

# Annual Gala 2013



*Priscilla Walker*

Srta. Panamá CA 2012



Lynwood High School



## *Victor Grimaldo*

**Founder President & CEO**



Dear Friends, compatriots and relatives:  
Please receive a special welcome to our 2013 Fundraising event. 2013 is a very important year for the Panamanian community for many reasons:

We celebrate the 500 years of the First Sighting of the Southern Sea (Pacific Ocean), by the Spaniard Vasco Núñez de Balboa with

The guidance of our native people on September 29, 1513.

We celebrate the first time that Panama participates at the Tournament of the Rose Parade, represented by Colegio Jose Daniel Crespo from Chitre, with its Banda Herberto Lopez.

We also celebrate the Kick-off of the Centennial of the Opening of the Panama Canal, with a big event in August 2014, with special guest Ballet Folklorico Elisa de Cespedes, a Pictorial Exhibit of the Panama Canal Construction, a night of high fashion with Horacio Prado (Designer of Calle Arriba de Las Tablas) & Federico Vissuetti, among others.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, members, collaborators and volunteers, we want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support, trust and for believing in us. Thanks to our sponsors. Viva Panamá" !!!

## *Priscilla Walker*

**Srta. Panamá California 2013**

I always had a dream to become a queen as a little girl. But this year I was not only blessed to become a queen, but to become a queen of my country.

Panama has always had a big part in my heart and in my life. I love Panama for everything that it stands for and it has been such a blessing to be able to hold the title Miss Panama 2013.

I wanted to thank Victor, and all of the Viva Panama Organization for making my dream come true. It has been an amazing year and I'm still excited to be able to be part of the organization for all the years to come and for whatever else may be needed.

Miss Panama 2013 will always be in my heart, and welcome to the new Miss Panama 2014, this new journey awaits you!



# *Program*

Welcome

Protocol Act

**Ballet Folklorico Viva Panamá**  
Encounter of Gods

**Srta. Panama CA 2013**  
Presentation

**Judges Introduction**

**Maritza Collins' Recognition**

**Ballet Folklorico Viva Panamá**  
Diabolicos Santeños

**Swimsuit Presentation**

**Intermission**

**Guest Artist: Clave & Tumbao Dance Company**

**Dr. Leon Smith-Harrison's Recognition**

**Evening Gown Presentation**

**Duo: Javier Campines & Erica Rayena**

**Vielka McFarlane's Recognition**

**Ballet Folklórico Viva Panamá**  
El Borracho, Por la Mañanita & Cumbia Viva Panamá.

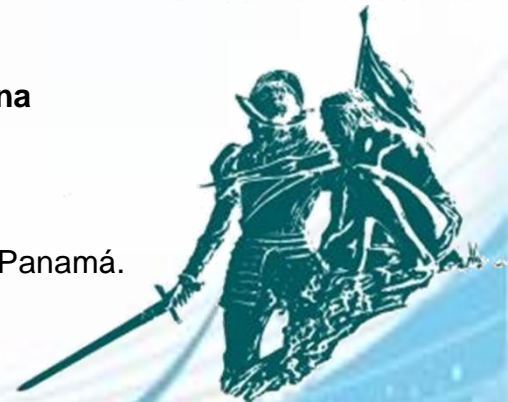
**Farewell to Priscilla Walker**

**Crowning.**

**Gran Finale.**



**QUINTO CENTENARIO**  
DESCUBRIMIENTO DEL OCEANO PACÍFICO



# Viva Panama Organization, Inc.

presents



**Banda Herberto Lopez**  
**Colegio Jose Daniel Crespo**  
representing Panama  
at the 2014 Rose Parade

## Gala Concert

# 2013



under the Artistic Direction of  
**Prof. Irving Rodríguez**

**Sat., Dec. 28, 2013, 7:00 pm**



**Margarita Henriquez**  
Latin American Idol '08.



**Sylvia Forrest**

**Special Guests:**  
**Danzas Folklóricas Raíces Chitreanas.**

**More Panamanian Artists to confirm.**



**Centinela Valley Center for the Arts**  
14901 So. Inglewood Ave.  
Lawndale, CA 90260

**Information: [www.vivapanama.org](http://www.vivapanama.org)**

# Maritza Collins

Maritza Y. Collins was born and raised in the Republic of Panama and relocated to the United States in 1986. She received her Bachelor's of Science degree in Marketing from California State University, Northridge.

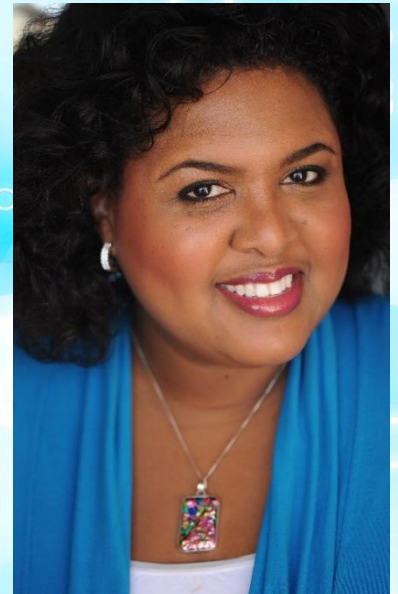
Maritza is a versatile international marketing professional with over 15 years of progressively increasing responsibilities working for Fortune 500 companies and leading companies in the technology, educational, public relations, financial, manufacturing and non-profit industries. Her expertise includes: marketing communications, event development and management, project supervision, advertising, branding, direct marketing, vendor relations, negotiations, and budget administration.

Ms. Collins began her current position as Development Manager for the YWCA Greater Los Angeles (YWCA GLA) in September 2010.

As the Development Manager, Maritza has worked closely with staff, consultants and Board of Directors to help create, implement and oversee the organization's fund development plan for corporations and individuals through annual events, a major gifts program and an individual membership campaign. Ms. Collins has been charged with planning and managing two large annual fundraising events for the YWCA GLA, as well as stewardship and donor cultivation events throughout the year. In addition, Maritza is responsible for the creative direction and branding of all YWCA GLA marketing materials to include: PSA's, press releases, advertisements, media buying, bi-monthly newsletters, direct mail campaign, social media, annual report, website and program brochures, to name a few.

Prior to joining the YWCA GLA, Ms. Collins held the following positions: Projects Manager at the Los Angeles Chapter of Susan G. Komen for the Cure; Senior Marketing Communications Specialist for Zebra Technologies; Events Manager at Countrywide Financial Corporation; International Marketing Specialist for INTEL Corporation (formerly Xircom) and Advertising Project Manager for Latin America and the Caribbean at Tech Data Corporation.

Ms. Collins is a founding member and current Treasurer of the Board of Directors for the International Society of Black Latinos (IBSL) and an active member of the National Latina Business Women Association, Los Angeles (NLBWA-LA). Maritza currently lives in Los Angeles. Her hobbies include: traveling, cooking, entertaining and learning about other cultures.



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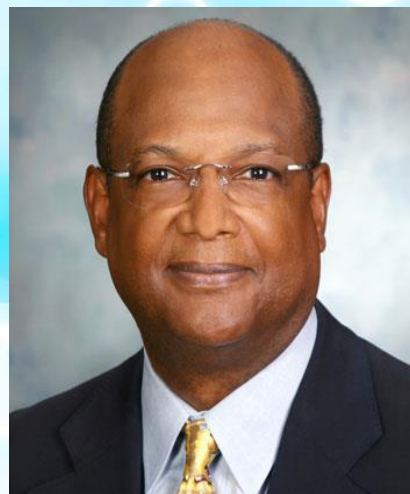
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Phone: 818.249.9733

# *Dr. Leon Smith-Harrison*

In writing my autobiography, I must first give thanks to my family, the Harrison family, beginning with my grandparents, John J. and Ethel M. Harrison. They were the beginning and inspiration. Beginning in Jamaica and Costa Rica and later Bocas del Toro, their union resulted in a family that functioned with a sense of great self-worth and great pride in who they were. This pride and self-worth were passed on to their 5 children and their progeny. I am proud of my family. I am proud of Panama and proud to be Panamanian.



My life began on November 8, 1953 in Panama City. I remember the Harrison family gathering in my grandparents' home in San Francisco, with my 3 aunts and cousins. My cousin Mickey and I would have followed Hector Lopez to play professional baseball with the New York Yankees, except for our grandmother did not allow us to play until the evening, which is when all the baseball games were over.

At the age of 7 years old, I moved to the United States with my parents and siblings. I first lived in Delaware and then moved to San Jose, California. From the beginning, we were taught to work hard and expect perfection. I did quite well in high school and received many scholarships to public and private universities and colleges. I graduated from the U.S. Armed Forces Academy in 1975.

Commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the USAF, I was selected to go to medical school and after 4 years, I graduated from University of California San Francisco, School of Medicine. I chose the specialty of urology and continued at UC San Francisco for 5 more years, followed by a year in a pediatric urology fellowship at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Much later in life, I obtained a Masters Degree in Business Administration from the University of Richmond.

Since 1985, my life has been dedicated to my family and the practice of pediatric urology. My family and I lived at Clark Air Base, in the Phillipines for 3 years. The next 17 years were spent in Richmond, Virginia, on the faculty of the Medical College of Virginia and in private practice. As of today, I continue to practice pediatric urology in Corpus Christi, Texas. As the years have passed, I have taken a more active role in medical staff leadership, and in January 2014, I will be Chief of Staff at the Driscoll Children's Hospital.

My family life consists of my wife Stephanie A. Williams from Denver, Colorado and our 4 children. Teisha Samirah is a lawyer in Pittsburgh, PA and the mother of our first grandchild, Kieren. Leon, aka Tito, is a graduate of the USAF Academy and aspiring medical student; Riel is a physician and urology resident. Chaviess Anne, a graduate of Skidmore College, is at Sotheby's Institute of Art completing her Masters Degree in American Fine and Decorative Art. Their success is my legacy. One of my joys in life is to introduce friends to my country, Panama. From Bahía Piña on the east to Chiriquí, Boca Chica, Boquete and Bocas del Toro on the west, Panama is a jewel, for the world to appreciate and enjoy. Viva Panama!

Clubben.com brings the best of the nightlife in California, providing media coverage. Its staff consists of public relations, models, marketing, photographers, editor & contributing writers, and dancers.



Photography by:  
Helen Yesenia Ramos  
webmaster@clubben.com

# *Vielka McFarlane*



Vielka McFarlane grew up in poverty. Her family struggled to make ends meet, however, what they lacked monetarily, they made up for in values. Vielka's parents instilled in her the principal that education was the key to success. They worked long and exhausting hours in order to provide her with a private education. Their work was not in vain; Vielka excelled in her studies and graduated with honors.

She was accepted to a college in Panama where she majored in International Relations. Vielka moved to Los Angeles in 1982 and earned her bachelor's degree in economics at Cal State University of Los Angeles and later received her Master's degree from National University, all while honing her English by taking English language classes in the evenings.

Upon arriving to Los Angeles, Vielka saw severe educational disparities based upon socioeconomic status, and decided to focus on serving underserved communities in the inner city of Los Angeles. She worked with LAUSD for 14 years, introducing her students to extra-curricular activities such as tennis, chess and yoga, broadening their perspective and motivating them to stay in school. She instilled in her students a sense of ownership, encouraging them to take control of their own destiny. As an educator, Vielka not only gave her students the desire to be successful, she gave them the tools to help them follow through and reach their goals.

Vielka's impact did not go unnoticed; she went from teaching one classroom, to becoming a principal and eventually became a coordinator at Los Angeles Unified School District's office. While appreciating all the knowledge she gained from those experiences, she felt like opening her own charter school would give her the true freedom to provide high risk students with the programs and guidance needed for success. In 2005, Vielka took this opportunity to begin her highly successful "Celerity" charter schools. Now with eight, each school offers an exceptional, high quality college preparatory curriculum that has proven to be both challenging and successful. Academic results have placed each school within the top 10 to 20 percent of the state's ranking, easily surpassing their local surrounding schools.

Vielka has found the right formula for creating a much needed alternative education from the current public schools that, due to state budget cuts, have been failing for years. In the fall of 2013, Vielka opened her first high school in Los Angeles and expanded into Ohio and Florida. Next year, Vielka has already set her sights to open schools in Louisiana. This past summer Vielka partnered with several schools in China and began a foreign exchange program. Hundreds of Chinese students traveled to study and experience American culture at the Celerity school located in Pasadena. Plans are now underway for next summer's exchange program to be even larger. Her expertise in education management is well known amongst her colleagues and her advice is often sought after by many who are trying to repeat her success story.

Fortunately for all of us, Vielka McFarlane's story doesn't end here. In the summer of 2013 Vielka was appointed Executive Director of the Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Organization, an organization that seeks to promote the urgent transition to sustainable development and renewable energy sources. IREO does this by partnering with organizations in the private and public sector to bring about sustainable energy initiatives locally and globally. Vielka believes education and environmental sustainability go hand in hand, insisting that the quality of lives she desires for her students depend on the quality of the environment we leave for them. Her goal of touching the lives of as many as possible is becoming a reality.



# *Giselle Samson - Choreographer*

Exotic, breath taking, compassionate, talented, indispensable, and surreal are a few of the words that have been used to describe Giselle Samson, by some of the industry's biggest and best. Icons such as Kimora Lee Simmons, "You were one of my favorites on America's Next Top Model," and the late great Michael Jackson (who went as far as to personally contact her, after seeing her in Stuff Magazine, to be his love interest in one of his upcoming music videos) have expressed their love for this rising star.

At the tender age of three, Giselle was propelled into the wonderful world of the performing arts. She quickly fell in love and began to excel in numerous areas; dance (emphasis in ballet and jazz), modeling, and acting to name a few. Her strong dedication and diligence has led her to work with Disney, The Tyra Banks Show, Deal or No Deal, America's Next Top Model, Fox Sports Net, The Soul Train Music Awards, and numerous other live and televised events.

When she is not perusing or strengthening her craft, Giselle spends her time working on her clothing line brand "Kiss the Planet," a fun and fresh brand that gives back on a global scale. She has also volunteered for such organizations as Locks of Love and New York Cares. She has donated her time to local churches, non-profit organizations and studios in and around the Los Angeles area, coaching and helping kids pursue their dreams within the arts.



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Viva Panama Organization

Limited Edition  
**PANAMANIAN**  
"Kiss the Planet" Tee's  
on sale only  
**\$20**

A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the  
Viva Panama Organization



" Good luck Juliessa, Kira and Javi... I enjoyed working with you!"

- Love, *Giselle*



*Giselle Samson* a proud Panamanian, fashion designer and Founder of **Kiss the Planet** brand, an original cast member of hit TV show "*America's Next Top Model*", has teamed up with **Viva Panama** to support the awareness of the Panamanian culture!

Visit [www.kisstheplanet.net](http://www.kisstheplanet.net) to learn more about the KTP brand



*Srta. Panamá California 2013*



# *Juliessa Daisley*

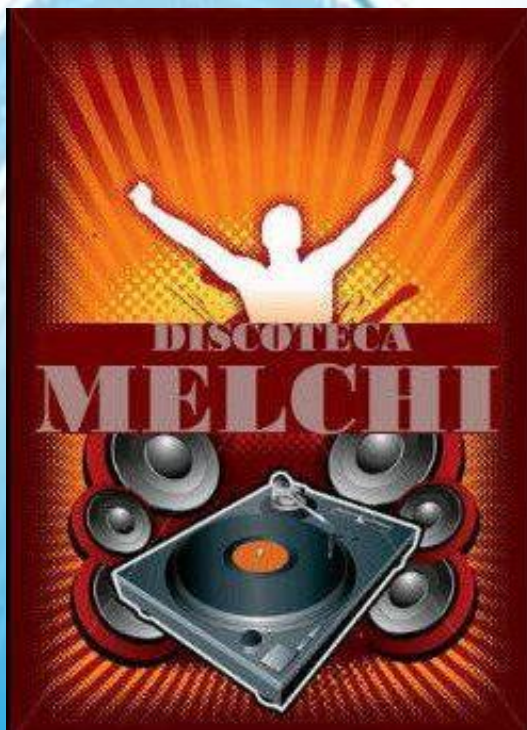
Representing: Los Angeles, CA.  
Height: 5' 7"  
Born: Bellflower, CA.  
Eyes: Dark Brown  
Hair: Dark Brown  
Languages: English & Spanish.  
Education: Saint Joseph High School.  
College: El Camino College  
Travels: Panama.  
Hobbies: Dance, family/friends.  
Ambitions: Nurse Practitioner.  
Talents: Memory skills, Dance, Caring for people.  
Experience: Some modeling and public speech.  
Community: Breast cancer walks, fundraisers, beach clean-up, Aids walk, thanksgiving drive, teacher assistant



An advertisement for Rubio's Studio, a 'Centro de Iniciación Artística'. The background is a vibrant, abstract blue and purple design with light streaks. In the top left, there is a logo featuring a yellow star with 'Rubio's Studio' written above it and 'Centro de Iniciación Artística' written around it. The central text reads 'Comienza a Trabajar En la Industria Artística'. Three images illustrate different career paths: a woman in a grey top and black skirt labeled 'Modelaje', a woman in a black dress labeled 'Baile', and a man in a light shirt labeled 'Actuación'. At the bottom right, a woman in a green top and a cowboy hat is labeled 'Canto'. A white box at the bottom left contains the phone number '(562) 964-7904'.

# Javiritzel Courtney

Representing: Montclair, CA.  
Height: 5' 3"  
Born: Glendora, CA.  
Eyes: Brown  
Hair: Dark Brown  
Languages: Spanish, English  
Education: Montclair High School  
College: Psychology, Montclair San Antonio.  
Travels: Panama, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Jamaica  
Hobbies: Shop, basketball, eat, travel, dance.  
Ambitions: Successful Crime Scene Investigator, Pathologist, the whole world for my mother.  
Talents: Dance Salsa, do makeup, Folklorico.  
Experience: Modelling, public speech, danced on national TV.  
Community: I take any opportunity to help my community out, helping the homeless in our community by helping the board of directors at my old high school by raising funds, donations, and getting sponsors to help the people in need. I have also branched out living in Panamá in 2011, when it was presented to me to help build homes for the people in need in Panamá with the Foundation of Unidos por un Techo and United Nations. I've done my share and will continue to do so.



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# *Kira Sly*

Representing: Lancaster, CA.  
Height: 5' 7"  
Born: Lancaster, CA.  
Eyes: Dark Brown  
Hair: Dark Brown  
Languages: English  
Education: Paraclete High School  
College: Psychology, Antelope Valley College  
Travels: Panama, Canada, Spain, Mexico,  
Belize, Bahamas  
Hobbies: Dancing, volunteer work, watching  
movies, listening to music, socializing.  
Ambitions: Psychology, and guidance counselor  
and become Ms. Panama California.  
Talents: Making desserts, dance, hair dresser.  
Experience: Modeling at Dillard's Antelope Valley Mall.  
Community: Feed the homeless when I was in high school with my dance team members, dance  
instructor at Piute Middle School and taught kids from the ages of 11-14 different  
dance routines and showed them different exercises to help them stay in shape.



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Javier Campines, originally from Panama, is a professional Latin dancer & choreographer, ranked amongst the best in Los Angeles. He teaches Salsa, Bachata, Cha-Cha-Cha, and Hustle to men and women of all ages and at all levels of dance experience and fitness and also directs and choreographs for his Dance Team: CLAVE & TUMBAO Dance Company.

Whether your goal is to go out social dancing, to put together a routine for a special event, to spice up your workout routine, to perfect your technique & styling, or to perform and compete, Javier will tailor his classes to best meet your needs. Javier is available for both group classes and private lessons during the weekdays and weekends.

Javier instructs dance all throughout Los Angeles, teaching group classes weekly in Studio City, Santa Monica, West LA, East LA and Gardena. He also commonly teaches at students' residences for their convenience if preferred. Visit [www.javiercampines.com](http://www.javiercampines.com) or call 310-904-8789.

# Ballet Folklórico Viva Panamá



**Victor Grimaldo**

Ballet Folklórico Viva Panamá consiste de un grupo de profesionales en diversos campos, quienes disfrutan compartiendo su cultura a través de la música y la danza. Su principal meta es proveer a la audiencia con una muestra de calidad del espíritu y sabor de Panamá.

Su repertorio esta compuesto de piezas original y tradicionales con una visión contemporánea esforzándose en preservar la originalidad y autenticidad en los ritmos y movimientos de las danzas tradicionales. Viva Panamá trae el verdadero espíritu de la gente de Panamá.

Viva Panamá mantiene un agenda bastante ocupado durante todo el año a través de todo California, otros estados y internacionalmente. La compañía se ha presentado en Texas, Nevada, Puerto Rico, México y Canadá.

Ballet Folklórico Viva Panamá ha sido invitado a Italia, Turquía, Ecuador, Grecia, España, etc. Se presentarán en Shangai, China en el 2012.



**Viannette Serrano**



**Jairo Laws**



**Geovana Ayala**



**Jaime Torres**



**Nereida Johnson**



**Dennis Lara**



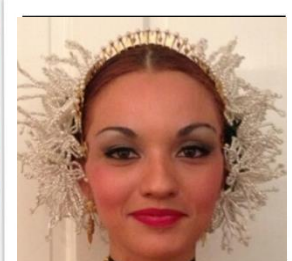
**Javiritzel Courtney**



**Loira Ramos**



**Genesis Salazar**



**Irma Ochoa**



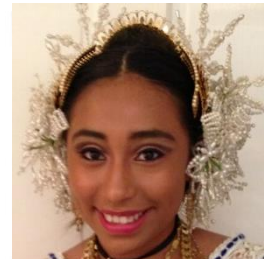
**Darius Jackson**



**Mario Meléndez**



**René Meléndez**



**Natalie Guerrero**



**Yhinyer Jackson**



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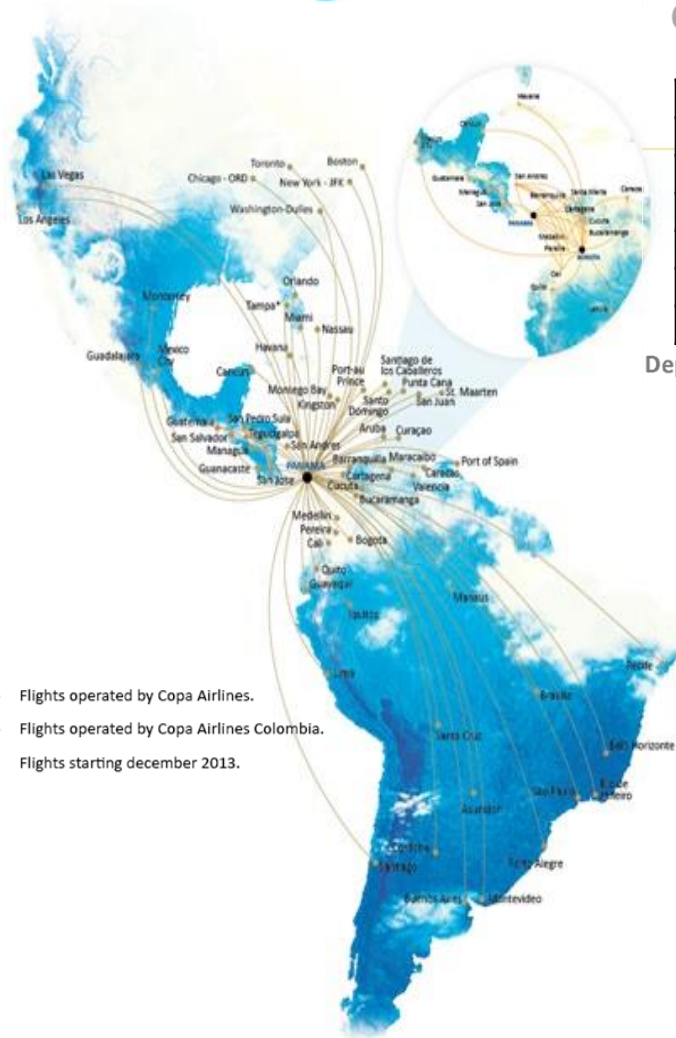
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CM473	11:26 am	8:00 pm	LAX - PTY	Daily
CM303	11:39 pm	8:08 am	LAX - PTY	Daily
CM360	7:55 am	12:59 pm	PTY - LAX	Daily
CM472	11:42 am	4:48 pm	PTY - LAX	Daily
CM302	6:32 pm	11:15 pm	PTY - LAX	Daily

Departure from terminal 6. Arrival at Tom Bradley International terminal



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