



WITTE MUSEUM
Conference On Texas
Texas Trailblazers Awards

Origin Stories



*Playing Tops, Fidencio Duran. Witte Museum Collection.
Gift of Ricardo and Harriett Romo.*

WE ARE TEXAS –

Welcome to the *2023 Conference on Texas: Origin Stories* at the Witte Museum. The 6th annual conference at the Witte examines and explores Texas through families and origin stories.

Each year, the **Conference on Texas** is a time to focus on new scholarship and deep-rooted stories. This year's theme, *Origin Stories*, emboldens all of us to rediscover relational and familial beginnings, whether we are generational Texans or just arrived. We constitute this great state with its power and foibles, its vastness, and astonishing urban spaces, especially the culturally dense San Antonio.

To accompany this conference, we are also opening *Texas Art: Kinship and Culture*, which provides a visual narrative of all that is Texas on artists' pallets. Texas artists have captured and interpreted the lifeways of people over hundreds of years with insight that helps us comprehend the dignity of work, kinship, culture, and adaptation of diverse ecosystems. This exhibition will provide keen artistic insights into how Texans have lived and worked over time.

When the outstanding **Texas Trailblazers Committee** met to choose this year's **Trailblazer Award**, with the theme of *Origin Stories*, a powerful family name rose from the room: the Steves family. The Steves family literally built San Antonio over many generations. The Steves family is iconic in the history of San Antonio, having established Steves & Sons, Inc. 150 years ago, providing the underpinning lumber and welcoming doors in the most significant buildings in the city, including the Witte Museum. Today, the Steves family thrives in many business arenas and is influential in politics and philanthropy throughout San Antonio. The family has been involved with the Witte for generations, most recently with Edward Steves as a Trustee and currently as a member of the Witte's Collection Committee.



Chili Queens at the Alamo. Julian Onderdonk. Witte Museum Collection.

The **Texas Trailblazers Luncheon** will honor the Steves family and will feature a keynote address by Catherine Nixon Cooke, an author of many books on esteemed people in San Antonio, who will illuminate her methodology in discovering the origin stories of her subjects, including research expeditions and discoveries.

The conference will also host the opening of *Texas Art: Kinship and Culture*, featuring works from the Witte's Texas Art Collection. A VIP opening reception will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 23rd.

We thank the **Trailblazers Committee** for their leadership, including Chairs Mary Pat and Michael Bolner, Ruth and Jim Berg, Bonnie and Frank Gittinger, Christy and Andy Kerr and Cynthia O'Connor.

The Witte Museum is grateful for the Presenting Sponsorship of the Elizabeth Huth Coates Charitable Foundation, which has supported this conference from its inception. Many thanks to Veltri and Velasquez Wealth Management of Wells Fargo Advisors, Jefferson Bank, Humanities Texas, Traylor Ranches, and HOLT CAT.

Sincerely,

- Marise McDermott, President and CEO



**Conference on Texas:
Origin Stories**
Featuring: Texas Trailblazers Awards
March 23 - 24, 2023 | Witte Museum

**12th Annual
Texas Trailblazers Luncheon**

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. | Mays Family Center

Thursday, March 23

8:30 a.m. **Coffee and Pastries**
Memorial Auditorium

9:00 a.m. **Greeting by Marise McDermott,
President and CEO, Witte Museum**
Memorial Auditorium

Session 1 | 9:15 – 10:15 a.m.

Angelique, Indigenous Scout of Los Adaes

Francis Galan, Associate Professor of History, Texas A&M University San Antonio

Henri Castro and the Ferdinand Louis Huth Family of Castroville

Bradford Boehme, Castroville Historical Society

Facilitator: Gretchen Stieren O’Gorman, Coates Energy Trust

Session 2 | 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Erasmu Seguín and the Paradox of Loyalty

Frank de la Teja, Former State Historian

The Flour King: C. H. Guenther and Family

Jack Hebdon, Jr., Guenther Family Historian

Facilitator: Francis Galan, Associate Professor of History, Texas A&M University San Antonio

Sponsored by Jessie and Richard Kardys

11:30 a.m.
Feik Family Pavilion

Check-in and Registration

12:00 p.m.
Mays Family Center

Welcome

Marise McDermott, President and CEO, Witte Museum

2023 Texas Trailblazers Awards Keynote Speaker
Catherine Nixon Cooke, Author and Historian

2023 Texas Trailblazers Awards Keynote Speaker

Catherine Nixon Cooke, Author and Historian

Presented by  JEFFERSON BANK



Catherine Nixon Cooke is an award-winning author of six biographies and histories that delve deep into the origin stories of families and organizations. Her most recent book, *San Antonio: City on a Mission*, co-authored with former San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros, takes a fresh look at San Antonio's first inhabitants and the many characters and companies that created modern San Antonio. Cooke's books include, *In Search of Tom Slick: Explorer and Visionary* and *The Thistle and the Rose: Romance, Railroads, and Big Oil in Revolutionary Mexico*, among others.



2023 Texas Trailblazers Award Honorees

The Steves Family

The Steves Family arrived in Texas in 1857. Edward Steves, lumberman, second son of Heinrich and Christina (Schlippes) Steves sailed from Germany to Galveston, Texas, then to Indianola and New Braunfels. Steves acquired 160 acres of land near Comfort, and on December 26, 1857, he married Johanna Kloepper, a native of Hanover living in the village of Comal. They had three sons on their Kendall County farm. In 1866, Steves entered the lumber business in San Antonio. His enterprises expanded rapidly after the arrival of the railroad in 1877, and his four-acre lumberyard beside the depot served a trade area that extended to northern Mexico and Fort Davis in Jeff Davis County.

Four generations later, the Steves Family has expanded into other businesses, but still operates the international company, Steves and Sons. Edward Steves will be providing a family history, from the German origin story to Comfort, San Antonio and beyond.

Session 3 | 1:45 – 2:45 p.m.

The Glasscocks – From Circus Artistry to Oil Industry

Kathleen Glasscock Tomasovic, Family Historian

Facilitator: Bob and Patty Hayes, Philanthropists

Session 4 | 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

The Descendants Walk Among Us

Ramón Vásquez, Executive Director of American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions

Hector Bazy and the Silence of the Archives

Ronald W. Davis, II, Curator of American History, Witte Museum

Facilitator: Marise McDermott, President and CEO, Witte Museum, and Aaronetta Pierce, Civic Leader and Trustee of the Witte Museum

Session 5 | 4:15 – 5:15 p.m.

A Visual Story of Us

Ricardo Romo, Historian and Fidencio Duran, Artist

Sponsored by Ruth B. Russell



Nivia Gonzalez. Witte Museum Collection.

5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Russell Hill Rogers
Art Gallery

VIP Opening Reception for *Texas Art: Kinship and Culture*



Portrait of Sam Houston, William M. Samuel, Witte Museum Collection.

People Predominate - Curatorial Talk by Marise McDermott

*Ewing Halsell Hall, Robert J. and Helen C. Kleberg
South Texas Heritage Center*

Friday, March 24

9:00 a.m.
Memorial Auditorium

Coffee and Pastries

Session 6 | 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Families in the Aftermath of the 1813 Battle of Medina

Amy Porter, Professor of History, Texas A&M University San Antonio

The Bigmouth of East Texas and the Unnamed Mother

Christina Villarreal, Professor of History, University of Texas at El Paso

Facilitator: Cecilia Ballí, Journalist

Session 7 | 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

The Stories Art Can Tell

Lionel Sosa, Artist

Facilitator: Marise McDermott, President and CEO,
and Justin Muñoz, Vice President of Development,
Witte Museum



Conference On Texas | Texas Trailblazers Awards *Origin Stories*

Abstracts of Presentations and Biographies

Session 1

Angelique: Indigenous Scout of Los Adaes

Largely overlooked in the Spanish, Comanche and Anglo-American conquests of Texas in the 18th and 19th centuries is a different origin story about relations between indigenous people and Europeans. This story involves a Hasinai woman the French referred to as Angelique and the Spanish Angelina whom they believed was both translator and guide for Europeans during the early 1700s into the Land of the Tejas. She served as de facto diplomat for peaceful ties across cultures in deep East Texas and her story raises many questions about the role of indigenous women in conquest narratives plus comparisons with famous women in North American history and memory. In Texas, there is only one county named after a woman and that happens to be Angelina, yet most Texans likely do not know about this *angelita* or Little Angel.

Francis X. Galan is Associate Professor of History at Texas A&M University - San Antonio where he teaches courses on Latin America, Mexico, Texas, and the Caribbean. He received his Ph.D. in history from Southern Methodist University, MA in history from UTSA, and BA in Latin American Studies from UT Austin. His book, *Los Adaes: The First Capital of Spanish Texas*, was published in 2020 by Texas A&M University Press, College Station, through the Summerfield G. Roberts Texas History Series. This work received a 2023 Book Award from the San Antonio Conservation Society Foundation, a 2022 Book Award from the Texas Old Missions and Forts Restoration Association. He is from San Antonio and together with his wife, Dr. Emma Mata Galan, has two children.

End of Conference

Henri Castro and the Ferdinand Louis Huth Family of Castroville

In the early 1840s the new Republic of Texas employed the empresario system to help populate its public lands. The presentation is about two men, Henri Castro and Ferdinand Louis Huth, whose efforts led to the settlement of the land west of San Antonio. Castro, a French-born naturalized U.S. citizen, was one of the first to be granted the title of empresario by the Republic of Texas. Seeking funding in 1843, he partnered with German Merchant Ludwig Huth to fill ships returning to Europe with Texas cowhides and cotton. With a vested interest in the venture's success, Huth provided cash, aided recruitment, and most importantly sent his son Ferdinand Louis Huth to Texas to assist the settlement effort. The young Huth was left in charge of Castroville when Castro returned to Alsace to recruit more settlers. In this capacity he often purchased goods from San Antonio. Castro and Huth's roles are still recognized today.



Louis Huth. Courtesy of Barry C. Roberts

Bradford Boehme, of the Castro Colonies Heritage Association, is a San Antonio firefighter, a Medina County rancher and hay farmer on his family farm in Castroville, and is happily married to a fellow 6th generation German/Alsatian Texan. They are raising their three children on the farm to appreciate and participate in the traditions and culture of their forbears.

Session 2 - Sponsored by Jessie and Richard Kardys

Erasmu Seguín and the Paradox of Loyalty

As postmaster of San Antonio in 1807, Erasmu Seguín was a member of the royal establishment in San Antonio. His royalist sympathies led to his arrest by Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara during the second Texas revolt in 1812-1813. He was accused of treason by the royalists when they regained control of the province following the battle of Medina in August 1813. Seguín would spend over five years defending himself from the charges. He served as alcalde of San Antonio in the last year of Spanish rule, but then represented Texas at the congress that drafted the federal Constitution of 1824. After Texas Independence, he served as a judge under the Republic. Thus, Seguín serves as an apt case study of the conflicted loyalties through which Tejanos had to navigate during the first half of the 19th century.

Jesús F. "Frank" de la Teja is Regents' Professor Emeritus and University Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History at Texas State University in San Marcos. He obtained the Ph.D. in Latin American history from the University of Texas at Austin, and between 1985 and 1991, he worked in the Archives and Records Division of the

Texas General Land Office. He has published extensively on Spanish, Mexican, and Republic-era Texas, including the award-winning *San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier*, and most recently *Faces of Béxar: Writings on Early San Antonio and Texas*. He served as book review editor for the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* from 1997 to 2014 and as managing editor of *Catholic Southwest: A Journal of History and Culture* from 1991 to 2005. He has served on the board of directors, as president, and as executive director of the Texas State Historical Association. He was the inaugural State Historian of Texas (2007-2009), is a Fellow of the Texas State Historical Association and the Texas Catholic Historical Society and is a member by election of the Texas Institute of Letters and the Philosophical Society of Texas.

The Flour King: C.H. Guenther and Family

Jack Hebdon, Jr. will discuss Carl Hilmer Guenther as a Texas pioneer. This is a story about a 20-year-old young miller apprentice from Weissenfels, Germany, who became restless and left Germany to build a new mill and make his fortune. Along the way, he ended up in Texas and used his entrepreneurial skills to build a business that still exists today, C.H. Guenther and Son, 172 years later.

Jack Hebdon, Jr., a Partner and VP and CFO of Bakke Development Corporation, is also a Guenther descendant. Hebdon received a Bachelor of Business Administration from The University of Texas at Austin. He went on to graduate with honors from the Graduate School of Banking at The University of Wisconsin. He is a CPA licensed in the State of Texas (CPA license retired 2020), and a member of the AICPA and Texas Society of CPAs. Hebdon served as a Director, as well as Chairman of the Audit Committee of C.H. Guenther and Son for over 16 years, until the company was sold in March 2018. During Fiesta 1999, he reigned over Fiesta as King Antonio LXXVII, the seventh King Antonio in the C.H. Guenther Family. He currently serves as an advisor to the Secretary of the Air Force, Chief of the Air Force and Chief of Space Operations. He also currently serves on the City Public Service Board-Rate Assistance Committee and as Chairman of the Board of the Heritage and Leaning Center.

Session 3

The Glasscocks – From Circus Artistry to the Oil Industry

Kathleen Glasscock Tomasovic, Family Historian

Kathleen Glasscock Tomasovic was reared on the family ranch in Mathis until she was 7 years old when her family moved to Corpus Christi, but continued to stay at the ranch on weekends. During summers, Kathleen's father drove the family across America. Her father worked for the Forepaugh Circus as an accountant when the family owned the Circus, purchased by his father, and traveled across America and Europe. Once the circus was sold, the family entered the oil business. Kathleen was married to Curtis Gunn for more than four decades, during which time they traveled the world.

Session 4

The Descendants Walk Among Us

The children of two couples, Damacio de la Cruz and Margarita Del Toro as well as José Tejada and Dorothea Pérez, have contributed to the history of San Antonio, the State of Texas and the United States of America and their descendants walk amongst us today. Damacio de la Cruz was born around 1764, probably at Mission San José and married Margarita Del Toro on September 3, 1804. Damacio was the "Yndio Gobernador" or Indian Governor of Mission San José. José Tejada was born around 1752 and a member of the founding Tribe of Mission San Francisco de la Espada, the Pacoa Indian Nation. José was married to Dorothea Pérez, and they had two sons that we know of. The story of two families can be multiplied by the number of Indian families that descend from the missions, resulting in tens of thousands of descendants throughout San Antonio and beyond.

Ramón Vásquez, Executive Director of American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions (AITSCM), was born in San Antonio and is an enrolled member of the Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan Nation. The AITSCM is a nonprofit that serves the indigenous population of Northeastern Mexico and South Texas. In this capacity Ramón has spent the last 25 years working on community mobilization and has developed community/academic partnerships primarily focusing on reversing extinction of the American Indian descendants of the Spanish Missions of Northeastern Mexico and South Texas. In 2006, Ramón co-founded the National Urban Indian Family Coalition, now headquartered in Seattle, Washington. He also is the co-founder and Vice President of the Land Heritage Institute Foundation in Bexar County. In 2014, he co-founded the Texas Heritage Project, which is now in partnership with Texas A&M University - San Antonio.

Hector Bazy and the Silence of the Archives

Born enslaved in 1851, Hector Bazy grew up on a plantation in Grimes County, Texas. After the Civil War, at age 14, Bazy became one of the Black cowboys that trailed cattle throughout Texas and beyond. Bazy remembered tending cattle as a child when he said that the cattle on the plantation he grew up working on were "his silent friends." Bazy's life represents his lived experiences and provides insight into the joys, struggles, and resilience of Black cowboys in Reconstruction Texas. His memoir, written in 1910, is one of two autobiographies of Black cowboys from the nineteenth century. This talk will address the story of Hector Bazy, access to his narrative, problems with digitization, and the silences in archival collections. Finally, this talk will explore how museums and archives can potentially increase awareness in minority communities and build relationships of trust with people of color.

Ronald W. Davis, II is the Curator of American History at the Witte Museum and doctoral candidate in the History Department at The University of Texas at Austin. His dissertation project, titled "'They Made Me the Best Bronc Rider in the Country, but They Weren't Trying to Make Me a Rider: Enslaved and Free Black Cowboys in Texas, 1830-1865," examines enslaved cowboys, labor, and resistance in antebellum Texas. He co-curated the exhibition *Black Cowboys: An American Story*, which was at the Witte Museum in San Antonio until April 2022 and is traveling to different cities around the nation. He is also a twenty-six-year veteran of the U.S. military and served in various capacities through five deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Session 5 - Sponsored by Ruth B. Russell

Fidencio Duran: A Visual Story of Us – A Conversation

Fidencio Duran will provide the background to the three paintings in the Witte's *Texas Art: Kinship and Culture* exhibition, among his other art works. The paintings are *Throwing Tops*, *Winter Feast* and *New Day*. Duran will explore how his visual stories honor the history of his family and community.

Fidencio Duran's artworks have been exhibited by institutions from the Witte Museum, San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago, IL, Amarillo Art Museum, Mexic-Arte Museum in Austin, TX, Millicent Rogers Museum in Taos, NM to Smithsonian Latino Center and the Fundación Osde in Buenos Aires, Argentina. One of Duran's most prominent works, *The Visit*, graces the entire length of the ticket counter at the Austin Bergstrom International Airport. Duran has the distinction of being the only artist to receive all three of the Dallas Museum's Awards to Artists. He was awarded the Clare Hart DeGolyer Memorial Fund Award in 1983, the Arch and Anne Giles Kimbrough Fund Award in 1990, and the Otis and Velma Davis Dozier Travel Grant in 1996. He has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from The University of Texas at Austin and has taught and lectured at UT Austin, Austin Community College and Texas State University in San Marcos.

Session 6

Children of the 1813 Battle of Medina

With Father Miguel Hidalgo's call for Mexican independence in 1810, rebellion broke out throughout New Spain, and Texas was no exception. Fights for independence would reach Texas quickly. One of the most devastating battles of this fight was the 1813 Battle of Medina that took place just south of San Antonio. This was a devastating event for the citizens of Spanish Texas. Families were shattered as fathers and brothers died in the fighting or in the aftermath of the battle, and women and children had to find ways to survive. Some families fled to Louisiana. Others stayed in Béxar and suffered through imprisonment in La Quinta, abuse, hunger, and property loss in some cases. The policies that the Spanish placed upon Bexareños led to years of suffering, and it would be Mexican independence in 1821 that finally brought a reprieve. Though records of distinct family experiences are rather sparse, some glimpses exist in the historical record, and these pieces can help us to better understand this era.

Amy M. Porter is Professor of History at Texas A&M University - San Antonio where she teaches classes on early America and Texas. She received her Ph.D. in History from Southern Methodist University. Porter's research focuses on women in the Spanish borderlands. Her 2015 book is entitled *Their Lives, Their Wills: Women in the Borderlands, 1750-1846* and was the recipient of the Lou Halsell Rodenberger Book Prize in History, Culture, and Literature from Texas Tech University Press and a co-recipient of the Fabiola Cabeza de Baca prize from the Historical Society of New Mexico.

The Bigmouth of East Texas and the Unnamed Mother

Juan José Peña, known locally as El Bocón, or "The Bigmouth," sustained a life of crime and fugitivity in the Texas-Louisiana borderlands between 1788 and 1792. His wrongdoings included countless thefts, multiple jailbreaks, and the abduction of an unnamed enslaved mother and her child. This presentation uses the criminal experiences of El Bocón to explore the late eighteenth-century Texas-Louisiana borderlands, the early gateway to the North American southwest and the selective sanctuary it offered to fugitives.

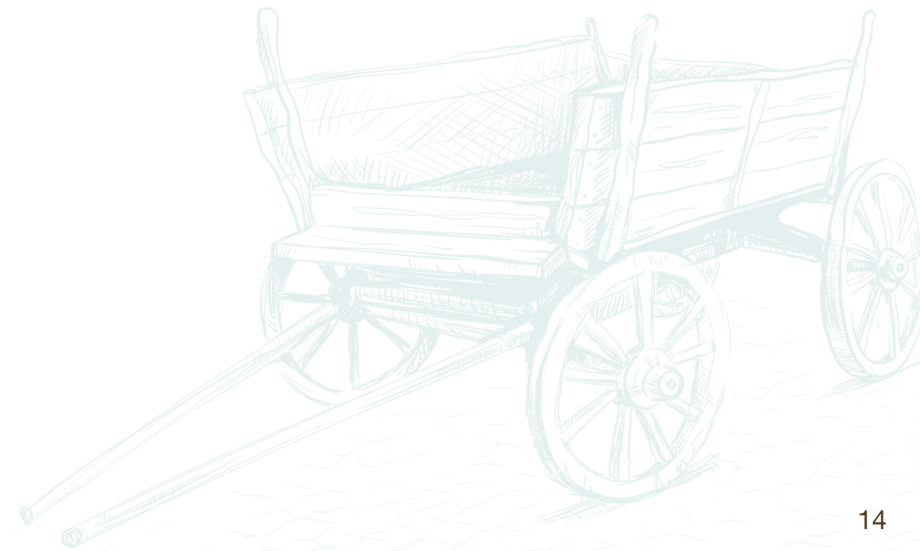
Christina Marie Villarreal is Assistant Professor of History at The University of Texas at El Paso. Her research focuses on the Texas-Louisiana borderlands, Vast Early America, fugitives from slavery, desertion, and sanctuary. Villarreal has received support for her research from the Ford Foundation, the Fulbright Program, the Clements Center for Southwest Studies, The Institute for Citizens & Scholars, and the SSRC-Mellon Mays Program. She is currently completing her first manuscript, "Imperial Fugitives: Apostates, Deserters, and Runaways in Eighteenth-Century Texas and Louisiana Borderlands, 1714-1803."

Session 7

The Stories Art Can Tell

The Texas vaquero can trace his ancestry to the vaqueros of Spain and Mexico, who came here as the Spanish land grants of the 17th century beckoned. The vaquero taught the American cowboy everything he needed to know about cattle and horses. They were born, lived, and died on the ranch, with next generation taking over the duties that made the cattle industry the main driver of the growing Texas economy. In 2007, photographer John Dyer and Lionel Sosa spent more than a month visiting Texas ranches from the biggest to the smallest. Their book called *El Vaquero Real: The Original American Cowboy*, was published that same year by Bright Sky Press. The paintings and photographs were displayed in an exhibition at the Witte Museum of same name.

Lionel Sosa After a successful career in advertising, Sosa, who has been painting all his life, realized his life-long dream of becoming a full-time portrait artist. He and his wife Kathy are both artists and have two studios- one located in Querétaro, Mexico and the other in San Antonio, Texas. The two have exhibited together in the Smithsonian Institution-sponsored *Huipiles: A Celebration* in Washington, DC. Sosa has also exhibited at the Centro de Artes and at the Witte Museum in San Antonio, the Heritage Museum in Laredo, and at the Paisano's Gallery in Marfa.





Witte Museum Texas Trailblazers

2014 – Mayor Julian Castro and Estrella Hernandez

2015 – Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison

2016 – Peggy and Lowry Mays

2017 – Susan Naylor

2018 – Kittie West

2019 – San Antonio River Authority & Bexar County
Commissioners Court

2020 – Graham Weston

2021 – Mike Bolner and Bolner’s Fiesta Products

2022 – Trustees of the Robert J. Kleberg, Jr. and Helen
C. Kleberg Foundation

2023 – The Steves Family



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12TH ANNUAL TEXAS TRAILBLAZER AWARDS LUNCHEON

March 23, 2023

PIONEER LEVEL

Mary Pat and Mike Bolner
The Elizabeth Huth Coates Charitable Foundation
C.H. Guenther & Son, LLC
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EXPLORER LEVEL

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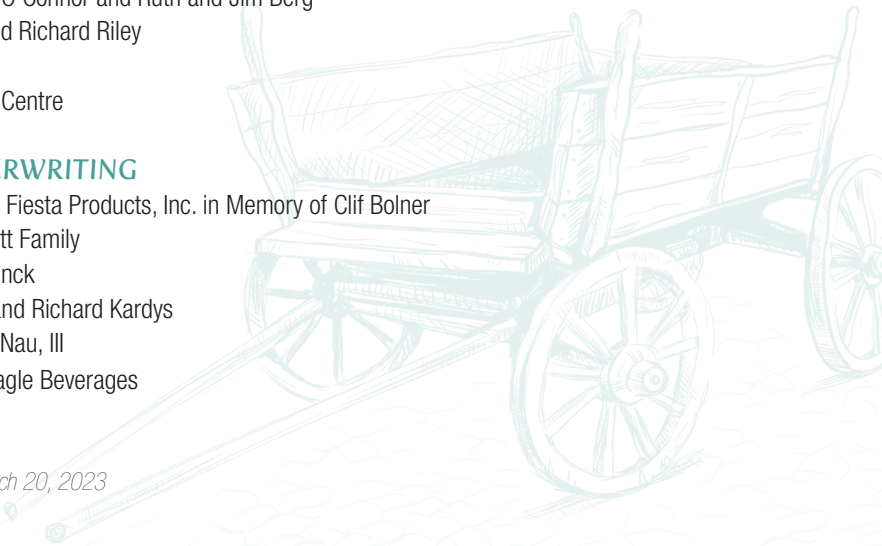
NATURALIST LEVEL

Bank of America Private Bank and Peggy Walker
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Jefferson Bank
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Luther King Capital Management
Cynthia O'Connor and Ruth and Jim Berg
Mimi and Richard Riley
Valero
Weston Centre

UNDERWRITING

Bolner's Fiesta Products, Inc. in Memory of Clif Bolner
Tex Elliott Family
Missy Finck
Jessie and Richard Kardys
John L. Nau, III
Silver Eagle Beverages

as of March 20, 2023



Menu

Salad

Medallion Cut Garlic Grilled Beef Tournedo on Top of Arugula, Sorrel, Sprouts, Petite Green Beans, Shaved Parmesan, Fingerling Potato, Breakfast Radishes and White Balsamic Vinaigrette

Fresh Baked Assortment of Local Artisan Rolls , Multigrain Crackers, Breadsticks and Creamy Butter

Dessert

Apple Carrot Cake

Cream Cheese Mousse, Cardamom Crumble, Cobbler Sauce and Dark Chocolate Tuile

Pecan Praline Cheesecake

Texas Pecans, Praline Caramel and Cinnamon Whip

Freshly Brewed Regular and Decaf Coffee