

CASA Magazine Named Citizen of the Year

S.B. Downtown Organization Presents 2007 Awards

Christina Gonzalez Receives Leadership Award

AT ITS ANNUAL LUNCHEON held January 17th, the Downtown Organization presented its 2007 Downtown Citizen of the Year Award to CASA Magazine. It also presented the Harriet Miller Youth Leadership Award and the George Gerth Volunteer of the Year Award.

The Downtown Organization saluted CASA Magazine for: promoting downtown Santa Barbara as a center for art, culture, entertainment, and commerce; its commitment to enhancing the beauty of Santa Barbara through its involvement with Santa Barbara Beautiful; its dedication to championing the non-profit community through its reporting on humanitarian projects; and its leadership and commitment to supporting the cultural arts in general and the 1st Thursday program in particular.

Other awards at the Downtown Organization's Annual Lunch were the Harriet Miller Youth Leadership Award and the George Gerth Volunteer of the Year Award. The Harriet Miller Youth Leadership Award was presented personally by former Mayor Miller to Christina Gonzalez. Christina is a senior, student-scholar at Bishop Diego High School. Not only is she a dedicated student carrying a 3.8 GPA, she is also actively involved



Harriet Miller Youth Leadership recipient **Christina Gonzalez** with former Mayor **Harriet Miller** who presented the award.

in over 15 on-campus clubs and community programs, including the Cardinal S.I.N. student run newspaper and MECHA, a club that promotes Hispanic culture. In addition, she has served as Class President in both her sophomore and junior years and is currently the Associated Student Body (ASB) President.

Along with her outstanding scholastic achievements, Christina feels that it is "her calling to promote and initiate positive change in the community, and ultimately the world." As part of this quest she has served as a member of the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention Teen Coalition and the Santa Barbara Youth Council for the past four years. Christina's other school

and community activities are evidence that both her faith and her Latino heritage are driving forces in her mission to educate and lead the teen community.

The George Gerth Downtown Organization Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Maria Arroyo. Maria has served on the Downtown Organization's Board of Directors since 2005. She has served on the Executive Committee, the Promotions Committee, the Government Relations Committee, and the Police Committee.

When she's not volunteering for the D.O., Maria and her husband, Tony, own and operate the Los Arroyos Mexican Restaurants in Downtown Santa Barbara and Montecito. She and Tony are also parents to a four year old son, Diego. Maria has deep roots in the Santa Barbara community, having



Kerry Methner, Editor and **Mark Whitehurst**, Publisher of CASA Magazine which received the Citizen of the Year Award; **Maria Arroyo**, of Los Arroyos who was presented with the George Gerth D.O. Volunteer of the Year Award; **Bob Gronendyke**, a community volunteer who received a second Volunteer of the Year Award; and **Christina Gonzalez** who received the Harriet Miller Youth Leadership Award.

been raised in town since the age of one. She is a descendent of the De la Guerra family; her grandfather was Superior Judge John T. Rickard of Santa Barbara.

This year the Downtown Organization handed out an unprecedented second Volunteer of the Year Award. The award which usually recognizes the outstanding volunteer efforts of a Board member was also awarded to community volunteer Bob Gronendyke. Seventy-seven years young,

Gronendyke's enthusiasm for art and the Santa Barbara community has helped support the Downtown Organization's efforts to promote downtown as the Historic Arts District. A fixture at 1st Thursday, the Downtown Art & Wine Tour and the Annual Downtown Holiday Parade his dedication to the organization has been invaluable.

For more information on the Downtown Organization call 962-2098 or visit santabarbaradowntown.com.