

INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF PANAMA

Golden Gala

AUGUST 17, 2018

LOUVRE BANQUET HALL





Viva Panama Organization thanks

AIDS Healthcare Foundation

for their sponsorship and support.

AHF is a Los Angeles-based global nonprofit provider of HIV prevention services, testing, and healthcare for HIV patients.

aidshealth.org

¡Bienvenidos!



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Gala Committee

Victor Grimaldo – Producer
Maritza Collins – Event Director
Vladimir Anderson – Sponsorship
Alvaro Gomez – Protocol
Ben Hernández – Protocol
Hal Laws Landau – Protocol
Marlene Sánchez – Protocol
Marta Hansen – Protocol
Melissa S. Williams – Editor &
Social Media

Film Festival Committee

Jorge Ameer – Director
Victor Grimaldo – Producer
Alvaro Gomez
Ben Hernández
Maritza Collins
Marlene Sanchez
Melissa S. Williams

Honorary Committee

Lic. Raquel Alfaro
Lic. Cynthia S. de Goldstein

Ballet Folklórico Viva Panamá

Isabel Sanjur
Jairo Laws
Joaquín Wong
Loira Ramos
Mara Montini
Milly González
René Meléndez
Spencer Williams
Victor Grimaldo
Victoria González
Yhinyer Jackson



Please receive warm greetings from all of us at Viva Panama Organization.

Every year VPO dresses up and shares its pride for its history, music, dance, folklore, people and films--- among other facets of our beautiful country.

VPO is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) entity that has developed diverse programs throughout its 27 years striving to spread the culture of Panama in California and the world. VPO is committed to offer the best sample of our culture in this type of event and the others that we present during the year.

The 2018 VPO Golden Gala makes a special dedication to pieces called Huacas, which represent the pre-

columbian heritage of our ancient people and the value of these gold pieces before the conquistadores arrived in our continent.

Just as in the early 20th century these gold huacas were discovered, we also continuously discover golden Panamanian people that really make us feel pride in our nationality. Among them are Dr. Guillermo Ameer, who has developed a regenerative bandage that heals diabetic wounds four times faster than a standard bandage and has the added benefit of promoting healing without side effects. Also, Dr. Luis Carlos Rabelo working in NASA projects; Julio Hanson in the entertainment and educational fields; and Panamanian Miss Universe Justine Pasek, only to name a few.

Tonight's Gala also serves as the Opening Night for "Films from Panama & the Americas Festival" (FFPAF). We hope that you can support our efforts in promoting our film harvest of Panamanian films and filmmakers. Additionally, we would like to thank our sponsor, AIDS Healthcare Foundation, as we recognize Dr. Adan Ríos and his efforts in the discovery of an HIV preventive vaccine.

I encourage you to consider becoming a VPO member by donating your time and funds, and by referring potential sponsors. Remember that all your contributions are tax deductible and because your support, we can generate educational programs for our multicultural community, not only in Southern California, but the world, as our Ballet Folklórico Viva Panamá will be performing next month at the Shanghai Folk Dance Festival in China.

Thanks to all our partners, sponsors, emcees, and artists for your support, kindness and generosity which made this evening a beautiful reality. Thanks to Lic. Raquel Alfaro - General Consul of Panama in California; Lic. Cynthia Sanjur de Goldstein, Vice Consul, and all our Board members, volunteers, supporters and Louvre Banquet Hall. ¡Qué Viva Panamá!

Victor Grimaldo

Dr. Victor Grimaldo
Founder, CEO & President



CONSULADO GENERAL DE PANAMA

Han pasado ya casi 4 años de mi llegada a la Ciudad de Los Ángeles. Durante cada año he compartido con la Organización Viva Panamá sus eventos culturales, sus Festivales de Cine y sus presentaciones en beneficio de la cultura y turismo de nuestro país.

Este año su célebre evento anual "The Ambassador Award Golden Gala" se vestirá de lujo una vez más para rendir honor a tres distinguidos con-ciudadanos que me causa mucha alegría ver galardonados.

Un ilustre médico que lleva muchos años dando lo mejor de sí en beneficio de la Ciencia Médica. Hombre íntegro que ha recorrido el mundo por amor a su vocación y dejando siempre en alto el nombre de Panamá; nuestro Honorable e internacionalmente famoso Dr. Adán Ríos.

Por otro lado, cambiando de género, nuestra querida Señora Marlene Sánchez, talentosa mujer, siempre dispuesta a apoyar la cultura y la gastronomía en nombre de Panamá. Ha compartido con el Dr. Víctor Grimaldo su incansable labor en Pro de la Organización, inclusive fungiendo durante muchos años en la Directiva de Viva Panamá.

Nuestra tercera homenajeadada, Destenee McKenzie, es una emprendedora y exitosa personalidad del mundo del entretenimiento, que deja en muy alto a nuestra patria. Ella ha cosechado innumerables logros en diversas plataformas y sigue creciendo en fama a nivel mundial con su talento.

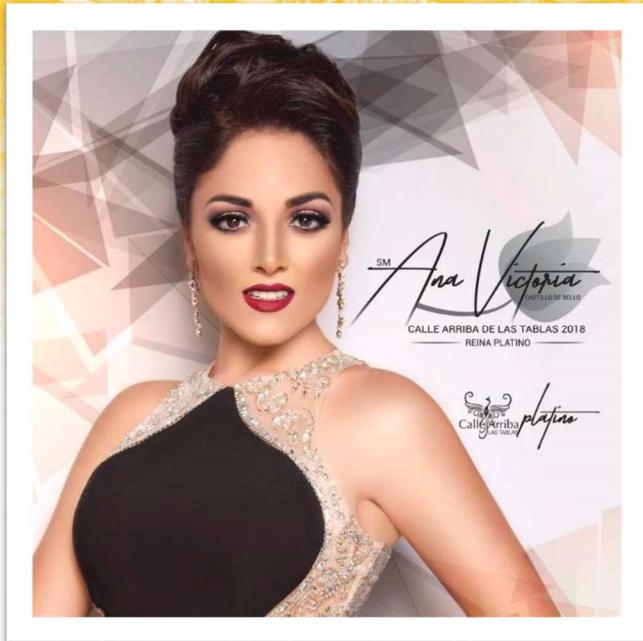
Me parece que hace un año para estas fechas el Presidente de la organización, el Dr. Víctor Grimaldo, desfallecido y agobiado por los afanes de la Gala 2017, me confesaba que ya era hora de colgar los guantes. Sin embargo, veo que se aproxima una nueva Gala 2018 y armado de sus cutarras y con montuno en mano el Dr. Grimaldo seguirá luchando hasta la última gota.

Mis mejores deseos para que la Gala 2018, que sea todo un éxito cultural.
¡Que Dios los bendiga y que VIVA PANAMA!

Raquel Alfaro
Cónsul General de Panamá
Los Ángeles, California
17 Agosto 2018.

Special Guest

S.R.M. ANA VICTORIA CASTILLO DE BELLO



The year 2018 marks a milestone for Calle Arriba de Las Tablas because it reached its sixty fifth Crown, with its Platinum Queen, SM Ana Victoria Castillo De Bello. She has Las Tablas roots and 20 years of age.

Graduated from Lincoln Academy, she is in her second year of Bachelor studies in the International Business program at Universidad Santa Maria La Antigua. She belongs to a legendary dynasty of sovereigns: SRM Leticia Tejada de Tejeira (1953), SRM Mariela Castillo (1980), SRM Ana María Gómez Amaya (1997), SRM Bertilda Ducasa Cedeño (1998) and Maruquel González Velázquez (2013).

Ana Victoria was part of the Royal Court of various carnivals: SRM Renata Alexandra Díaz (2007), SRM Andrea Valeria Batista Escudero (2015), SRM Rosario Mayela Garcia Chanis (2016) and SRM Maria Laura Zambrano Cárdenas (2017). Ana Victoria represents the tuna with

Masters of Ceremony



Melissa Shepherd-Williams

Raised with Panamanian & Caribbean traditions, Melissa Shepherd-Williams is a psychotherapist graduated from Antioch University in Los Angeles. She's dedicated herself to design and present programs on how to live with

GUSTO by taking charge of one's health in body, mind, and spirit. Her speaking engagements include audiences like the Los Angeles Police Department psychologists, Writers' Guild of America, UCLA Human Resources students, Association of Los Angeles County African-American Employees, Latino Behavioral Health Institute Conference and California State University Los Angeles faculty.

Her book "Living Deliciously: Recipes to Welcome Joy into Our Lives" is a compilation of exercises and reflections on how to "squeeze the juice" out of life. Melissa collaborates as Vice-President of the International Society of Black Latinos.

Vladimir Anderson

Vlad brings over 30 years of combined military and civilian law-enforcement experience. Vladimir worked as a background investigator, hostage negotiator and for the last 10 years, he has overseen the safety of school campuses.

He educates and trains schools administrators, educators, parent and students on a range of subjects impacting students educational success, including protocols and state mandated emergency policies.

Former President of the Newport Beach Police Association, Director of the Newport Beach Police Charitable Foundation, a non-profit organization, and he is the Chair of the NBPA Political Action Committee. He is an advisor to the 1st Battalion/1st Marine Foundation.

His passion for supporting youth manifests in orchestrating funding to support NBPA's community services.



Pre-Columbian



What is a huaca? Huaca is a clue to the mysteries of a vanished people who inhabited Panama during pre-columbian times. Golden huacas are precious artifacts which were buried to accompany them on their journey to another life, the gold ornaments remained sun bright for hundreds of years. They were created by the hands of the skilled Caribbean goldsmith who fashioned a breast ornament for a warrior and a strand of gold beads for his lady. These people left no written history, but the objects they made - jewelry, weapons, tools and ornaments - give a clue to their great culture and the skill of their artisans.

The gold figures portray stylized human and animal forms or a combination of the two. There are snakes with two legs, men with crocodile heads, figures with a human head and shoulders attached to the body of a snake, with the projecting eyes of a crab, and the recurring images of the alligator and eagle which many believe have religious significance. These artifacts were dated from approximately AD 700 to AD 900.



By the end of the 19th century, the Rio Grande de Coclé changed course and began to cut through the western edge of the site. In doing so, it washed a number of artifacts downstream, which were later collected and sold. Some objects were displayed by the Panamanian government during the opening of the Panama Canal in 1915. In 1927, the river changed course once again, sending more objects downstream.

In 1928, the Conte family, who owned the land, invited Harvard and Pennsylvania University archeologists to the site after realizing the significance of the treasures the shifting river was pushing to the surface. The Conte family excavated a pit, which revealed some of the large stone columns that Lothrop later referred to in his reports. In 1930, Sitio Conte became the "first site to receive scientific field study in Panama". Archeologist Henry Roberts led the excavations the following year as well. In 1933, the Peabody Museum returned under the direction of Samuel K. Lothrop.



Pre-Colum

Golden Panama

All three seasons of the Peabody excavations were successful, as 59 graves and 38 “caches” were discovered, as well as a large number of gold objects and polychrome ceramics. Many of these objects found their way to the Peabody Museum of Harvard University.

In the late 1930s, the Conte family asked the Peabody Museum to return for further excavations, which was denied and J. Alden Mason of the University Museum in Philadelphia was recommended to continue the excavations. In 1940, Mason and his colleagues carried out another successful excavation, uncovering 41 graves, which included a large number of grave goods. This was to be the last excavation at the site.

The excavations of both the Peabody Museum and the Pennsylvania University Museum have been criticized for the manner in which they were conducted. Most criticisms are aimed at the archaeologists’ decisions to forego any stratigraphic investigations at the site. Olga Linares felt that “good stratigraphic control was sacrificed for expediency.

In the late 1940's, following floods that changed the river's course, natives traveling along the Rio Grande de Coclé, just 100 miles from the Canal Zone, had one of modern man's earliest glimpses of this reminder of Panama's ancient civilization. The gold ornaments the natives uncovered, along with bone fragments and pottery, made their way from hand to hand until they arrived in a Panama City antique shops, and eventually aroused the curiosity of archeologists around the world.

The gold artifacts uncovered in these ancient sites and at others in the provinces of Chiriquí, Veraguas and Venado Beach in the Canal Zone, have traveled a long journey over many lands; displayed in the Panama Museum and in many museums in the United States and Europe. About 150 of the most important artifacts they excavated are on display at the museum's "River of Gold" exhibit. Viva Panama Organization gives a silent tribute to the master craftsmen who reached a pinnacle of artistry.



Art from Panama



MARLENE SÁNCHEZ

2018 Ambassador Award Recipient – Childcare Services Entrepreneur

Marlene Sanchez was born and raised in Boquete, Chiriquí, Panamá. At a young age, Marlene and her family migrated to the United States, eventually settling in La Crescenta, California, where Marlene currently resides. While attending high school at Crescenta Valley, Marlene sang in the high school choir and joined the International Club, a social group dedicated to helping young people of diverse cultures to assimilate and socialize. After graduation, she attended Glendale College where she studied Child Development, an important first step on the way to eventually dedicating her life to caring for and nurturing young children. Subsequently, Marlene attended Valley College, eventually worked as an interpreter for various medical offices.

In 1991, Marlene assisted Victor Grimaldo and a few others establish the Ballet Folklórico, a well-loved dance troupe that has helped to keep traditional Panamanian dance alive in the U.S. Brought up to respect diversity while embracing her heritage, Marlene has made her participation in the Viva Panama Organization a top priority for over 20 years, serving as its vice president and one of its most active board members.

Anyone who has met Marlene knows that her greatest passion in life is children. In 2004, she decided to focus on her life long passion, starting her own licensed child-care business at her home in La Crescenta. For the last 14 years, she has helped raise a plethora of children from all walks of life, many with special needs, and often from broken homes, while providing them with guidance and loving care.

She has earned a well-deserved reputation in her community for kindness, patience, warmth, humor, and perseverance. An expert in childcare, Marlene has found ways to reach even the most difficult to reach of these little ones, and her legacy can be found in the many young adults, once cared for by Marlene herself, who today entrust their own children to her. In her spare time, Marlene enjoys dancing, hiking and giving back to her com-



DESTENEÉ MCKENZIE

2018 Ambassador Award Recipient – Entertainer.

Creating her own path as a recording artist, TV Personality, music producer, DJ, actress and otherwise entertainment powerhouse, Desteneé was born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts, and moved at 14 to Los Angeles to pursue a career in the entertainment industry.

As an up and coming recording artist & music producer, Desteneé scored a #2 spot on the Billboard dance single sales charts and a #6 spot on the hot 100 sales charts for her electro-house single “Illuminate”. This accomplishment made her the first female to single-handedly write, produce, sing, mix and master a song that broke into the top 10 on the sales charts.

Having already hosted her own nationally syndicated radio show, “Desteneé’s EDM Power Hour”. She expanded her résumé as a TV producer and personality after getting season 1 of her own reality show. The show was picked up by the Fashion One network garnering over 400 million viewers in 170 countries worldwide. Season 1 of the series titled Desteneé’s Fashion Dolls premiered in September 2017 and chronicled her life as a recording artist and female entrepreneur running an all-female music and fashion event production company, while building her name in the music industry.

Following her TV Debut, Desteneé signed on to executive produce and star in her own sitcom shooting season 1 winter of 2017, while performing as a singer and DJ at some of the hottest clubs, events and music festivals across the country. After completing season one of her docu-series, she released her new album “Beautiful Chaos” in the fall of 2017 with lead singles “Miss you”, “Burgundy” and “Release” available worldwide.

DR. ADÁN RÍOS. M.D.

2018 Ambassador Award Recipient—HIV Vaccine Preventive Researcher



Dr. Adán Ríos was born in Panama City, Republic of Panama. He grew up in the barrio of “El Chorrillo” where he lived and worked for over 25 years. His parents were Evangelista Abrego de Rios from Las Palmas de Veraguas and Adan Rios Castillo from Doleguita, Chiriquí.

He received his Doctorate Degree in Medicine from the University of Panama, School of Medicine in 1970. He completed a Residency in Internal Medicine in the Gorgas US Army Hospital in Panama and a Fellowship in Medical Oncology at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, where he became Assistant Professor of Medicine and Director of Clinical Research and Medical Affairs of the

Institute for Immunological Disorders, the only hospital created for the management and treatment of AIDS and related disorders in the United States. From there he created a community program to treat and manage patients with AIDS and related disorders.

Dr. Rios has written extensively in the areas of tumoral immunology, AIDS, and cancer. He is the author of the confirmatory activity of interferon in Kaposi sarcoma. He is currently Associate Professor of Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Oncology, University of Texas McGovern Medical School at Houston, Texas Medical Center.

He is the President of the Adan A. Rios Foundation, sponsor of the Annual International Conference of Santiago de Veraguas. This conference has brought medical education and contributions between the best scientists of the United States and the Scientist of Panama for the benefit of Panama and the Central American Region.

On April 30, 2009, Dr. Rios accompanied authorities of the University of Panama to the Graduation ceremonies of the first promotion of the Nursing School of Santiago de Veraguas of which he is a co-founder together with the Nursing School of the University of Panama. The School of Nursing of Santiago de Veraguas is the first school of nursing founded in the last 20 years in a rural area Panama and has an active program of academic interactions with the Texas Women University at the medical center in Houston, Texas and the UT Medical School at Houston. It graduates between 30-40 nurses per year.

His work has been recognized with numerous awards and distinctions; among them, the 2001 MD Anderson Cancer Center Distinguished Alumnus Award, the 2003 George Washington University Presidential Medal Award, the 2008 University of Texas Health Science Center Minority Services Award and the 2014 Arrival Award from the Univ. of Houston Law Center.

Dr. Rios has been issued Patents for a methodology for the Development of a Preventive Vaccine in the USA, Australia and the European Union. He is the Co-Founder and Chief Officer of PhotoImmune Biotechnology, a company committed to the development of a preventive HIV vaccine, based on Dr. Rios intellectual property. Experiments for the Proof of Concept of Dr. Rios methodology were done at the McGill AIDS Center under the direction of the renowned HIV virologist, Dr. Mark A. Wainberg.

Dr. Rios is married to Mary Beth Rios, has three children, and two grandchildren.



Entertainment

BALLET FOLKLORICO VIVA PANAMA



“Ballet Folklórico Viva Panamá” was created in 1991 under the direction of Victor Grimaldo, and it has toured extensively over the 27 years of life, locally in more than sixty five cities in California, nationally in Texas and Nevada, and internationally, in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Canada and next month in China at the Shanghai Folk Dance Festival.

It consists of a group of talented individuals from diverse professional fields, who enjoy sharing their culture through music and dance. Its main goal is to provide audiences with a high-quality sample of the spirit and flavor of Panama. Our repertoire is composed of original pieces approached with a contemporary vision, striving to preserve the originality and authenticity in the rhythms and movements of the traditional dances.



LOVE ÁLVAREZ

Love started dance classes at age 2 ½ , after visiting her mother’s friend who teaches ballet. Love didn't want to leave her studio and her mother had to sign her up.

Love danced at Fremont Nutcracker 2002-13 and main performer for the San Francisco Hip Hop Showcase 2016. She competed Tap, Jazz, Lyrical & Contemporary at national level between 2002-2015. Northern California Panamanian Queen 2014 and Advanced Dance Team Owner & Choreographer. Currently, Love is the choreographer for Grammy Nominated artists Los Rakas.



ORQUESTA TABACO Y RON

Orquesta Tabaco Y Ron (OTR) is a high-energy salsa band that has appealed to devoted Salsa dancers and Latin music DJ's worldwide. OTR is composed of musicians from all over Latin America including: Puerto Rico, Cuba, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Perú, Colombia and México.

OTR's stunning rhythms create a contagious energy that delights. Their numerous presentations and tours have earned them the respect of tropical music aficionados worldwide.



Films from PANAMA & the Americas Festival 2018



SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, 2018
12:00 PM - 8:00 PM

AHF THEATER
6500 W. SUNSET BLVD.
LOS ANGELES, CA 90028.

HONORING
DR. ADAN RIOS, MD
HIV VACCINE RESEARCHER

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