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USHCC Board Member Wins Prestigious Award from Ford Motor Company
Sil Gonzales, leading Hispanic business owner, is awarded The Ford Salute, an elite award given to exceptional car dealerships from around the world.



(WASHINGTON, D.C.)— The United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC) is proud to announce its board member, Sil Gonzales owner of Gresham Ford in Oregon, received the prestigious and highly sought Ford Salute to Dealers Award recently in Dallas, Texas at the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA).

Only six recipients are chosen annually by Ford Motor Company from among 10,000 Ford and Lincoln dealerships from all over the world.

“It is a great honor for Gresham Ford to be recognized by Ford Motor Company, but I must emphasize that absolutely none of this would be possible without my managing partner Bess W. Avila and her outstanding leadership and our amazing team. The award belongs to her and the Gresham Ford family” said USHCC board member Sil Gonzales.

The award, which was started by Edsel B Ford II in 2001, recognizes and honors dealer principals who have made an extraordinary commitment of their time and resources to help improve the lives of others by providing support to different causes.

“Sil puts a 100 percent effort and commitment into everything that he does,” said Ramiro Cavazos, CEO of the USHCC. “The USHCC is proud of Ford’s incredible recognition for Sil. He is a passionate voice for Hispanic businesses.”

Gonzales, who is from California, has advocated during his 40-year career for Hispanics to have a seat at the table, and more importantly, that they are heard and seen as equals. The journey to the success he enjoys had obstacles, resistance, and challenges. He recalls how early in his career he encountered economic discrimination, and how banks expressed astonishment when he wanted lines of credit. When he applied for loans, it was a protracted process, which was not the case for everyone else. He was asked for more information and personal interviews than others. Instead of seeing this as a deterrent, he saw it as determination to forge ahead and overcome anything that stood in his way. The resistance he encountered only served to propel him to great accomplishments.

“You have to face the challenges rather than run away from them,” said Gonzales. “We have all been down and out, but it is the getting up again that matters. It is the only thing that matters,” he added.

It is this perseverance that he hopes younger generations will learn to help them fulfill their dreams. And he has four words for Hispanics pursuing the life they want: never, never, never quit.

“Sil is an inspiration to our board and the Hispanic community,” said Alice Rodriguez, immediate past chair of the USHCC. “He has blazed a trail for many Latinos, and we salute him and his team for a well-deserved recognition,” she added.

While the Golden State native has enjoyed much success, it is his investment in people that matters most to him.

“I strive to be successful, but it is more important that my employees are successful. They should receive the accolades because without them we couldn’t do what we do.”

His illustrious career has taken him from beginning as a financial analyst, to creating savings and loans and banks to developing multi-million-dollar enterprises, which include real estate and car dealerships.

In addition to USHCC, the business leader is currently a board member on the Southern California Ford Dealers Advertising Association, and an active member of the Ford Minority Dealers' Association. His former board memberships include the boards of the Chrysler Minority Dealers Association and the Montebello Federal Savings and Loan as well as the Bank of Whittier.

He lives in Long Beach, California with his wife, Taide Gonzales. He enjoys fishing, spending time with his family and is active in local churches.

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The USHCC is the nation's largest Latino business advocacy organization and works to actively promote the economic growth, development, and interests of more than five million Hispanic-owned businesses that combined, contribute over \$800 billion to the American economy each year. We operate through a network of more than 260 local chambers and business associations throughout the nation. For more information, please visit www.ushcc.com. Follow us on Twitter @USHCC.