

## **Ambassador Marcela Celorio**

Ambassador Marcela Celorio has a solid and outstanding career as a diplomat and a Cross-Cultural understanding advocate. She joined the Mexican Foreign Service in 2000 and ascended through the ranks until she was named Ambassador in 2017.

Her career began at the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs's Legal and Consular Affairs departments in Mexico City. During her time there, she grasped the Mexican immigration phenomenon and complex consular scene for the first time. At this time, Marcela also drafted, advocated, and succeeded in the passing of a constitutional amendment allowing Mexican nationals to bear dual or multiple nationalities. This effort responded to an everlasting request of the Mexican diaspora, particularly from those in the United States.

For her first foreign posting, she served at the Mexican Embassy in Washington, D.C. as a political officer and Chief of Staff. Through this experience, she acquired a profound understanding of the ins and outs of the United States government and politics, as well as of its society. After 4 years in the United States capital, she was commissioned to the Mexican Ministry of Interior to coordinate the Mexican international security agenda with its North American partners -the United States and Canada-.

After this commission, she was posted as Deputy Ambassador at the Mexican Embassy in Israel. And later as *attaché* of political affairs before the European Union and Belgium in Brussels. Throughout that time, she gained a deep understanding of social and political dynamics within the Middle East and the European Union.

Following her assignments in Europe and Asia, she returned to the United States to serve as Deputy Consul General in New York. From that position, she maneuvered to position Mexico in one of the most important cities in the world by assisting a diverse community with various needs: from bankers and Wall Street experts to undocumented immigrants facing tough social and economic situations.

For her notorious contributions to Mexican foreign policy, in 2016, she was designated Consul General of Mexico in San Diego. There, right at the border, she observed a region with its own rhythm and soul, which demanded tailored solutions with a binational fit. The notion and nature of the border reality demanded a local approach solid enough to be respected and recognized by central authorities but simultaneously flexible enough to be a solution facilitator.

The need to develop a new approach to the challenges of this particular community

-the Cali-Baja region- led Marcela to develop the concept of cross-border diplomacy. This cross-border diplomacy conception aims to recognize that even though the traditional notion of diplomacy has a preponderant role in international relations, there is a gap in certain sub-regions where problems and challenges demand a more refined approach.

In 2019, recognizing her outstanding work at the border, the President of Mexico appointed her as Consul General of Mexico in Los Angeles. Los Angeles is home to the second largest Mexican community in the world -only Mexico City has a larger Mexican population-.

During her tenure at the helm of Mexico's largest diplomatic and consular representation, Marcela faced, along with her team, the historic challenge brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, together with local, state, and federal allies, she captained the health and humanitarian efforts to assist the Mexican and Angeleno community altogether. Among other things, a testing site, a vaccination center, and a humanitarian aid hub were installed at the Mexican Consulate, and made available to the region's most vulnerable people regardless of their nationality.

In an unprecedented manner, through a partnership with Canal 22, the cultural channel and the Consulate's team produced two seasons of "MEXLA: Una mirada de los mexicanos". This TV series seeks to make unknown aspects and faces of the Mexican community in Los Angeles visible to other people. Marcela also used social media (Instagram and Facebook) to stay close to the community and as a means for experts to provide reliable information on the most effective ways to face the pandemic and the resources available to all. These platforms also allowed her to convey a message of resilience much needed at those times through art, culture, and sports, among others.

During this dramatic historic period, she had the vision to contribute to building understanding bridges within the Angeleno community. With this purpose, she hosted several conversational forums about Mexican heritage in California, its present, and its future. These activities were captured and published in the book *"From Victimhood to Protagonism: A look into the Mexican community in Los Angeles"*.

In 2021, Mexico celebrated 500 years of the encounter between Spaniards and Mesoamerican indigenous people, as well as 200 years of its independence. With these historic events in mind, she coordinated the publication of a second book:

“*Mirada de Dos Mundos: Recetario Mestizo 200/500*”. Through a gastronomic perspective, this book highlights the importance and benefits brought about by the *mestizaje* process to a number of cultures. Both books are available at the Los Angeles Public Library.

Ambassador Celorio graduated as an attorney from the prestigious Law School *Escuela Libre de Derecho*. She is the Law School's first and only woman to have reached the rank of Ambassador. Additionally, she holds two Master's degrees, one from *Instituto Matías Romero* and one from the Mexican Ministry of National Defense. Furthermore, she has taken numerous courses from well-known institutions such as Harvard University and the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies. Marcela is a dual national from Mexico and Spain. She is fluent in English and has some knowledge of French, Italian, and Hebrew.

Throughout her career in the Mexican Foreign Service, Marcela faced and was in charge of solving a wide array of complex situations. Her experiences allowed her to attain an understanding of different cultures and the ways in which they interact with each other. Through her work, she identified the imperious necessity of promoting understanding and fostering the Rule of Law and a Culture of Lawfulness as fundamental society pillars within the Cross-Cultural Community.

## **PRIZES OR AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE**

Ambassador Celorio is convinced about the important role that identity plays in the Cross-Cultural Community. In that regard, she has received several recognitions from government entities, the private sector, and the community as a whole.

- She was recognized as the “*2016 Border Advocate of the Year*” by the San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce for her leadership on promoting the Cali-Baja megaregion.
- Awarded the “*2017 Border Advocate of the Year*” by the United States House of Representatives.
- Recognized as “*Woman of Success 2017*”. The Alianza de Mujeres por Mujeres, A.C. (AMPM), an organization that seeks the empowerment of women, granted her this award.
- Given her commitment to defending human and minorities rights in the Tijuana-San Diego region, she was the first foreign person to receive the “*2017 Major George Moscone Humanitarian Recognition*” by the San Diego LGBT Community.
- The San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce distinguished her with the “*2017 Binational Leader Award*”.
- In 2018, she was listed in the “*San Diego 500: The Book of Influential Business Leaders.*”
- The South County Economic Development Council recognized her with the “*Binational Endeavor Award*” in 2018.
- In 2019, the San Diego City Council proclaimed March 2nd as Consul General Marcela Celorio Day.
- In August 2019, the City of Los Angeles recognized her outstanding citizenship and activities enhancing the livelihood of the community.
- In 2019, on the 50th anniversary of the sisterhood between Los Angeles and Mexico City, the City of Los Angeles recognized her leadership and commitment for promoting and representing these two cities.
- The City of El Monte honored her for being a committed promoter and supporter of filmmakers, as well as for her contributions to the Broadway International Film Festival in 2020.

- In September 2021, the Los Angeles Police Department granted her an Honorable Recognition for her outstanding diplomatic career in public service.
- During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department recognized her for her service to the Los Angeles community through humanitarian efforts.

### **ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP**

- Co-Chair of the Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities at the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).
- Honorary member of the Smart Border Coalition.
- Member of Visionary Women.
- Honorary Member of the Pacific Council.
- Member of the International Law Association (ILA).

### **JURY/PANEL PARTICIPATIONS**

- Ambassador Celorio was invited to participate as president of the jury in the final rounds of new candidates seeking to join the Mexican Foreign Service.
- She has served several times as judge in international moot court competitions where young lawyers simulate a hearing before the International Court of Justice to prove their skills as international lawyers.

Ambassador Celorio has advocated intensely for community empowerment through art. In such context, the Consulate General of Mexico and the Cinematographic and Cultural Center in Los Angeles organized several contests, for which she served as judge and/or jury member:

- Film the Future Contest
- Monologue Contest
- Gratitude Art Contest

To celebrate 5 de mayo, she organized the first Guacamole Contest at the Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles. This contest was successful given the participation of Mexicans and Americans in rich cultural and culinary ambiance.

### **AUTHORSHIP OF SCHOLARLY ARTICLES IN PROFESSIONAL MEDIA**

She has authored several papers where she has contributed to the fields of international law and international relations.

- Celorio, M. (2004) 'Dual nationality, dual citizenship: mistake or success of Mexican foreign policy' in Instituto Matías Romero (ed.) *The challenges for Mexican foreign policy in the current juncture*. Mexico City: Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Relations.
- Celorio, M. (2006) '*The North American security and prosperity partnership: an Evaluation.*' Center for North American Studies, American University, Washington, D.C.
- Celorio, M. (2017) '*The role of the Consulate General of Mexico in San Diego: Exercising an effective consular diplomacy*', California Western Law Review, 53(2), pp. 131-148.
- Celorio, M. (2018) '*The role of consular diplomacy in the cross-border context: the case of CaliBaja*' in Fernández de Castro, R. (coord.) 'Mexican consular diplomacy in times of Trump' Tijuana, Baja California: el Colegio de San Luis & el Colegio de la Frontera Norte.
- Celorio, M. (2020) '*The CaliBaja Border, the gateway to a cross-border reality*', California Western International Law Journal, 50(1), pp. 1-22.
- Celorio, M. & E. del Moral (2020) '*Undocumented but essential: A paradox of the COVID-19*', Foreign Affairs Latin America. Available at: <https://revistafal.com/indocumentados-pero-esenciales/>
- Celorio, M. (2020) '*The Mexican community in Los Angeles*', Diplomacia Pública Revista Digital.

- Celorio, M. (coord.) (2021) *From victimhood to protagonism: A glimpse into the Mexican community in Los Angeles*. Los Angeles, CA: Consulate General of Mexico in Los Angeles.
- Carrera, F. & M. Celorio, (2021) '*Mexico's Feminist Foreign Policy: Beyond declarations and good intentions*', Mexican Foreign Policy Journal.
- Celorio, M. (2022) '*Cross-consular diplomacy*', in Martinez, J. & R. Hernández López (coords.) *Yearbook of Foreign Relations*. Mexico City, Mexico: Nueva Era.
- Celorio, M. (2022) *A glimpse of two worlds: Mestizo recipe book 200/500*. Los Angeles, CA: Consulate General of Mexico in Los Angeles.
- Celorio, M. (2022) '*Mexico-United States cross-border diplomacy: A paradigm of the Twenty-First Century cultural cooperation*', Mexican Foreign Policy Journal.

### **LEADERSHIP RECOGNITIONS**

- In December 2016, the City of Chula Vista, California, recognized her for her commitment to improving the lives of students and families in San Diego County.
- In April 2017, San Diego's LGBTQ+ community granted her the "*Mayor George Moscone Humanitarian Award*" for her efforts in favor of this community.
- In June 2019, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Board of Directors recognized her for her leadership, commitment, and dedication. She was also recognized for her outstanding support and contributions that facilitated a better understanding in the binational community.
- The same year, the United States of Homeland Security and the United States and Border Protection San Diego field office, recognized her for her public service in fostering diplomatic relations and promoting border security in the U.S. and Mexico regions.
- In 2021, the U.S. Congress recognized her exceptional leadership and commitment during the COVID-19 pandemic given her efforts to provide humanitarian aid and health services to the most vulnerable members of the Angeleno Community.
- The City of Los Angeles and the Board of Los Angeles County recognized her contributions to the community's well-being and distinguished her leadership and enthusiasm in actions to alleviate the effects of the pandemic on the Mexican community.

