

Texas House of Representatives recognizes two McAllen women

Special to The Monitor

McALLEN — Two McAllen women were recently honored by the Texas House of Representatives for their work in the community. At a recent Legislative Luncheon hosted by the McAllen Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, State Rep. Veronica Gonzales surprised Monica Weisberg-Stewart and Cynthia M. Sakulenzki with resolutions passed by the State of Texas House of Representatives.

Weisberg-Stewart was recognized for being a business and civic leader. Some of her accomplishments have been for her work in downtown McAllen, helping to form the Downtown Coalition that evolved into the Downtown Improvement District and addressing the needs of an area that was half-abandoned. Through careful organization and fund-raising efforts, the coalition was able to leverage millions of dollars and achieved an occupancy rate of about 90 percent. She has served on the board of the first



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Shown with State Rep. Veronica Gonzales, center, are Cynthia M. Sakulenzki, left, and Monica Weisberg-Stewart, right.

McAllen Development Corporation during a number of major construction projects, serves on the heart of the city board, Futuro McAllen, and the McAllen Hispanic Chamber of Commerce board of directors, where she actively works on the U.S. Visit Program pushing to give Mexican nationals

the same six-month permit as Canadians. Also noted was her role as a wife, mother, daughter and civic leader.

Sakulenzki was also honored for her demonstration of leadership and exceptional ability as president and CEO of the McAllen Hispanic Chamber. Since February 2000 she has

taken the responsibility for planning, developing and implementing the chamber's business plan in an effort to achieve the chamber's goals. She plays an active role in supervising and managing committees, both directly and indirectly, and is involved in implementing the chamber's policy on governmental relations and issues.

The MHCC, under Sakulenzki's tenure, has received numerous awards and accolades, including Small Chamber of the Year by the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce for 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005. National recognition has also been bestowed on

the Hispanic Chamber by the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce as National Small Chamber of the Year in 2000 and National Medium Chamber of the Year in 2005. National regional awards for Region III were also received in 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2005.

The Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce also

recognized Sakulenzki as one of the "Top 10 Hispanic Women in Texas" in 2000 as well as awarding her the "Latina Empowerment Award" in 2002. The MHCC was also presented with the National Political Empowerment Award by the USHCC in 2004 in Washington, D.C., for its work on the U.S. Visit and Immigration issues.