



## J. GONZÁLEZ

★★★★★

### SUPPORT LOCAL JOURNALISM

KEEPING THE RGV INFORMED IN TIME OF NEED!

“We at J. Gonzalez Injury Attorneys recognize, more than ever, the value of local journalism. Our community depends on steady and reliable voices to report the facts. Please join J. Gonzalez Injury Attorneys in supporting local journalism by reading The Monitor in print and at [www.themonitor.com](http://www.themonitor.com) for round-the-clock Coronavirus updates. Stay safe!”

~J. GONZALEZ

# Freddy Alaniz remembered as beloved family man

BY EVA TRISTÁN TORRES  
SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

**BEARING WITNESS**

Alfredo “Freddy” Alaniz, a husband, father, brother, friend and beloved security guard at Edinburg North High School, died on July 19, 2020, at the age of 54.

Born on Nov. 6, 1965, as the youngest of 10 children, his wife, Criselda, and two children, Freddy Jr. and Nicole are left to grieve his death. Freddy was taken too soon; his life was snuffed out swiftly, suddenly, and much too early.

A victim of COVID-19, Freddy, like so many others, one of the Rio Grande

Valley’s darkest periods, he left behind loved ones who yearned for a last embrace, a final farewell to make sense of their loss, to acknowledge and honor his life, and to give meaning to the time that he was here.

Today, we bear witness to the extraordinary life of Freddy — a quiet, humble man whose passing shook our community and reduced so many to tears.

On the east side of the city of Edinburg, behind Al-



Alfredo Alaniz

bores Courts, the small frame house where Freddy lived

and died stands as a testament to his life—one of family love, motherly devotion and dedicated service.

Freddy succumbed to the virus in the very house in which his mother raised the 10 children to whom she devoted her life. Deeply devoted to his mother, he chose to live by her side, until her death, even bringing his wife and children to live in his mother’s home.

He was born into a culture of caring and a life of humility and service, just like so many remember him. A graduate of the 1984 Edinburg High School Class, his classmates fondly recall his warm

smile and friendly demeanor, a man “who had the purest heart.”

As far back as 2001, when he joined the Edinburg North security force, he “carried the torch of safety, security and servitude” for the students and staff of our high school. Standing proudly in his uniform, he maintained order, modeled respect and emanated kindness. Freddy had a genuine concern for all, and always found a way to “make things right,” regardless of what might have been wrong.

Just inside the entrance to Edinburg North High School is the security guard podium behind which Freddy would

stand, welcoming visitors—always with a smile—and monitoring his kids, the students who roamed the hallways of his home away from home for almost 20 years.

His presence at Edinburg North, as one of his colleagues put it, “was as constant as the sun rising,” and the memory of how he “welcomed every visitor with kindness, greeted every colleague with a smile, and gently nudged every student to class” is a memory we will not forget.

The same, simple wooden podium is now adorned with flowers, wreaths and crosses

See **ALANIZ** | 4A



Joel Martinez | [jmartinez@themonitor.com](mailto:jmartinez@themonitor.com)

President Trump supporters rally across the street from where then-Vice Presidential candidate Kamala Harris spoke at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley on Oct. 29 in Edinburg.

# Latino vote up for grabs as Trump makes inroads in South Texas

BY DIANNE SOLIS, ALFREDO CORCHADO, ALLIE MORRIS AND PAUL COBLER  
THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Eva Arechiga, a McAllen retiree, started small on the Fourth of July weekend with a red-white-and-blue car rally for the incumbent President Donald Trump. Then the cruising caravan of Trump supporters, known as the RGV Trump Train, mushroomed through the Rio Grande Valley with trucks, Corvettes and big rigs.

The simple goal: Pump up Trump votes with a grassroots approach.

“I remember the Saturday we were praying for 45 cars for president 45 and it went to 60,” Arechiga said. “Once we got to 1,500 cars, we stopped counting.”

Momentum built from there.

With record turnout, former Vice President Joe Biden overwhelmed in Texas’ urban areas, polls show, but he underperformed in heavily Latino counties along the border.

While Biden carried the vote in the Rio Grande Valley, he did so with a much tighter margin than Democrat Hillary Clinton in 2016. That erosion — in an area

considered a Democratic stronghold — is a warning sign to the party as it tries to flip the state.

It also serves as a stark reminder that the Latino vote is diverse, especially in a state the size of Texas. And that Democrats cannot take it for granted.

“When we say there are no shortcuts, we mean it,” said Lorella Praeli, the head of D.C.-based Community Change Action, in a post-election assessment of voter turnout around the nation. “If you want Latino voters to turn out, you have to do the work.”

**MESSAGE RESONATES**

On election night, Latino voters proved decisive for both candidates around the country. In Florida, conservative Cuban-Americans worried about the specter of socialism propelled Trump to a narrow victory. In Arizona, Hispanics furious about anti-immigrant measures helped flip the once-red state to blue.

Latinos, far from being a monolithic group, mirror political divisions across the country with divergent views based on everything from the handling of COVID-19, guns, income, education, gender, faith to even President Trump’s border wall.

In South Texas, anti-abortion stances strike a chord with some Catholics and the right to bear arms plays well with many Latinos eager for a sense of security.

Several voters who chose Trump cited his economic message and their fears that a Biden administration could threaten jobs in the oil and gas industry.

On Election Day, Daniel Sanchez, 43, voted in El Paso by traveling 285 miles from the Permian Basin where he works in the oil fields. Born across the border in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, Sanchez is a first-time voter who cast his ballot for Trump, even though the president has referred to Mexicans as rapists and drug traffickers.

He concedes his decision was difficult, but ultimately he decided “President Trump is the best choice for this country and for my future, my job.”

Bob Peña of the Republican Alliance in El Paso put it more bluntly.

“He may not look or sound presidential, but his economic policies make the difference,” Peña said.

While Biden handily won El Paso County with over 66% of the vote, Trump improved his performance there by roughly six percentage points over 2016.

The president’s fear-inspiring rhetoric about unauthorized immigrants, as well as his hard-line policies about border security, may have helped crack Hispanic solidarity, said Richard Pineda, political analyst at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Stoking a fear of new immigrants “actually played strongly to Mexican Americans,” Pineda said.

“This wasn’t just some kind of xenophobic impulse ...the rhetoric has worked very well for Mexican American voters especially in Texas,” Pineda said.

Trump effectively gave such voters permission to look at new arrivals from Mexico and Central America and conclude, “We don’t like those people, and we don’t want those people here,” he said. “Trump has been able to cultivate a sense of us versus them — with a portion of Mexican Americans, obviously not all.”

In a nation of immigrants, bashing the latest arrivals has played out for past generations among descendants of Germany, Ireland, Italy and other countries. It’s the story of America, analysts, including Pineda, have said.

# Pharr plans Veterans Day fireworks displays

BY FRANCISCO E. JIMÉNEZ  
STAFF WRITER

COVID-19 has ravaged the country for the better part of 2020, but will not keep the city of Pharr from honoring those who have served on Veterans Day.

The city announced that it will be hosting a fireworks show on Wednesday evening, and is taking precautionary measures to ensure that everyone is able to enjoy the show in a safe manner.

It will be the first time that the city hosts a fireworks display on Veterans Day. The display will be viewable from two locations in the city.

“We actually had fireworks on the Fourth of July,” Pharr

Assistant City Manager Anali Analis said. “The first time around, we only did it in south Pharr. Due to the response of the citizens, we identified that there was a need in the north side because they couldn’t see very well. That’s why we’re going to do two (displays).”

The two shows will go on simultaneously. The display will also be available for residents to view online via the city’s Facebook.

“Normally we have an event (on Veterans Day), and due to COVID-19 we can’t have an event,” Analis said. “We figured we should still do something for the community to commemorate

See **FIREWORKS** | 4A

# Roma police investigating man’s homicide death

STAFF REPORT

The Roma Police Department is investigating a homicide that occurred Sunday morning.

Just before 7 a.m., a man in his 40s was killed on Hibiscus Street in Roma, according to a news release issued by the police department.

Starr County Precinct 2

Justice of the Peace Ramiro Guillen pronounced the man dead, according to the release, which added that no additional information is currently available as it is an active investigation.

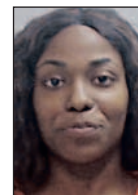
If anyone has any information about the incident or the identity of the suspect, they are urged to call the police department at (956) 849-2231.

# Edinburg ATM robbery suspects indicted

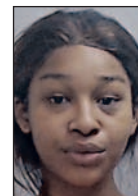
STAFF REPORT

A grand jury has indicted two 18-year-old women on charges of aggravated robbery and robbery over allegations they attacked and robbed people at a Chase Bank ATM in late August.

Edinburg police arrested Ashanti Slater and Isis Wallace on Aug. 30.



Slater



Wallace

Wallace is scheduled to be arraigned on the charges Monday afternoon while Slater is scheduled to be arraigned in late November, records show.

Authorities said the robberies occurred at the Chase Bank ATM at 1801 W. University.

On Aug. 30, police allege Wallace attacked a woman and stole a debit card.

The first robbery was on Aug. 24 and police allege the duo stole \$600 that a woman had just withdrawn from the ATM.

Wallace remains jailed on a total of \$35,000 in bonds while Slater remains jailed on a total of \$145,000 in bonds, records show.

See **LATINO VOTES** | 3A

# Astronauts arrive at launch site for 2nd SpaceX crew flight

BY MARCIA DUNN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Four astronauts arrived at Kennedy Space Center on Sunday for SpaceX's second crew launch, coming up next weekend.

For NASA, it marks the long-awaited start of regular crew rotations at the International Space Station, with private com-

panies providing the lifts. There will be double the number of astronauts as the test flight earlier this year, and their mission will last a full six months.

"Make no mistake: Every flight is a test flight when it comes to space travel. But it's also true that we need to routinely be able to go to the International Space Station," NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said in wel-

coming the astronauts to Kennedy.

The crew of three Americans and one Japanese are scheduled to rocket away Saturday night, provided approaching Tropical Storm Eta doesn't interfere. It will be a speedy trip to the space station, a six-orbit express lasting under nine hours.

The astronauts have named their Dragon capsule Resilience given all

the challenges of 2020: coronavirus and social isolation, protests against racial injustice, and a particularly difficult election and campaign season. They have been in quarantine for a week or two and taking safety precautions — masks and social distancing — long before that.

"It's been a tough year for everybody for a lot of different reasons," crew

commander Mike Hopkins said after flying in from Houston. "We felt like if the name of our vehicle could give a little hope, a little inspiration, put a smile on people's face, then that is definitely what we wanted to do."

The four will remain in orbit until spring, when their replacements arrive aboard another SpaceX Dragon capsule. The car-gov version of the capsule

also will keep making regular deliveries of food and supplies.

SpaceX's Benji Reed said the company expects to launch seven Dragons over the next 14 months: three for crew and four for cargo.

"Every time there's a Dragon launch, there will be two Dragons in space," said Reed, director of crew mission management.



Ricardo B. Brazziell | Austin American-Statesman

File image of Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX) at a 2019 roundtable discussion on human trafficking.

## After sweeping losses in congressional races, Texas Democrats ask why

BY MARIA RECIO  
AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN

WASHINGTON — When national Democrats helicoptered into Austin in April 2019 and set up an operation to flip GOP seats in the U.S. House in 2020 — a list that grew from six districts to 10 — they exuded confidence, and Republicans took notice.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee was fresh off gaining two Texas seats in 2018 and declared that the Lone Star State was "ground zero" for expanding the Democratic majority in the House.

Instead, GOP candidates won nine of the races, some by double digits, and Republican Beth Van Duyen is leading in a North Texas congressio-

nal race that has not yet been called.

"If you're going to get hit by a truck, you want to see it coming," said Matt Angle, director of the Lone Star Project, a Democratic political action committee in Washington and Texas.

He and other Democratic activists were especially surprised by losses in the predominantly Latino 23rd Congressional District, which runs from San Antonio to El Paso, and in the 21st Congressional District, where U.S. Rep. Chip Roy, a freshman Republican from Hays County, easily defeated Austin Democrat Wendy Davis.

And U.S. Reps. Michael McCaul, R-Texas, and Roger Williams, R-Texas, facing the same Democratic opponents as in 2018, won by larger margins.

## LATINO VOTES

From Page 3A

Trump's law and order message also resonated in El Paso and the Rio Grande Valley, where thousands of residents are employed in the federal sector, especially jobs in homeland security, including Border Patrol agents.

Former state Rep. Domingo Garcia, a Dallas Democrat who serves as national president of the League of United Latin American Citizens, one of the country's first groups to promote Hispanic empowerment, said Republicans this year "did a very good job" of appealing to more conservative Latino voters.

Nationally, some progressive Democrats called for eliminating the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, he noted.

"That's their paycheck," Garcia said. "When you talk about abolishing ICE, that hits home."

Antonio Arellano, the interim executive director of the progressive Latino group Jolt Action, agreed that different geographic groups of Texas Hispanics have different priorities.

"There is a divide between an RGV Latino voter and a Dallas County or Harris County Latino voter," Arellano said. "We need to recognize that Texas is the size of three Georgias — it's a massive state. Latinos in the North, in the East, in the West and in the South of Texas all have different motivations that are driving them out to vote."

Matt Barreto, a Biden pollster, notes that in all five of Texas' biggest cities, including Dallas, the Democrat matched or exceeded the share of Latino votes Hillary Clinton won in 2016.

"That is an important counterpoint to the Rio Grande Valley," he said.

### 'SCARED TO DEATH'

Still, even Democrats conceded — with regret — that Trump made inroads among Latino males in South Texas and along the border.

U.S. Rep. Vicente González, D-McAllen, said that without a stronger counter message from Democrats, too many Hispanic men began "to believe in Trump's lies," whether on the economy or the coronavirus pandemic. His brusque manner taps into the machismo of those of Mexican ancestry, he said.

"Hispanic men are specifically attracted to the hoopla, the bravado, machismo, Donald Trump lucha libre culture, if you will," González said, referring to stylized wrestling matches popular among Latinos.

## ALANIZ

From Page 3A

that memorialize Freddy's life, opening a small window into the world of this humble, genuine and caring man. The sudden shock of his death hit hard, and the outpouring of community



Alfredo Corchado | The Dallas Morning News

Daniel Sanchez, 43, drove over 200 miles to cast a ballot in El Paso for President Trump, saying he was afraid Democrat presidential candidate Joe Biden would end his oil job.

For others, that's a major turnout.

"A president should unite his people not divide us. I am shocked that other fellow Latinos would want such a racist person," said Mitsy Maris-Garza, a Harlingen accountant.

"I am scared to death that if Trump wins there will be nothing stopping him from being more of a dictator than a leader," said Maris-Garza, a Central-American immigrant married to a Mexican-American who voted for Biden.

Jacob Monty, a longtime Republican born in El Paso who voted for Biden, pivoted because of Trump's disparaging remarks about Latinos.

The last straw came after the Aug. 3, 2019 shooting at a Walmart that killed 23 people and injured 22. The alleged gunman, Patrick Crusius from Allen, posted a diatribe online minutes before the shooting, saying he was doing his part to prevent the "Hispanic invasion of Texas," using language familiar with that of Trump.

"I'm a real Republican, but I had enough of Trump's disrespect of my community," he said. "For me, seeing how Trump rhetoric motivated the white nationalist terrorist in El Paso was the absolute last straw for me."

### GETTING OUT THE VOTE

Just as national Republicans, after Barack Obama won a second term as president in 2012, conducted an "autopsy" report on how they could broaden the GOP's appeal to minorities, women and the LGBTQ community, Texas Democrats may study what went wrong with Hispanic voters in 2020.

Colin Strother, a Democratic consultant who's worked many races in South

Texas, noted that three of his party's U.S. House incumbents in South Texas — González, Henry Cuellar of Laredo and Filemon Vela of Brownsville — won by smaller than usual margins. That's even though each faced poorly funded GOP challengers, Strother stressed.

"We weren't far from utter disaster," he added. "We could've lost some seats."

U.S. Rep. Veronica Escobar, D-El Paso, and others noted that in less populous, Western states that in recent cycles have moved from solidly Republican to purple, such as Arizona, Democratic-leaning groups spent many years building get-out-the-vote efforts among state residents who are Hispanic.

That work in Texas has only recently begun in earnest, Escobar said.

"You can't just parachute in, and expect you know people to feel connected to the party," Escobar said. "It takes long term sustained effort."

This year, Democrats also weren't helped by the COVID-19 pandemic, which prompted many of their campaigns to forgo traditional door-knocking and rallies in favor of virtual events.

Building personal connections with voters in the Rio Grande Valley is critical, local politicians from both parties said.

"In our area, it's about relationships that you build," said Ruben Villareal, a Republican and the former mayor of Rio Grande City in Starr County. "You start building them before you even need them."

Look no further than Hillary Clinton, who has deep ties to South Texas where she cut her teeth as a political organizer. When the Democrat ran for president in 2016,

she won a blowout in Starr County with nearly 80% of the vote. This year, Biden eked out a win with 52%.

His running mate, Kamala Harris, campaigned in the Rio Grande Valley, but her visit came the Friday before Election Day. By then, more than 75% of the ballots in the four-county area had already been cast in early voting, according to state data.

"She did a great job, but it was a dollar short and an hour late," said state Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, D-McAllen.

While Trump didn't pay the region a personal visit, people saw his name on federal stimulus checks they received this spring amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"To people in a community that struggle day in and day out and they get a check with the president's name on it, it helps build his identity," Villareal said. "When it's time to make a choice are you going to vote for a guy you never heard of before or a guy who signed a check that helped buy groceries for that week?"

This year, Trump and the GOP also had a bigger on the ground presence. With Trump trains, and newly formed Facebook groups for Trump supporters, and the encrypted messenger services of WhatsApp and Telegram, Arechiga, the McAllen voter, said she was able to grow support in the community.

The caravans of Trump supporters, which have organized across Texas, have drawn backlash in some places because of the noise and taunting of others who don't agree with them. The FBI is even investigating an incident where Trump supporters driving trucks swarmed a Biden campaign bus on I-35 south of Austin.

With Biden in the lead in the electoral vote count, Trump is making unsubstantiated claims that some of the tally is "illegal votes." It is clear that the change of power in the U.S. may be chaotic — a prediction made weeks ago in the political fracas of the Rio Grande Valley by an influential Catholic bishop.

"I have a bad feeling in my stomach about the coming election campaign,"

Bishop Daniel Flores wrote in a tweet chain. "Like the dread you feel when a Category 5 hurricane is in the Gulf, promising remorseless wind, relentless waves, and flying debris... Be prepared."

*Dallas Morning News staff writers Tom Benning in Washington D.C. and Holly K. Hacker in Dallas contributed to this report.*

Rest in Peace, Alfredo Alaniz.

*This story is part of an ongoing series entitled Bearing Witness. In the series, the Museum of South Texas History aims to document some of the Rio Grande Valley lives lost to COVID-19. For more information about the museum, visit MOSTHistory.org.*

The fireworks display is scheduled for 9 p.m. Parking areas will be designated to 1103 E. Nolana for the north side display and the floodway at 900 E. Pecina for the south side display.

*jjimenez@themonitor.com*

**GOLD CHIROPRACTIC CLINIC**

FREE Initial Consultation & Shiatsu Massage  
• No X-Rays Required  
• Resolve your pain without drugs & surgery

• Neck Pain & Stiffness  
• Numbness & Tingling In Hands & Arms  
• Low Back Pain  
• Radiating Leg Pain  
• Sciatica

TREATMENTS 5 for only \$120

782-8000  
101 E. Exp. 83, Ste F  
Pharr, TX 78577  
goldchiro.com

**MONEY SAVERS**

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESSES!

**SUMMER SPECIALS!**

Sandwiches, Soups, Salads, Burgers, The Real New York Water Bagels and more!

**New York Deli**  
Family Owned & Operated Since 1982

NEW DELIVERY AVAILABLE THRU FAVOR OR DOORDASH  
McAllen 829 Dove Ave. 631-8787 Mon-Fri: 11am-8pm Sat: 11am-3pm Sunday (Worship)

Call Jeff at 956-683-4327 for Advertising Opportunities

## FIREWORKS

From Page 3A

veterans, so we're going to do a fireworks show."

The city has designated 400 parking spots where residents can safely enjoy the display from their vehicles. They are being asked

to stay inside their vehicles throughout the show. Patriotic music will also be provided by tuning radios to KTEX 100.3 FM.

"We understand that our veterans — they did a lot not only from the city of Pharr but all veterans," Analis said. "It's just a way

for us to pay back a little bit of respect for them. Obviously, fireworks are a very, very tiny token of appreciation that we want to offer to them.

"We didn't want this day to go unnoticed, which is why we are doing the fireworks. It is important to us."