin) Jiang
Parinaz Maraufi Kamilian
Lia-Madeline Kampmann
Nino Kapanadze
Steve Keane
Nino Kiria
Jordana Koja-Volk
Brian Kramer
Rita E. Kuckertz
Fredrick Bastien Lanuza
Tom Laube
Angelika Levytska
Jacqueline Lozano
Mitchell Malachowski
Mary Marun
Alona Marzouq
Harris McLeod
Greg J. Merchant
Mehran "Ron" Mehrtash
Danny Milla
Cynthia Morales
Miriana Moran
Benjamin J. Morris
John Mysliwiec
Alvina Olivier
Lillian Overson
Jae Kyun Park
Elena Perez
Sarah Almond Pike
Mary Popit
Ryan Rauzon
Jeff Rector
Iain Richardson
J.P. Riley
Sophia Gabrielle Roach
Julie Robinson
Conrad Rodriguez
Amy Romaker
Kit Ryan
Scott H. Saham
Andre Schmidt
Alex M. Schroth
Jennifer Schulman
Ericka Jacobs Schulz
Rosa Mitsumasu Scotti
Abigail Sharkey
Jeffrey Sheriff
Mary Siegrist
Jared A. Smith
Elena Smolina
David Solberg
Gary Stenger
Kristin Strojan
Brittany Syz
Ronan Taaffe-Nelson
Meghan Thadani
Marcela Timbó
Dylan Towns
Nicole Trawick
Lauren Twist
Gregory A. Vega
Daniel Washle
Robert Weber
Alan Wiener
Yvonne Yragui
Tatiana Zunshine

CASA CORNELIA
LAW CENTER



Join Us For Pro Bono Week

The Evolution of the Violence Against Women Act & Our Understanding of Domestic Violence

Tuesday, October 27 | 4:00–7:00 p.m.
Casa Cornelia Law Center

Join Casa Cornelia Law Center for an engaging and interactive conversation exploring how our understanding of domestic violence has evolved since the passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994—and the work that continues today.

Through conversation and role play, we'll examine the shift from viewing domestic violence as a private matter to recognizing its broader societal impact, including efforts to move beyond victim-blaming and the culture of silence.

ATTORNEYS: EARN 1 HOUR OF MCLE CREDIT

The program will include a substantive overview of immigration protections available to survivors of serious crimes, including VAWA, U visas, and T visas.

Questions: abautista@casacornelia.org

CONNECT • LEARN • ENGAGE

Stay for a mini-reception and networking with fellow members of the legal and Casa Cornelia community over light refreshments.

JOIN US OCTOBER 27

REGISTER / LEARN MORE

HUMAN RIGHTS ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

EDUCATE • INSPIRE • EMPOWER

Registration Opens
October 16, 2026



Inaugural 2026 Symposium Theme: "Women-Led Advocacy for Change"

DECEMBER 10, 2026 | 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

SHILEY THEATRE, UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

The Casa Cornelia Law Center Human Rights Annual Symposium is an annual convening focused on education, dialogue, collaboration, immigration law, and human rights. Each year the symposium may explore a distinct issue or perspective while advancing a consistent commitment to human dignity, access to justice, quality legal support, and the development of current and future human rights leaders.

2026 Inaugural Symposium Focus

The inaugural 2026 symposium, "Women-Led Advocacy for Change" will intentionally center women's leadership, storytelling, gender-based human rights issues, and the experiences of women attorneys and advocates, establishing the Symposium's intent to address different human rights issues in future years.

Official Host Sponsor

University of San Diego SCHOOL OF LAW

https://casacornelia.org/humanrightssymposium

Together, we build bridges, protect rights, and create pathways to justice.

Learn more at casacornelia.org
#CCLCHumanRightsSymposium

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We applaud the honorees for their outstanding services to victims of human and civil rights violations

Paul Hastings is a leading global law firm with a strong presence throughout Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and the United States.

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Support Justice: Giving Opportunities at *Casa Cornelia*

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Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)



Friend-raiser Events

Cy Pres Awards

Attorneys and those involved in class action litigation can nominate Casa Cornelia for a Cy Pres Award. These awards direct unclaimed settlement funds to nonprofits serving the public good. By recommending us, you help extend justice to children escaping abuse, survivors of trafficking and domestic violence, and asylum seekers fleeing persecution.

Learn more and explore all ways to support Casa Cornelia by scanning the QR code or contacting our Director of Philanthropy.

Contact: Mia Walter
Director of Philanthropy
mwalter@casacornelia.org
(619) 231-7788 ext. 324

Don Quixote *Circle*

Leave a lasting legacy of justice and compassion by naming Casa Cornelia Law Center in your will or estate plan. Don Quixote Circle members are recognized and are invited to exclusive gratitude gatherings held once a year. Your planned gift ensures continued support for immigrants in need.

Why should you leave a bequest or planned gift to Casa Cornelia Law Center?

- You have been successful in your career, and you are a philanthropist.
- Casa Cornelia is the largest immigration legal services organization in San Diego focused on providing completely free legal services to indigent immigrant victims of civil and human rights violations.
- Casa Cornelia amplifies the impact of your gift by leveraging a network of over 400 pro bono attorneys, professionals, interpreters, and translators to maximize the number of survivors helped.
- Casa Cornelia serves clients from all over the world who have experienced human rights violations, both abroad and here in San Diego. A gift to Casa Cornelia is a way to bring relief, safety, and the opportunity to pursue stability, economic self-sufficiency, and freedom.

Casa Cornelia's Don Quixote Circle

By joining us you will connecting with a group of individuals and families that care about human rights, social justice, immigrants and the world community. If you have already named Casa Cornelia Law Center in your will or trust please contact Mia Eadington Walter, mwalter@casacornelia.org or 619.231.7788 ext. 324.

Consult with your Financial Planner and Estate Attorney for more details.

Learn more and explore all ways to support Casa Cornelia

casacornelia.org/ways-to-give

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Congratulations Casa Cornelia Law Center on your 19th Annual La Mancha Awards

Do justice and love mercy...

Kevin F Quinn





For over 30 years, Casa Cornelia has been a steady, effective advocate for children, families, and asylum seekers from all over the world. As an immigrant who has been blessed with a great life, career, and family, I'm grateful to contribute to this organization as a volunteer, Board member, and donor.

Ron Mehrtash

Attorney Advertising

Robbins Geller is honored to celebrate those who champion justice at Casa Cornelia Law Center's 19th Annual La Mancha Awards.

Robbins Geller Rudman & Dowd LLP

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Recognizing Service



Foley & Lardner LLP proudly congratulates **J.P. Riley** on receiving the Pro Bono Publico Award at Casa Cornelia's 19th Annual La Mancha Awards.

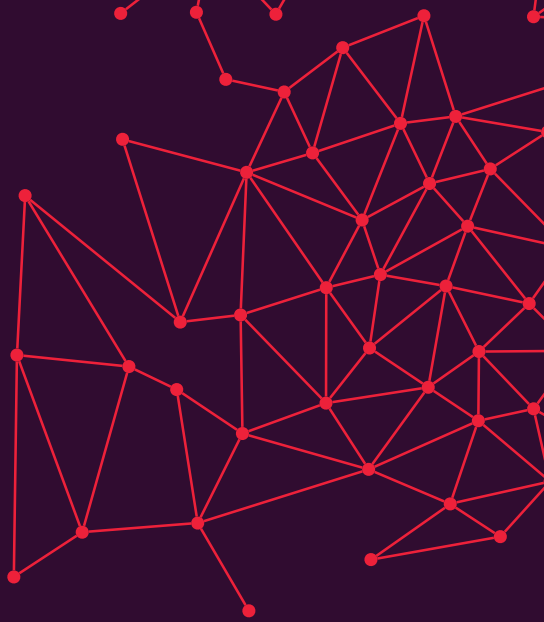
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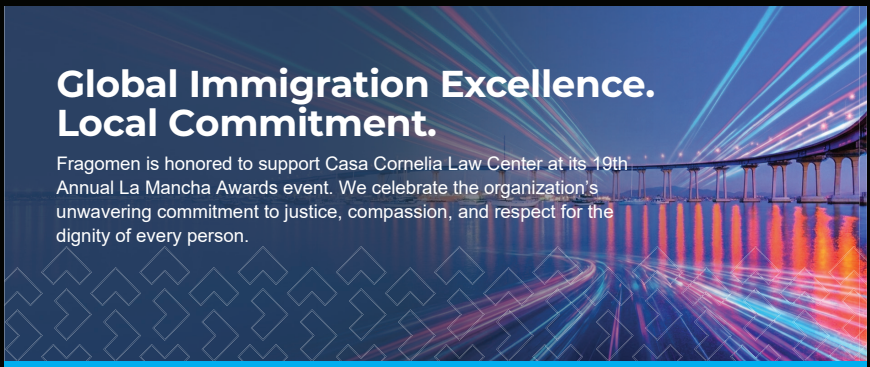
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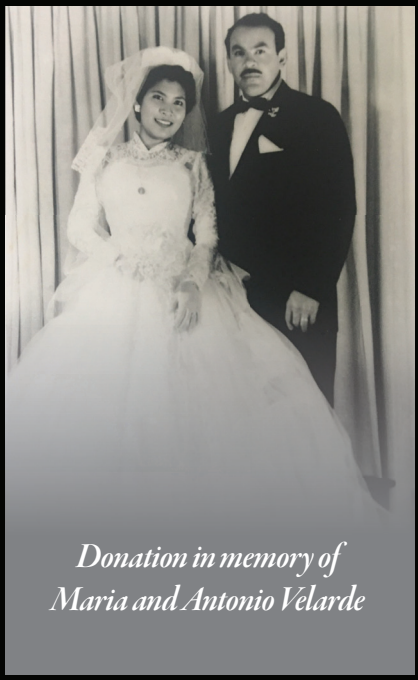
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