

Guillermo Nicolas

I. Guillermo Nicolas is a brilliant and tireless San Antonio Public Library advocate with a fabulous sense of humor (a trait I believe is necessary in maintaining resolve to overcome many of the gritty challenges and obstacles involved with improving our libraries). From committing significant amounts of time, talent and financial/material contributions to our libraries, this gentleman took the position of San Antonio Public Library Foundation (SAPLF) Chairman of the Board to an incredible new level. A well known and respected individual in the San Antonio community, Guillermo was frequently the face behind the microphone at library press conferences and greeting the crowd at galas. But, he was also the industrious, humble public servant visiting library branches to create a strategic technology plan and working “behind the scenes” to create community partnerships that brought world renown authors and art to the San Antonio public through its local libraries. I. Specific reason for nomination

“Guillermo’s two-year term as Chairman (2007-2008) has left many of us in awe. He assumed the position with full determination and has done a top-notch job. However, even before he began his term as Chairman of the Board, he was an ardent champion of our library system. His financial generosity to our libraries has been steady for well over a decade, and his advocacy on behalf of the library has included hosting numerous fundraisers for the San Antonio Public Library. Below I have highlighted some of his more significant contributions; it is most certainly not an exhaustive list.

In 2004, Guillermo embarked on a capital campaign fund with the San Antonio Public Library Foundation to enhance the Raoul A. Cortez branch library, a library named for a man who was always one step ahead, defeating the greatest challenges, a pioneer of Spanish radio and television and a true advocate of the community. This man was Mr. Nicolas’s grandfather. Guillermo embraced the campaign not only to honor his grandfather, but to preserve his legacy of community outreach that encourages education, appreciates diversity and embraces the future. The result of this capital campaign? A contribution that benefitted 55,000 individuals, over 15,000 households, and 11,500 children. The library grounds were relandscaped, much of the library was redesigned and refurbished, and public access technology was infused throughout.

Guillermo was also key to a partnership between the San Antonio Public Library Foundation, The Tobin Endowment, Giles Design, and the City of San Antonio which resulted in a new name and look for one of San Antonio’s busiest public library branches, the Tobin Library at Oakwell. In 2007 the Library Foundation, with the support of The Tobin Endowment, made improvements of over \$300,000, which included a renovated parking lot and children’s area and a new roof.

One of Guillermo’s more memorable contributions to the San Antonio Public Library has been his ability to form partnerships and to bring nationally-known and world-renowned artists and authors to San Antonio and our Central Library for the community to enjoy. San Antonio was the first U.S. stop on a long-anticipated retrospective exhibition entitled The Baroque World of Fernando Botero, featuring paintings, prints and sculptures from the Colombian artist’s personal collection. Guillermo and the San Antonio Public Library Foundation were thrilled to host the kickoff celebration, Colombian Carnival, for this exhibit.

The Carnival was an immensely successful celebration of the collaborative project Botero: Beloved Artist of the Americas. Comprised of the retrospective exhibition displayed simultaneously at the San Antonio Museum of Art and the Southwest School of Art & Craft, Family Fun Days at local library branches, community art classes, lectures, and KLRN public television programming, Botero: Beloved Artist of the Americas was a community-wide celebration focusing on the work of one of South America’s best-known and well-loved artists. So dedicated was Guillermo to the success of this collaboration and to being a galvanizer of enthusiasm for libraries that he devoted his time and energies to ensuring that Fernando Botero (Colombian-born but now living in Italy) was in attendance at the Central Library’s celebration and that the Library Foundation would be able to purchase a Botero sculpture, Caballo, for the Central Library as a lasting reminder of his visit! The Botero collaborative was so successful that all partners have already begun discussions for the next educational community-wide celebration, and the Museo Alameda has committed to participate also.

The San Antonio Public Library participated in the National Endowment for the Art’s Big Read program for the first time in 2008. The celebrated title was Harper Lee’s *To Kill A Mockingbird*. As you may know, Sissy Spacek does a stellar job with the reading for the audio version of the book. Guillermo, always bringing style and class to an event, worked persistently to bring Mrs. Spacek to the Library Foundation’s 25th Anniversary Gala at the Central Library to read a 15-minute long selection from the title. Of course, everyone treasured her reading and it was the talk of the town the next day. He also played an important role in getting authors Tina Brown (*The Diana Chronicles*) and Marie Brenner (*Apples and Oranges*) to come to San Antonio for luncheon “Conversation and Q&A” engagements. Guillermo’s love for bringing a bit of glam to all events and places he goes, including the library, has got the community wondering “What’ll happen next at the library?!”

What I hope to have conveyed is that Guillermo is the Renaissance man of library support, and it has been an absolute pleasure to team up with him on projects large and small. He excels at throwing an exquisite fundraiser event, but he is just as devoted to those strategic tasks that ensure our Central Library and 23 branches have the infrastructure and resources needed to successfully serve as a wonderful educational and cultural institution to the San Antonio community. He treated the Chairman position with a strong passion and enthusiasm, as though it were the full-time job he’d always been searching for and had finally found (albeit unpaid!).

II. Achievements/contributions related to library service

The San Antonio Public Library Foundation (SAPLF) has quite an impressive financial history. Over the past 25 years, we have contributed more \$30 million dollars to improve libraries in our community. The Library Foundation's constant advocacy and public-awareness efforts have resulted in an increase in the Library's city-funded operating budget - resulting in branch expansions, expanded operational hours, and a boost in materials budgets. Under Guillermo's leadership and guidance the SAPLF gave its largest gift ever to the San Antonio Public Library – over \$3.8 million. His keen business sense and management expertise have helped the Library Foundation maintain administrative costs at 11.3% and Board giving at 100%.

III. Other activities/information pertinent to nomination

Guillermo Nicolas (including his family) was the recipient of the Ford Salute to Education Award in 2008.

IV. Recognitions and awards

GUILLERMO C. NICOLAS

555 East Basse Road, Suite 201

San Antonio, Texas 78209

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2003-Present President 3N Group, LLC., San Antonio, Texas.

Responsible for managing and growing a private multi-million dollar commercial Real Estate portfolio.

2000-2003 Director of HSE Home Shopping Espanol, St. Petersburg, FL.

Responsible for programming an international 24/7 home shopping network in Spanish. Hired and managed the programming and planning departments, the on-air producers, the on-air talent, the food stylist and models. Responsible for increasing network sales, program diversity and innovation along with creating loyalty among viewers with quality destination programming.

1990-2000 Director of Operations Nicolas Communications, San Antonio, Texas.

Responsible for all aspects of operation for four television stations in Texas. Also responsible for corporate and community relations, including fund-raisers for local non-profits, and corporate giving.

COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS & ACTIVITIES:

Responsible for special events, fundraising, community awareness and start-up of young support groups for the various organizations.

2006-Present Advisory Board, University of Texas Austin, College of Communications

2005-2008 Board of Directors, Artpace, Chairman of Development.

1998-Present Board of Directors, San Antonio Library Foundation, Chairman of the Board.

1995-1997 Board of Directors, Healy Murphy Center, President.

1994-2001 Board of Directors, San Antonio Museum of Art.

1994-1998 Board of Directors, Texas Public Radio, Vice Chairman.

1992-1997 Board of Directors, Southwest School of Art & Craft, Vice Chairman.

1991-1997 Board of Directors, Las Casas Foundation, Vice President.

EDUCATION:

University of Texas, Austin, Texas

Degree: Bachelors of Science in History & Art History.