



March 24, 2010

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## **Leadership Austin Announces *Best Party Ever* 2010 Honorees**

AUSTIN, TX, March 22, 2010 – Leadership Austin, a nonprofit organization focused on preparing leaders to effectively address challenging local issues, announces the honorees who will be recognized at its annual *Best Party Ever* event June 2 at the Four Seasons Hotel Austin. The ninth annual gala celebrates community leaders for their contribution to making Central Texas a better place to live, and is the single largest fundraising event for Leadership Austin.

At this year's *Best Party Ever*, Leadership Austin will honor Patsy Woods Martin with the Polly Scallorn Community Trustee award; Neal Spelce with the Exceptional Award for an Honorary Alumnus; and Priscilla Guajardo Cortez and John-Michael Cortez with the first-ever Ascendant Award.

*Best Party Ever* brings together more than 500 of the region's most influential civic and business leaders for an unparalleled community celebration and networking opportunity. A presentation-style VIP reception, cocktail-style main event and spectacular silent auction will make this year's circus-themed event the "*Best Party on Earth*," organizers say.

"*Best Party Ever* got its name because each Leadership Austin Essential Class embraces the tradition of calling themselves 'the best class ever,'" says Eric Shepperd, chair of Leadership Austin's board of directors and Judge, Travis County Court of Law 2.

"*Best Party Ever* celebrates collaborative leadership in Central Texas and the accomplishments of those who make things happen all year long. We are honored to recognize four outstanding and inspiring leaders this year. They truly epitomize what Leadership Austin is all about," Shepperd said.

For more information, tickets, or sponsorship opportunities contact Hannah Nokes, at 512-499-0435 X 117, or [hnokes@leadershipaustin.org](mailto:hnokes@leadershipaustin.org).

### **About Leadership Austin's *Best Party Ever* 2010:**

#### Honorees:

Polly Scallorn Community Trustee Award: Patsy Woods Martin

Exceptional Award for an Honorary Alumnus: Neal Spelce

Ascendant Award: Priscilla Guajardo Cortez and John-Michael Cortez

#### Event Chairs:

Amber Carden, U.S. Trust

Melanie Ridings, Topfer Family Foundation



### **About Leadership Austin:**

Leadership Austin ignites passion for community leadership, whatever your interests or experience level. Since 1979, our leadership development programs have helped thousands of individuals delve deeply into the critical issues and leadership skills required to keep our community thriving. Leadership Austin is a diverse, non-partisan environment for vital dialogue, experiential learning, and superior networking. For more information, visit [www.leadershipaustin.org](http://www.leadershipaustin.org).

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### **Honoree Biographies**

#### **Patsy Woods Martin, Polly Scallorn Community Trustee Award**

*Alumna, Leadership Austin Essential Class 1996*

Patsy Woods Martin founded *I Live Here, I Give Here*, the Central Texas Campaign for Philanthropy, which aims to increase charitable giving and public awareness of local needs. As executive director, Patsy has inspired countless Central Texans to practice thoughtful philanthropy and generated significant interest in “giving back.”

Previously, she was the vice president of resource development for United Way Capital Area and continues to be a key fundraiser and volunteer for various Austin nonprofit organizations. Patsy serves on the advisory board of the Legacy of Giving, the board of the Long Center for the Performing Arts, and the Women’s Fund of Central Texas. She is an active member of Leadership Austin, Junior League of Austin, the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Impact Austin, and UWCA’s Women’s Leadership Council.

For her unwavering passion, dedication, and community leadership, Patsy has also been honored as the Junior League of Austin’s “Volunteer Extraordinaire,” Ballet Austin’s “Woman on Her Toes,” and the Girl Scouts of Central Texas’ “Woman of Distinction.”

#### **Neal Spelce, Exceptional Award for an Honorary Alumnus**

Neal Spelce is a communications executive whose five-decade career has been distinguished by successes in radio, television, marketing, advertising, public relations, broadcast program syndication, speaking, consumer research and journalism.

He currently is Chairman/CEO of The Neal Spelce Company, Chief Executive Officer of Ninth Wave Productions (the creator/producer/syndicator of *An American Moment™ with Charles Kuralt* and *An American Moment™ with James Earl Jones*) and is Editor/Publisher of *The Neal Spelce Austin Letter*. An officer, principal and a major shareholder of CeloData, Inc., he is also a principal of Alumni Marketing Associates. He recently served as Senior Advisor to US Senator John McCain, traveling with the Senator during the final 90 days of his 2008 campaign for President of the United States.



Neal was President of the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce when Leadership Austin was formed and instrumental in encouraging its formation. Neal was also an early Leadership Austin Class Chair. He was named Austin's Most Worthy Citizen in recognition of his civic and charitable work, including service as Chair of Leadership Austin, Chair of the United/Way Capitol Area, President of the 15-county Boy Scouts of America Council, a Founder and President of the Austin Area Research Organization, Chair of the Better Business Bureau, President of the Society of Professional Journalists, President of The Headliners Club, Chair of the Texas Partners of the Americas (Peru, Mexico), President of the Texas Delta Upsilon Foundation and Chair of the American Health and Fitness Foundation, in addition to his service on more than a dozen other civic and charitable boards.

### **Priscilla Guajardo Cortez and John-Michael Cortez, Ascendant Award**

Priscilla Guajardo Cortez is an Associate Director of Development for The University of Texas at Austin. Prior to joining The University of Texas at Austin, Priscilla was the Director of Development and Legal Counsel for Southwest Key Programs, Inc., Austin's third largest nonprofit organization. Priscilla currently volunteers with Leadership Austin, Ballet Austin, and Con Mi MADRE. She is a member of FuturoFund Austin, the Hispanic Bar Association of Austin, Young Hispanic Professionals Association of Austin, and the Austin History Center Association. Priscilla is a graduate of the 2008-2009 Leadership Austin Essential Class.

A native Austinite, John-Michael graduated from UT Austin's McCombs School of Business with a BBA in International Business and is currently pursuing a MS in Community and Regional Planning at the School of Architecture. John-Michael is a graduate of the 2001 Hispanic Austin Leadership program and the 2008 Leadership Austin Essential Class.

Appointed by the Austin City Council, John-Michael has worked on the Libraries for the Future Task Force, Zoning and Platting Commission, and Planning Commission. Austin ISD selected John-Michael to serve on the Austin Community Education Consortium, and also appointed him co-chair of the Task Force for the District Strategic Plan.

As Past President of the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Education Foundation, as well as the Austin History Center Association, and having served on the board of directors for a diverse array of organizations, John-Michael has consistently used his leadership roles to foster inclusiveness in the community. John-Michael is currently involved in the Rotary Club of East Austin and is the Assistant Director for Community Involvement for Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

### **Event Fact Sheet**

**EVENT:** *Best Party Ever*, Leadership Austin's ninth annual gala, June 2, 2010



- PURPOSE:** An annual fundraising and networking event to recognize community leaders for their contribution to making Central Texas a better place to live.
- SCHEDULE:** VIP reception and awards ceremony, 6 - 7 p.m., Ballroom at Four Seasons Hotel  
*Best Party Ever* main event, 7 - 10 p.m., Lawn of Four Seasons Hotel
- LOCATION:** Four Seasons Hotel  
98 San Jacinto Boulevard  
Austin, TX 78701
- ORGANIZER:** Leadership Austin  
1609 Shoal Creek Blvd, Suite 202  
Austin, Texas 78701  
512.499-0435  
[www.leadershipaustin.org](http://www.leadershipaustin.org)
- KEY PLAYERS:** Patsy Woods Martin, *Best Party Ever* Honoree  
Neal Spelce, *Best Party Ever* Honoree  
Priscilla Guajardo Cortez and John-Michael Cortez, *Best Party Ever* Honorees  
Amber Carden, U.S. Trust, Event Chair  
Melanie Ridings, Topfer Family Foundation, Event Chair  
Heather McKissick, President/CEO, Leadership Austin
- MAJOR SPONSORS:** H-E-B, Presenting Sponsor  
Kennedy Creative, Event  
Four Seasons Hotel Austin, Venue Sponsor
- FULL EVENT COMMITTEE**  
Amber Carden, Co-chair  
Melanie Ridings, Co-chair  
Natalie Kennedy, Kennedy Creative  
Sunnie Channel, Kennedy Creative  
Jen Snavelly, Auction Co-chair  
Amy Welborn, Auction Co-chair  
Angular Adams  
  
Suzy Balagia  
Dawn Breyfogle  
Terri Broussard  
Julia Cuba  
Christina Felton  
Amy Holloway  
Angelia Johnson  
Michael Kellerman  
Bill Kempf



Tamra Kerns  
Michelle Krejci  
Christi Cuellar Lotz  
Jeannette Peten  
Carolyn Schwarz  
Paul Scott  
Julie Shannan  
Eric Shepperd  
Tiffany Stillwell  
Matt Williamson