



# Houston ewiConnect



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT LILY PORTALES | HILCORP ENERGY COMPANY

### MAKING WAVES: A NIGHT OF IMPACT & LEADERSHIP

April brought a truly defining moment for our chapter as we gathered for Executive Night 2026: Navigating New Horizons: Pearls of Leadership. What an incredible evening! Because of you! Our members, sponsors, partners, and volunteers, the night was not only a success, but a powerful reflection of what makes EWI of Houston so special. The energy in the room, the generosity on display, and the shared commitment to our mission created an experience that will carry forward in meaningful ways through our scholarship and literacy programs.

Together, we raised over \$100,000! What an extraordinary milestone that will change lives. This is what impact looks like when leadership, generosity, and community come together with purpose. Thank you for showing up with such heart. We are especially grateful to our sponsors and partners who went above and beyond, giving generously, contributing services, and helping bring this evening to life. Your support was instrumental, and your belief in our mission made it all possible!

A very special thank you to Lisa Helfman, whose presence and message elevated the evening in such a meaningful way. Her insights on leadership, service, and community resonated deeply and aligned with our theme. We are incredibly grateful for her time and the inspiration she shared with all of us.

It was also a proud moment to recognize excellence within our own community. Congratulations to Harvest Midstream, our Houston Chapter Firm of the Year. Your partnership, engagement, and unwavering support continue to make a lasting impact on the Houston chapter.

We are equally proud to have nominated the following outstanding organizations and leader for corporate recognition through the Lucille Johnson Perkins Awards. Each nominee reflects the very best of EWI, demonstrating excellence, leadership, and a meaningful commitment to our mission:

- Large Member Firm: Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty
- Medium Member Firm: The Ballroom at Bayou Place
- Small Member Firm: D. Jones Photography
- Non-Profit: The Rose
- Leader of the Year: LaTonya Perez

We are honored to celebrate their impact and proud to have them represent our chapter on a broader stage.

As we look ahead, our focus turns once again to giving back. In May, we are excited to host our next Reading Rally at Durham Elementary, continuing our commitment to literacy and community impact. I invite you to join us on May 2 as we come together to stuff backpacks and prepare for the day, and then be part of the experience on May 21 as we bring the Reading Rally to life with the students. It's a meaningful way to connect, serve, and share in the joy of making a difference together.

May is also a season filled with meaningful milestones and celebrations. As we honor Mother's Day and the incredible women who lead, nurture, and inspire, we also extend our heartfelt congratulations to this year's high school seniors and college graduates. Your hard work, dedication, and achievements are worth celebrating, and we are excited for all that lies ahead of you.

Thank you for continuing to make waves with us. The momentum we are building together is powerful, and as we look ahead, we are not just navigating new horizons; we are creating them!

*Lily Portales*

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Hilcorp Energy Company

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Houston First Corp

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**Sergeant-at-Arms**  
**Anna Bryant**  
H-E-B

**Communications Director**  
**Victoria Maldonado**  
Harvest Midstream Company

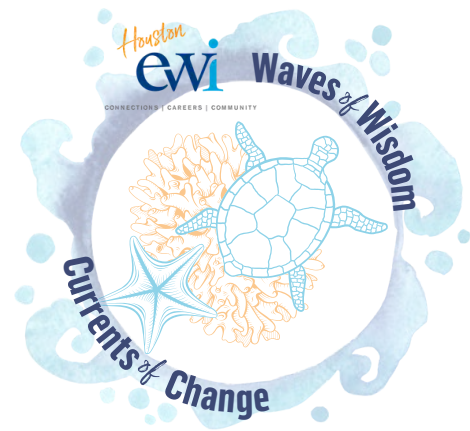
**Program Director**  
**Isabel McKinney**  
Hilcorp Energy Company

**Advisor & Parliamentarian**  
**Cindy Baker**  
Black Haw Group LLC

**Advisor**  
**Shari Schiffman**  
Douglas Elliman Real Estate

# APRIL 2026

# DIVE INTO THIS ISSUE



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# Houston ewiConnect Words of Wisdom



In 2014, I was employed by John Daugherty, Realtors, as the Operations Manager. We had a very busy office; however, that year all three of the JDR representatives for EWI were generously allowed to attend LCAM in Washington, D.C. with the company's support: myself, Shari Schiffman, and Carole Pitts. We made plans to have our office positions covered and fly together to attend the LCAM conference. Once we reached Washington, we were greeted by the LCAM representatives of EWI of Washington, D.C., who gave us the itinerary for the next few days. Many activities were planned, including an evening on a Potomac River dinner cruise, and another evening having dinner with our Chapter.

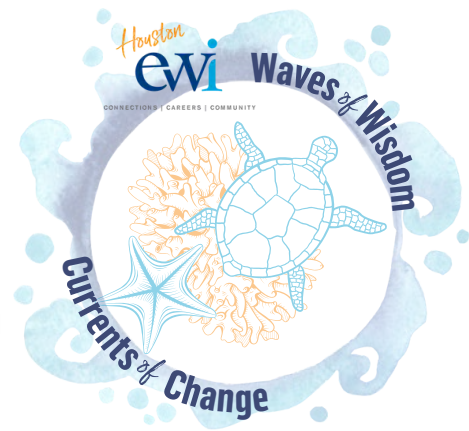
Elisa Garcia, representing Houston First Corporation, had made arrangements for those from the Houston Chapter to tour the White House the next morning. Coincidentally, the next day was the anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup>. We rode the subway, ending up on a side street beside the White House. During the train ride, I will never forget working frantically on my laptop and cell phone, trying to reset our office phone system, which had gone down. There were lots of people on the streets, crowds waiting to go in, and the extra police and security were very evident. Of course, we had to go through security and have our purses checked. As we lined up to enter the White House, through the Rose Gardens and up the stairs, Secret Service agent suddenly appeared on both sides of us. We were briefly explained the rules, no photography or talking on cellphones was allowed during the tour. We began the tour going from room to room, listening to the tour guide speak. We were in awe of the beautiful furnishings, the exquisite dishes and the chandeliers. It was so exciting! Then, this Texas girl had a momentary insane thought. I HAD to tell SOMEONE where I was! I got out my cellphone and texted my sister the words "Guess where I am?" There was a Secret Service agent immediately in my face with a stern look, telling me to put my phone away. I shakily responded that I wasn't calling anyone, I was just texting my sister in Houston. He glared at me! I immediately complied in total embarrassment! What was I thinking? Once word spread of my White House "faux pas" I endured a lot of kidding about being a person of "suspect" with the Secret Service! At our next EWI of Houston meeting in Houston, my humorous story was told again by letting everyone know that I was almost arrested in the White House!! What an adventure!

I will always be grateful to our company for allowing the 3 of us to make that memorable trip together. We had a wonderful time, making many new friends with other EWI members, learning so much from the seminars, and sharing a wonderful experience. If you have never been to LCAM, I highly recommend that you go. The experience and sister bonds formed opened up a whole new perspective into EWI and what we do.



**-Sara Waguespack  
W.O.W Member**

<https://ewihouston.org/>



# “SEA” WHAT’S COMING

**May 12**

Monthly Chapter Meeting  
Maggiano's

**Bring a friend and ride the wave with us!**

**Guest Speakers**

**Mary Alaniz & Steve Mendonça**

*AI in the Workplace, Benefits & Risks*

**Dress for Success & Career Gear Donation Drive**

**Bring your gently loved professional clothes & accessories for women and men**

**May 21**

Monthly Full Board Meeting  
Hilcorp Energy

**June 9**

Chapter Business Meeting  
The Ballroom at Tanglewood

**Celebrating our Past Presidents**

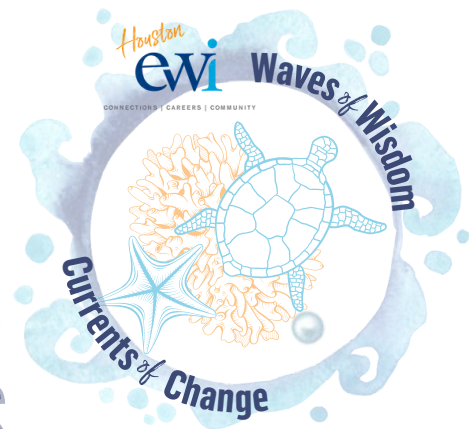
**June 18**

Monthly Board Meeting  
Hilcorp Energy

**July 14**

Scholarship Night  
Hilcorp Energy





# “SEA” WHAT’S COMING PHILANTHROPY HIGH TIDES

**May 2**

**Book Bag Stuffing  
Patti McLean’s House**

10am-12pm

Info to be sent out via email

**June TBD**

**Undies for Everyone**

Bring a pack of new, unopened children’s underwear

**May 12**

**Dress for Success & Career Gear Drive**

Chapter Monthly Meeting

Bring your gently loved professional clothing & accessories for women & men

**August 8**

**Peace, Love, and The Rose**

Come out and support member firm The Rose at their annual Shrimp Boil! More info to come!

**May 22**

**EWI of Houston’s Annual Reading Rally**

**Durham Elementary - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

More info to come!

**August 22**

**Pillowcase Sewing Day**

Benefiting Child Advocates

Sewing not required!

RSVP to Patti Strawther at

**pattistrawther@hotmail.com**

**June 5**

**Durham Elementary**

Assist passing out lunch to the school staff

RSVP to Patti Strawther at

**pattistrawther@hotmail.com**

# Waves of Celebration

**MAY**



## **REPRESENTATIVES BIRTHDAYS**

**KAY BART - MAY 18**

## **MEMBER FIRM ANNIVERSARIES**

**LET IT FLY EVENTS, LP - 2009**

**HARVEST MIDSTREAM - 2007**

**SKERL & ASSOCIATES - 2001**



<https://ewihouston.org/>

# Waves of Celebration

## MEMBER FIRM SPOTLIGHT



### Amegy Bank Brings Art, Soccer and Community Together Ahead of FIFA World Cup 2026



**Jessie Requena**  
Marketing Services Representative

2 min read

Amegy Bank is proud to participate in Art of Soccer, a Houston-based community initiative led by the Harris County Houston Sports Authority Foundation in celebration of the FIFA World Cup 2026 coming to our city.

Proceeds from the program support youth soccer access, sustainability initiatives and human rights efforts across Greater Houston, causes that align closely with Amegy's commitment to community investment and shared prosperity.

As part of the initiative, Amegy partnered with Houston artists Chu Okoli and Amber Cleveland, who designed two custom 36-inch fiberglass soccer balls titled *Heart of Houston* and *Here You Grow*.

#### ***Heart of Houston***

Designed by Chu Okoli, *Heart of Houston* is a vibrant piece celebrating Houston's resilience, innovation and civic pride. Featuring iconic city landmarks with Amegy Tower at the center, the design reinforces the bank's role as a steady financial anchor supporting the city's continued growth and prosperity.

#### ***Here You Grow***

Designed by Amber Cleveland in collaboration with Olivia Tao, *Here You Grow* highlights Texas landscapes, family roots and generational growth. The design symbolizes Amegy Bank's role in helping families and businesses plant for the future and thrive over time through stability and trusted financial partnerships.

Designed exclusively for Amegy, both works' eye-catching visuals reflect the energy of the communities we serve and reinforce Amegy's role as a trusted financial partner supporting growth across every stage of life and business.

#### ***On view at Amegy Tower***

Beginning Wednesday, April 22, *Heart of Houston* will be on display in Amegy Tower, serving as a visual anchor and point of pride for employees, customers and visitors. *Here You Grow* will travel throughout

# Waves of Celebration

## MEMBER FIRM SPOTLIGHT

Houston as part of the broader Art of Soccer citywide installation, appearing at high-traffic destinations including The Galleria. The traveling display extends Amegy's visibility beyond our walls and situates our brand within the broader celebration of sports, art and civic identity.

We welcome customers, employees and clients to stop by, take photos with the soccer ball and share in the excitement (#AmegyArtofSoccer). Be sure to keep an eye out to see where the traveling soccer ball will appear next.

The FIFA World Cup 2026 officially kicks off on June 11, 2026. Houston will host its first match on June 14, 2026, at NRG Stadium, welcoming fans from around the world.



"Heart of Houston"

# CURRENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

## APRIL MEETING RECAP

### April 14 - Aquarium Downtown (member firm, a Landry's restaurant) Executive Appreciation Night & Dollars for Scholars

Annual Executive Appreciation Night & Dollars for Scholars Fundraiser was truly an exciting, memorable evening enjoyed by all, member firm Executives, EWI Chapter Members, and guests. The evening started with excitement from the moment you walked into the ballroom, photo booths, casino tables, silent auction, raffles, piano player, and yes, even a Mermaid! Everyone came together to enjoy the evening and raise Dollars for our Scholars: high school students (EWISP) and adult students (ASIST).

Chapter President Lily Portales, representing Hilcorp Energy Company, welcomed everyone to the evening's event. She then introduced Gabriela Azcarate/VP of Finance for Hilcorp Energy Company, and invited her to the podium to deliver the invocation. Lily thanked Marilyn DeSimone, Landry's/Downtown Aquarium, for a wonderful, prepared dinner, venue, and exceptional service. Before dinner was concluded, Cindy Baker introduced special guest speaker, Lisa Helfman/Public Affairs Director for HEB. Lisa spoke eloquently and walked us through highlights of her amazing career, the start-up of her foundation Brighter Bites, and explained how this came to light. An extraordinary woman, professionally and personally. Lisa expressed commitment and support for our organization for what we do for the community and the students in our philanthropic efforts.

8:00 pm – Silent Auction is CLOSED! Congratulations to all the winners!

Adding to the highlight of this evening, the Chapter recognized member firms and member representative of the Year: Non-Profit: The Rose | Small Member Firm: D. Jones Photography

Medium Firm: The Ballroom at Bayou Place | Large Firm: Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty

Houston Chapter Firm of the Year: Harvest Midstream | Leader of the Year: LaTonya Perez

Congratulations to our Winners!

Thanks to all our corporate sponsors, donors, firm member executives' support and everyone's efforts who contributed to the success of this evening. Dollars raised this evening will continue funding for next year's scholarship recipients. 2026 Dollars for Scholars ended on a high note! Thank you, Lily Portales, for your leadership efforts to make this an incredible, memorable evening and it's SUCCESS.



- Elisa Garcia, President Elect  
Houston First



# Houston ewiConnect

## CURRENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

### EXECUTIVE APPRECIATION NIGHT & DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS



Gabriela Azcarate, Executive Hilcorp; Colleen Elkins, Executive Hilcorp; Jennifer Lopez, Guest



Lily Portales  
Hilcorp Energy



Tom Strawther, Guest  
Patti Strawther, James J Postl



Linda Petticrew, Shell; Paul Kilian, Executive MTSIR; Lisa Anhauser, Guest; Stephanie Cleary, Executive MTSIR



Shannon Lecoq, Executive, The Rose; Shannon McNair, The Rose



Elisa Garcia, Houston First  
LaTonya Perez, The Rose



Linda Day, Guest; Delynn Walker, Sustaining Member; Barbara Stokes, Amegy



Kehinde Ajiboye, Previous EWISP & ASIST  
Scholarship Recipient  
Mary Margaret Carroll, Sustaining Member



# Houston **evi**Connect

## CURRENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

### EXECUTIVE APPRECIATION NIGHT & DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS



Lily Portales, Hilcorp Energy  
Lisa Helfman, H-E-B Executive



Priscilla Massey-Hardy, Carolyn Noack,  
Sustaining Members; Deborah Jones



Debbie Russell, Guest; Patti McLean, Daikin;  
Cindy Baker, Black Haw Group;  
Lisa Anhaiser, Guest; Rosalind Moore, Corinthian



Drew Walters, Executive; Michele Votano  
Atlantic Relocation Systems



Thank you to our  
sponsors!



Melanie Woods, Executive, Harvest Midstream; Colleen MacCroy,  
Guest; Laney Whitney, Guest; Laura Reyes, Individual Member;  
Amy Herod, Harvest Midstream



# CURRENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

## EXECUTIVE APPRECIATION NIGHT & DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS

*Congratulations to our Lucille Johnson Perkins Award nominees!*



**Non-profit of the Year:  
The Rose**



**Small Firm:  
D. Jones Photography**



**Medium Firm:  
The Ballroom at Bayou Place**



**Large Firm: Martha Turner  
Sotheby's International Realty**



**Houston Chapter Firm of the Year:  
Harvest Midstream**

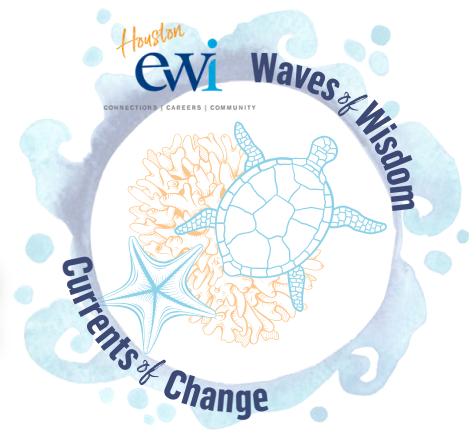
Let's come together to champion these incredible nominees. Your voice matters! Share a brief letter of support reflecting their impact and leadership.

Not sure where to start? Consider sharing a moment, contribution, or example that highlights why they are deserving of this recognition.

Please submit your letter to [President@ewihouston.org](mailto:President@ewihouston.org)  
by June 30.



**Leader of the Year:  
LaTonya Perez**



# WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR SPONSORS & PARTNERS

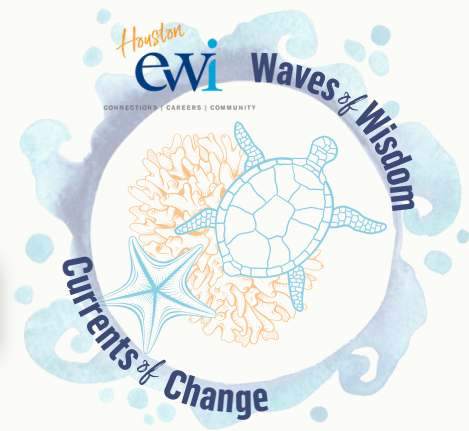
*We extend our deepest appreciation to the partners who went above and beyond:*



**We are deeply grateful to all of our sponsors, supporters, member firms, EWI representatives, friends and volunteers whose generosity fuels our mission and extends our reach in the community.**

**We thank you for your support year after year!**

**Thank You!!!!**



# CURRENTS OF GROWTH

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



### CURRENTS OF CONVERSATION

**Podcast:** "Bring Mindfulness to your Communication"

**(Think Fast Talk Smart)**

[!\[\]\(2becda4813f27b5edb43f5299d7596ac\_img.jpg\) Listen Here](#)



### CURRENT SKILL

#### COMMUNICATION CLARITY

**Clear communication is essential for effective collaboration and leadership. Professionals who can convey ideas concisely, listen actively, and tailor their message to their audience build stronger relationships and drive better outcomes.**



### CURRENT READS

**Read:** "7 Essential Tips For Effective 1 on 1 Meetings With Your Manager"

**(Lighthouse Blog)**

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### KEEP THE CURRENT FLOWING

Help us grow the wave of wisdom! If you have a resource, article, or insight worth sharing email Victoria Maldonado at

[vmaldonado@harvestmidstream.com](mailto:vmaldonado@harvestmidstream.com)

# CURRENTS OF GROWTH

## NEWS FROM CORPORATE

### Professional Development Webinar: “From Upended to Unstoppable! Solutionary Strategies for Leaders”

Hosted by: Kimberly Lyall

Date: May 20, 2026

Time: 12:00pm CST

[Register here for this EWI Professional Development Webinar](#)



### TEXOMA - July 31 - August 1, 2026

Chapter meeting: July 30

Corpus Christi, TX

Hotel accommodations: Omni Corpus Christi

More info to come!

[Click here](#) to visit the EWI Corporate site for past professional development webinars.

### 2026 Leadership Conference & Annual Meeting - LCAM

Date: Sept 16 - 19, 2026

Mobile, AL

Early bird registration now through June 30!

[Click here to register and for more info!](#)





## **EWI of Houston Mission Statement**

EWI of Houston aspires to be the premier business organization of choice for member firms and their key individuals. Recognized by the Houston community as an avenue to achieve personal and professional excellence, every activity of the Houston Chapter will fulfill at least one of the objectives of the EWI Mission Statement.

## **Our Mission**

EWI brings together key individuals from diverse businesses for the purpose of promoting member firms, enhancing personal and professional development, and encouraging community involvement.

## **Our Vision**

To enhance professional growth and development within a diverse group of women while empowering them to make a difference as they inspire others.



## Our Strategic Goals

- To strengthen, expand, and broaden membership
- To provide member firms with meaningful benefits
- To actively promote education for all representatives
- To achieve a high level of community visibility through service

## Corporate Office

Vicki Chapman, EWI Corporate President

c/o SWBC

9311 San Pedro Avenue, Suite 600

San Antonio, TX 78216

210-321-7535

[www.ewiconnect.com](http://www.ewiconnect.com)



# Leadership

## 2025-2026

### Board of Directors



President  
Lily Portales  
Hilcorp Energy Company  
lily.portales@hilcorp.com



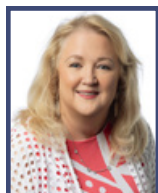
President Elect  
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Membership Director  
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Amegy Bank  
barbara.stokes@amegybank.com



Secretary/Treasurer  
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midstream.com



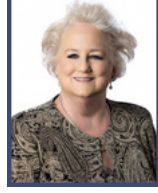
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imckinney@jdhcap.com



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Advisor & Parliamentarian  
Cindy Baker  
Black Haw Group LLC  
cindyb@blackhawgroup.com



Advisor  
Shari Schiffman  
Douglas Elliman Real Estate  
Shari.Schiffman@elliman.com

# Leadership

## 2025-2026 Committee Chairs



ASIST Committee Chair  
Debra Jaime  
The Rose  
djaime@therose.org



Bylaws Committee Chair  
Cindy Joutraw  
CenterPoint Energy, Inc.  
cindy.joutraw  
@centerpointenergy.com



Courtesy Committee Chair  
Elisa Garcia  
Houston First Corp  
elisa.garcia@houstonfirst  
.com



EWISP Committee Chair  
Patti Strawther  
James J. Postl Interests  
pattistrawther@hotmail.com



Hospitality Committee  
Chair  
Anna Bryant  
HEB  
bryant.anna@heb.com



Member/ Retention  
Committee Chair  
Carole Pitts  
Martha Turner Sotheby's  
International Realty  
Carole.Pitts@sothebys  
.realty



Nominating Committee Chair  
Cindy Baker  
Black Haw Group LLC  
cindyb@blackhawgroup.com



Philanthropy Committee  
Chair  
Patti McLean  
Daikin Comfort  
Technologies, N.A.  
patti.mclean@daikin  
comfort.com



Professional Development  
Committee Chair  
Isabel McKinney  
Hilcorp Energy Company  
imckinney@jdhcp.com



Public Relations &  
Social Media Chair  
Victoria Maldonado  
Harvest Midstream  
vmaldonado@harvest  
midstream.com



Strategic Planning  
Committee Chair  
LaTonya Perez  
The Rose  
lperez@therose.org



Web Committee Chair  
David Jones  
D. Jones Photography  
studio@djonesphoto.com

# Surf the Digital Wave

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