

NEVADA TRAILBLAZERS

Meet Elsie Lucero:

Leadership is Lucero's Way to Pay it Forward

BY MARY BACON, ESQ.

People often know Elsie Lucero for her leadership in the legal and Latino communities. For Lucero, she views her leadership as paying it forward.

“The number of people who invested their time in me are too many to count,” she said. “It’s important to me to honor their legacy by ensuring that I invest in others, so that their investment continues to pay dividends across our community.”

Lucero’s family is from Durango, Mexico. Her maternal grandfather immigrated to Texas as a bracero in the early 1960s. The Bracero Program was a government program that allowed Mexican men to work in the U.S. to help make up for the labor shortage created because of World War II. Working conditions were inhumane. As part of the program, workers were inspected by the health department and sprayed with DDT, a dangerous pesticide. But for her grandfather, the poor conditions did not compare to the opportunities for change immigrating to the U.S. would bring to his family. Her father immigrated to the U.S. in the 1980s and worked all types of jobs, which eventually led him to own businesses in real estate and transportation. Their sacrifices paid off in radical change.



“I was able to become a lawyer,” she said. “One of my brothers graduated from UC Berkeley and is an AI software engineer, and the other is only 20 and has already been accepted to medical school at Brown.”

Lucero was born and raised in Las Vegas. From an early age, her parents instilled the value of education and the importance of a strong work ethic in her and her siblings. Her parents also instilled a mentality that anything was possible if they set their mind to it.

“My mom was the first in her family to graduate from college, so she always took our education very seriously,” she said.

Straight A’s were expected, and that is what Lucero earned—in addition to playing tennis and participating in National Honor Society at Silverado High School. Wanting to stay close to family, she decided to attend the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She majored in political science and excelled both inside and outside the classroom. She was on the Dean’s List, a member of Alpha Delta Pi Sorority, a member of the La Voz Huellas Mentorship Program, and the vice president of Internal Programming for the UNLV Panhellenic Council, just to name a few.

Ensuring a well-rounded college experience, Lucero also made time to study abroad in Alicante, Spain, and interned for former Assemblywoman Irene Bustamante Adams. Through that experience, she met then-

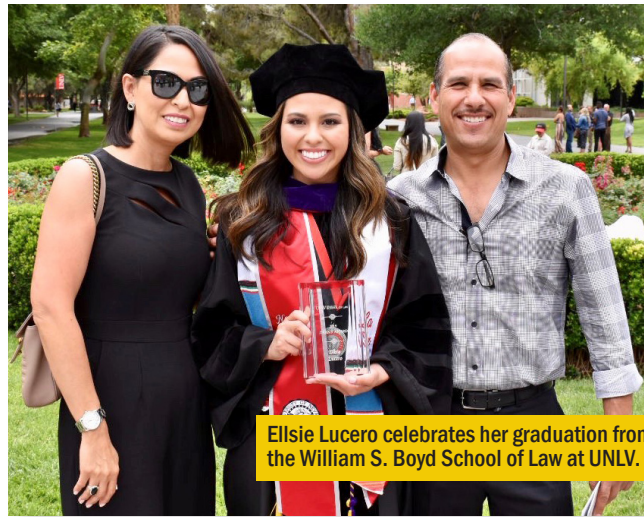
Assemblywoman, now-Las Vegas City Councilwoman Olivia Diaz, Professor Sylvia Lazos, and then-attorney general, now-U.S. Senator Catherine Cortez Masto. It was jaw-dropping for Lucero: the first time that she saw so many Latinas in positions of power. The tight-knit community of Latina leaders she met recognized her potential and encouraged her to consider law school. She took their recommendation seriously and enrolled at the William S. Boyd School of Law at UNLV.

During her time at Boyd, Lucero was a judicial extern to the Honorable Cam Ferenbach, executive editor of the Nevada Law Journal, and a member of the Society of Advocates Moot Court Team. Outside of academics, she was the treasurer and later the president of La Voz, the treasurer of the Phi Alpha Delta Fraternity, and an immigration instructor for the Community Service Program.

“Everyone in our legal profession should aspire to be like Ellsie! She is smart, hard-working, and compassionate,” said Marisa Rodriguez, Lucero’s longtime mentor. “Through diligence and excellence in her legal work, Ellsie has established a great reputation and earned the respect of fellow bar members. In spite of her busy schedule, she finds time to give back in so many ways and inspires the next generation of attorneys. I am so excited about Ellsie’s legal future because I know she’ll continue to go far.”

Today, Lucero is a busy litigator at Kaempfer Crowell where she practices commercial litigation and water law. She is the president of the Nevada Latino Bar Association, a Region XIV deputy president for the Hispanic National Bar Association, and a member of the executive committee for the Litigation Section of the State Bar of Nevada. Prior to joining Kaempfer Crowell, she was a judicial law clerk for the Honorable Ronald J. Israel in the Eighth Judicial District Court.

In her free time, she enjoys spending time with friends and family, barre workouts, watching Netflix, and going on walks.



Elsie Lucero celebrates her graduation from the William S. Boyd School of Law at UNLV.



Elsie Lucero (second from left) poses with past presidents of the Nevada Latino Bar Association.



Kaempfer Crowell attorneys, including Ellsie Lucero, celebrate completing the ¡Andale! 5K.



Elsie Lucero (seated, center) is a Region XIV deputy president for the Hispanic National Bar Association.



Hispanic National Bar Association members meet in Las Vegas.