

# RUFINA A. HERNÁNDEZ, ESQ.

## *Civil Rights Advocacy ~ Non-Profit and Program Management*

Accomplished executive with over 30+ years of national, state and local management expertise in the non-profit expertise. Extensive experience in anti-discrimination laws and bringing teams together with allied, but divergent groups, to propel a common agenda. Fluent in Spanish.

- ◆ Coalition Building
- ◆ LGBTQIA+ Advocate
- ◆ DEI Trainer
- ◆ Extensive Networking
- ◆ Title VII, IX, ADA
- ◆ Inclusion Strategies
- ◆ Results oriented
- ◆ Data Translator
- ◆ Effective Communicator

## **KEY CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### University of Denver (DU), Office of Equal Opportunity

- Wrote and published DU Staff Hiring Guidelines document providing A-Z guidance on best practices in equity and diverse hiring
- Primary responsibility for managing the day-to-day duties associated with the University's Section 504 and ADA compliance obligations and ensuring effective, timely, and consistent investigations of reported disability discrimination incidents.
- Produced annual Affirmative Action Plan and implemented strategies to improve hiring goals.

### National Education Association (NEA)

- Managed Women's Leadership Training, the GLBT Safe Schools, and the Minority Leadership programs, and helped develop and write curriculum for two of the three training programs.
- Envisioned and accomplished a series of 6 summits on the status of education and accompanying reports, for each ethnic minority student group as well as LGBT and female students.
- Trainer and presenter on diversity, GLBT and women's issues relating to education equity issues.

### Latin American Research & Service Agency (LARASA)

- Served as a spokesperson and co-leader for coalition of local Latino education and civil rights organizations that successfully advocated for increased services and programs for ELL and students of color in the Denver Public Schools
- Co-led a coalition of diverse ethnic minorities and education organizations called the "No on 31" coalition that soundly defeated an anti-bilingual amendment to the Colorado Constitution in 2002.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **UNIVERSITY OF DENVER**

2016-2021

*Office of Equal Opportunity, Associate Director (2016-2021)*

*Interim Director (2017-2019)*

*ADA Coordinator (2019-2021)*

Collaborated with colleagues, committees, and campus partners to ensure ADA, Title VII, ADEA, Equal Pay Act, and other civil rights compliance, including creating, modifying, and overseeing protocols related to the University's response to reports of discrimination due to protected classes.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE***(Continued)***COLORADO CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION**

2015-2016

***Director***

The Colorado Civil Rights Division is a state agency responsible for enforcement of the Federal and State Anti-Discrimination laws. We conduct investigation and hearings on charges of discrimination regarding Employment, Housing and Public Accommodations.

**CAMPAIGN FOR HIGH SCHOOL EQUITY, Washington DC**

2012- 2014

***Executive Director***

Funded by the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation, the Campaign for High School Equity (CHSE) was a coalition of ten prominent civil rights organizations advocating on behalf of students of color, ELL, Native and low –income students on high school equity issues. (Partner organizations included: MALDEF, NAACP, National Urban League, National Indian Education Association, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, and the National Council of La Raza.)

**NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, Washington, DC**

2002 - 2012

***Associate Director; External Partnerships and Advocacy (2006 - 2012)******Director and Associate Director; Human and Civil Rights Department (2002 – 2006)***

- Provided leadership to Human and Civil Rights Department; performed research, policy analysis and advocacy on behalf of underrepresented groups; provided policy assistance to NEA members on issues such as affirmative action, cultural competence, LGBT and gender equity, sexual harassment and anti-bullying training for students and educators.
- Staffed three governance Committees: Human and Civil Rights, Women’s Issues and Ethnic Minority Affairs.

**LATIN AMERICAN RESEARCH AND SERVICE AGENCY, Denver, Colorado**

1997 - 2002

***Executive Director***

*LARASA provided statistical, cultural, and demographic information as well as training, advocacy, and capacity building to increase knowledge and awareness of issues facing Colorado’s Latino families and community.*

- Lobbied and advocated on behalf of Latinos at the state and local levels on education, employment, civil rights, and immigration issues.
- Published monthly “The LARASA Reports” (policy paper), serving over 100,000 people both in Colorado and nationally; raised the agency’s visibility to position it as the principal community voice for Latinos.

**STATE BAR OF NEW MEXICO, Albuquerque, New Mexico**

1994 - 1997

***Executive Director***

*The State Bar is the licensing authority for attorneys in the state and promotes the interests of the legal profession and works to improve the relationships between the profession and the public.*

**UNIVERSITY OF DENVER-COLLEGE OF LAW, Denver, Colorado**

1989 - 1994

***Assistant Dean For Student Affairs***

- Developed policies and programs to address the needs of a diverse law student community

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

*(Continued)*

**LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF METROPOLITAN DENVER**, Denver, Colorado 1982 – 1989  
*Senior Attorney-Consumer and Family Law Units*

- Executed complex Consumer Law litigation in federal and state courts and in the Colorado Public Utilities Commission involving consumer contracts, bankruptcy, and utility regulation issues.
- As lead counsel in *Garcia-Westover v. PSCO* (1985-1987) litigated a class action complaint against the Public Service Company of Colorado involving issues of tenant liability for utility service/bills transferred without consent by a landlord.
- Extensive litigation in state and local courts representing indigent battered women with serious injury or deadly threat of injury due to weapons.
- Volunteer Attorney on immigration law cases.

**EDUCATION**

**GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER**, Washington, DC  
*Juris Doctorate*

**UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO**, Albuquerque, New Mexico  
*Bachelor of Arts in Political Science*

**SELECT COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

*City and County of Denver, Civil Service Commission* 2020-2023  
*Vice Chair* 2023

*International Women’s Forum – CO Chapter* 1999- 2002, 2015- present *President 2019*  
*DC Chapter*; 2002 – 2015

*American Society of Association Executives (ASAE)*

- Leadership Committee 2010-2012
- Diversity Committee 2009-2013
- *American Bar Association (ABA)* 2008 – 2012
  - ABA Legal Education Section-Accreditation Committee; 2008 – 2010
  - Accreditation Teams 1994 – 2012
  - Diversity Committee 2010 – 2012
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**AWARDS & HONORS RECEIVED**

- University of Denver – Robin Morgan Award – Outstanding Female Staff -2021
- National Council of La Raza – Special Advocacy Award 2001
- Project Safeguard Leadership Award 2001- representing Domestic Violence victims in Denver Metro
- Leadership Denver Class of 2001
- American Jewish Committee Professional Award 1999
- University of Denver – Minority Affairs Outstanding Staff Award 1993