

FROM THE DESK OF  
**Rosa Hernández Bautista**  
2025 WOMAN OF THE YEAR HONOREE

**Honorable Senator Caballero,**

It is an honor that you have appointed me “Woman of the Year 2025.” This nomination is a recognition not only for me but also for the Indigenous immigrant women.

I want to share what being an Indigenous woman means to me. Not long ago, the word Indigenous was rarely used, and when it was, it was to belittle us for the color of our skin, our languages, and even our ways of diet. Today, being an Indigenous woman means deeply caring for our heritages, respecting the land, being guided by spiritual values, and committing to nurturing our communities by preserving and passing on our traditions.

Immigrating to a new country presents many challenges like encountering new cultures, languages, and lifestyles. To live only to work, where each person lives in their own world only to forget the deep solidarity that defines us as Mexicans and Indigenous people. Too often, fear prevents us from sharing our origins, leading to isolation and a profound longing for what we left behind in pursuit of a better future.

To alleviate the nostalgia for what I had left behind, I committed to reclaiming and sharing my Indigenous heritage. I began with my family, then sought out groups and organizations that helped me create spaces where we could value our identity and build a sense of belonging. Gradually, I found an organization where I could deepen my understanding of cultural values and connect with women from diverse cultural backgrounds.

This led me to seek ways to create a cultural space for young people, including my children, where they could learn about their heritage. To truly love our culture is to recognize our roots, and this recognition fosters the security we need to embrace our authentic selves. With that security and pride comes the confidence to engage in civic and social affairs and become active, contributing citizens.

For centuries, Indigenous peoples have been subjected to invisibility. Surprisingly, it has been less than ten years since the Mexican government finally began to recognize us and provide the visibility that Indigenous communities, particularly women, have long been denied.

Being honored as Woman of the Year at a time when Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has declared 2025 the “Year of the Indigenous Woman” makes me feel doubly honored. Your nomination and the Mexican President’s declaration are a vindication of the Indigenous peoples who have been forgotten for years.

This is our moment to stand in solidarity and drive changes that uplift Indigenous people, women, immigrants, and families. We must acknowledge our worth as Indigenous people and proudly assert our identity. Our contributions to this country’s wealth extend beyond our labor; they encompass our rich culture and ancestral traditions. We have contributed in the past, we contribute now, and we will continue to shape the future by instilling in our children the values of engaged, productive citizenship. These are not times to regress into invisibility; it is a time to support one another and exercise our right to a dignified life without fear. This is not a plea; it is a claim to what we have rightfully earned through the dedication and hard work that strengthen our society and our families.

*Sincerely,*

**Rosa Hernández Bautista**