



# Houston ewiConnect



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

### EXECUTIVE APPRECIATION NIGHT PREVIEW

*A Pearl of Leadership Takes the Stage*

We are proud to welcome Lisa Helfman as our featured guest speaker at Executive Night 2026: Navigating New Horizons: Pearls of Leadership. Her leadership and heart for service shine as a reflection of EWI of Houston's values.

### RIDING THE CURRENT OF GROWTH

As I reflect on the past few months, I've found myself thinking not just about where we are as a chapter but how far we've come, and how much we continue to grow together.

This journey as President has already taught me so much. Leadership isn't always about having all the answers. No, it's about listening, adapting, and trusting the strength of those around you. It's about showing up with intention and learning from the incredible women who make up this chapter.

And that growth is happening all around us. In March, we experienced it in meaningful ways through connection, reflection, and community. From gathering to honor our Sustaining Members and the Waves of Wisdom they represent, to the continued momentum behind our programs and initiatives, it's clear that our chapter is not only active, but deeply engaged.

We are growing and not just in numbers, but in purpose. Like waves, growth builds over time. It strengthens, gains momentum, and carries us forward together. Each of you brings something unique to that current: your ideas, your energy, and your willingness to be part of something bigger.

And as we look ahead, that momentum continues. April brings one of our most anticipated events of the year, Executive Appreciation Night and the Dollars for Scholars Fundraiser. This special evening not only celebrates leadership and connection, but also fuels the future of our chapter through the scholarships and literacy programs we are so passionate about supporting.

As we navigate new horizons, we are lucky to have pearls of leadership to help guide us. We are incredibly honored to welcome Lisa Helfman as our featured guest speaker. A respected leader and champion for our community, Lisa's impact across Houston and her heart for service perfectly reflect the spirit of EWI. Her presence will make this evening even more meaningful, and I know her words will leave a lasting impression on all of us.

Executive Appreciation Night is more than an event, it is a reflection of who we are and what we are building together: our communities, our connections, and careers.

As we move into this exciting season, I encourage you to stay engaged, invite others into our mission, and continue saying yes to the opportunities that allow you to grow alongside this chapter.

We are not just navigating this year, we are shaping it!

Thank you for being part of this journey and for the energy, passion, and purpose you bring to EWI of Houston. The current is strong, and together, we are moving toward something truly meaningful.

*Lily Portales*

### 2025-2026 Officers &

#### Directors

**President**  
**Lily Portales**  
Hilcorp Energy Company

#### President-Elect

**Elisa Garcia**  
Houston First Corp

#### Secretary/Treasurer

**Linda Petticrew**  
Shell Energy Resources

#### Membership Director

**Barbara Stokes**  
Amegy Bank

#### Director-at-Large B/C/DP

**Cristina Barron**  
Martha Tuner Sotheby's International Realty

#### Sergeant-at-Arms

**Anna Bryant**  
H-E-B

#### Communications Director

**Victoria Maldonado**  
Harvest Midstream Company

#### Program Director

**Isabel McKinney**  
Hilcorp Energy Company

#### Advisor & Parliamentarian

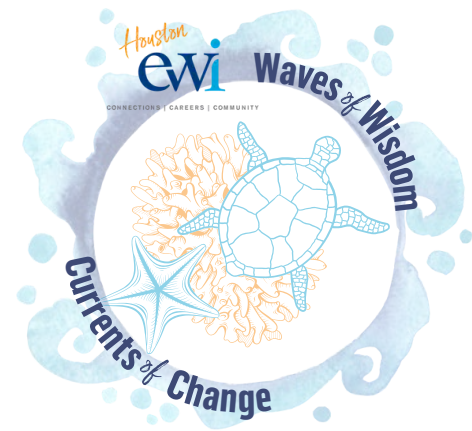
**Cindy Baker**  
Black Haw Group LLC

#### Advisor

**Shari Schiffman**  
Douglas Elliman Real Estate

MARCH 2026

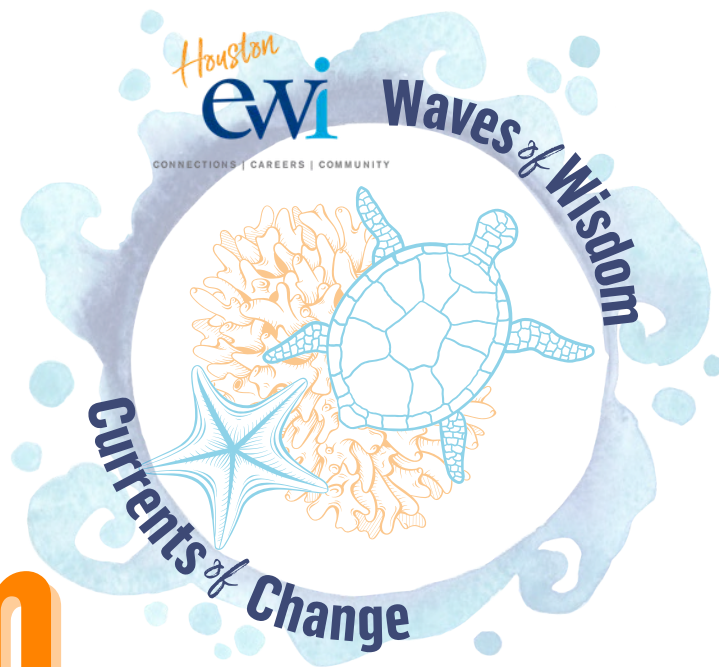
# DIVE INTO THIS ISSUE



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# Words of Wisdom



I was lucky enough to be invited to join EWI in 1991 when I worked for Pennzoil. The first meeting that I attended was hosted by the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, and we met during Rodeo season. I was blown away with the entire event and knew this was a group I wanted to be a part of.

Over the years I have attended great meetings featuring wonderful speakers and was educated on many city-wide organizations and businesses. Along the way, getting involved with committees and special events, I met some wonderful women, who to this day, are some of my dearest friends.

EWI also helped me get first-rate positions over the years. Two times, my resume was placed on top of a stack of resumes, and I was able to achieve top-tier positions on executive floors with major corporations in Houston. Even though I met and exceeded some of the requirements, that extra little help certainly was to my benefit.

Probably some of the greatest memories I have of EWI compassion and celebration is when I had a serious health situation, and when I adopted my infant daughter. How kind, caring, and welcoming my EWI sisters were to me.

And today, some 26 years later, these same ladies are giving me advice on how to plan my daughter's upcoming wedding.

EWI has been and continues to be an important part of my life. I am so honored to stay involved by being active with the WOW group. Getting together with these ladies is so much fun. We talk about current events and then there are those cherished memories of our involvement over the years. The genuine laughter is always the best end result of our gatherings. I always walk away from those gatherings with a big smile on my face.



**-Mary Sue Patronella**  
**Sustaining & W.O.W Member**

<https://ewihouston.org/>

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EXECUTIVE WOMEN INTERNATIONAL  
ADULT STUDENTS IN SCHOLASTIC TRANSITION

Tides

of

Thanks

**“I am excited to let you know that I was selected to participate in a study abroad program in India from December 2-24, 2025. During this time, I visited various colleges to study behavioral health practices and explore how mental health services are delivered in a different cultural context. This opportunity has significantly enhanced my understanding of global approaches to social work and mental health treatment.**

**I am also pleased to report that I am progressing well in my graduate studies at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work. Your scholarship support has been instrumental in allowing me to focus on my coursework and pursue valuable opportunities like this study abroad experience.**

**Thank you for investing in my education and professional development. I am committed to using the knowledge and skills I gain to serve my community and make a meaningful impact in the field of social work.”**

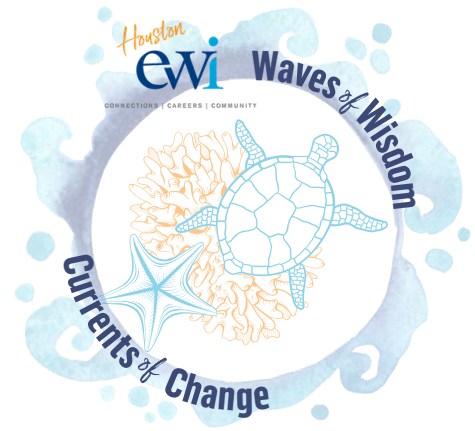


**-Maria Linares**

**2025 ASIST Scholarship Recipient**

<https://ewihouston.org/>

# Houston ewiConnect Tides *of* Generosity



**HELP US MAKE WAVES FOR SCHOLARSHIPS! DONATE TO OUR WINE PULL AND LIQUOR WAGON AND BE PART OF THIS IMPACTFUL EXECUTIVE NIGHT TRADITION.  
EXECUTIVE NIGHT IS ON APRIL 14TH!**



## Liquor Wagon

**IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!**

We're accepting donations of:

- Liquor • Beer • Mixers • Juices • Garnishes • Glassware
- Bar Tools • Snacks & Accessories

Reach out to [shari.schiffman@elliman.com](mailto:shari.schiffman@elliman.com)  
to schedule a drop off or pickup



## EXECUTIVE NIGHT FUNDRAISER APRIL 14, 2026

# SUPPORT THE WINE PULL

Help us create an exciting Wine Pull by donating a bottle valued at \$25 or more.

Premium wines (\$50+) & recognizable brands further strengthen our fundraising impact.

Monetary contributions will help stock our wine pull selection.

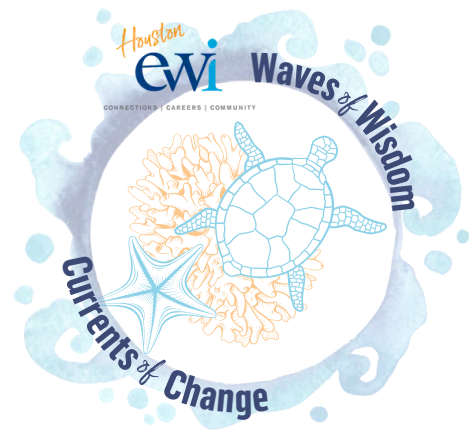
Contact Patti Strawther at [pattistrawther@hotmail.com](mailto:pattistrawther@hotmail.com)

ALL SPONSORS WILL BE RECOGNIZED IN OUR PRINTED MATERIALS. SPONSOR NAMES AND LOGOS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY MARCH 20. ALL DONATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MARCH 31.

Tax deductible donations



<https://ewihouston.org/>



# “SEA” WHAT’S COMING

**April 14**

Executive Appreciation Night and  
Dollars for Scholars Fundraiser  
Downtown Aquarium

**5:30pm-7:00pm Casino | 7:00pm Dinner and Program**

**We’re looking for volunteers to serve as dealers.**

**[Click here to sign up!](#)**

**April 23**

Monthly Board Meeting  
Hilcorp Energy

**May 12**

Monthly Chapter Meeting  
Maggiano's

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

**June 9**

Chapter Business Meeting  
The Ballroom at Tanglewood

**July 14**

Scholarship Night  
Hilcorp Energy





# “SEA” WHAT’S COMING PHILANTHROPY HIGH TIDES

**May 9**

## **Dress for Success Drive**

Chapter Monthly Meeting  
More info to come!

**May 21**

## **EWI of Houston’s Annual Reading Rally Durham Elementary - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

More info to come!

**June 5**

## **Durham Elementary**

Assist passing out lunch to the  
school staff

RSVP to Patti Strawther at  
**[pattistrawther@hotmail.com](mailto:pattistrawther@hotmail.com)**

**June TBD**

## **Undies for Everyone**

Bring a pack of new, unopened  
children's underwear

**August 8**

## **Annual Shrimp Boil Peace, Love, and The Rose**

More info to come!

**August 22**

## **Pillowcase Sewing Day**

Benefiting Child Advocates  
Sewing not required!

RSVP to Patti Strawther at  
**[pattistrawther@hotmail.com](mailto:pattistrawther@hotmail.com)**

# Waves of Celebration

**APRIL**

## **REPRESENTATIVES BIRTHDAYS**

**SHANNON MCNAIR - APRIL 14**

**BERNICE LANGLIOS, PAST PRESIDENT - APRIL 17**

**MARTHA CEBALLOS - APRIL 18**

**SARA SWEET - APRIL 21**

**ELLEN RAMSEY - APRIL 21**

**MARILYN DESIMONE - APRIL 23**

**SANELA HASAGIC - APRIL 25**

## **MEMBER FIRM ANNIVERSARIES**

**MARK KAMIN & ASSOCIATES - 2025**

**METRO STAR VANPOOL - 2024**

**THE BALLROOM AT BAYOU PLACE - 2018**

<https://ewihouston.org/>



**WELCOME TO THE REEF!**



**Laura Reyes**  
**Individual Member**

*Did you know??*

**Blue badges** indicate guests and **pink badges** indicate new members. Take a moment to introduce yourself and make them feel at home!

# CURRENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

## MARCH MEETING RECAP

### March 10 - Grotto (member firm, a Landry's restaurant) Celebrating our Sustaining Members

The EWI March Chapter Luncheon Meeting was held at the Grotto restaurant, known for its old country Italian charm by the Galleria. Grotto is part of the Landry's restaurant group, a member firm of the EWI of Houston chapter. President Lily Portales, representing Hilcorp Energy Company, welcomed our guests and representatives, and she recognized members with March birthdays and member firm anniversaries.

Membership Director Barbara Stokes, representing Amegy Bank, introduced our new member, Laura Reyes. Past President Cindy Baker, representing Black Haw Group LLC, shared a beautiful motivational address about "Becoming More" through love, discipline, and passion.

After the luncheon, the President began the special program "Celebrating and Honoring our Sustaining Members – The Waves of Wisdom." She recognized the sustaining members' experience, mentorship, and connection to EWI of Houston and shared the impact they have made on our organization. She also thanked the sustaining members for their continued commitment, contributions, and belief in our organization. Five sustaining members were recognized and presented with a beautifully decorated oyster shell: Mary Margaret Carroll, Cheri Ferguson, Virginia Iloff, Priscilla Massey-Hardy, and Carolyn Toriggino.

The raffle prizes were donated by our sustaining members – Mary Margaret Carroll, Cheri Ferguson and Priscilla Massey-Hardy (brownies, Landry's gift cards, and a collection of beautiful bags).

We were reminded of our Executive Appreciation Night and Dollars for Scholars Fundraiser scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, at the Downtown Aquarium. Silent auction items, wine pull and liquor wagon donations and purse contributions are still needed.

The luncheon was well attended and everyone had a great time visiting and celebrating.



**- Priscilla Massey**  
**Past President, Sustaining &**  
**W.O.W. Member**



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# CURRENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

## MARCH MEETING



LaTonya Perez, Past President, The Rose  
Jessica Sebesta, Past President



Carole Pitts  
Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty



Marilyn DeSimone, Landry's Inc.



Courtney Castellanos, Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam Inc.  
Anna Bryant, H-E-B



Christina Hutchinson  
Mark Kamin & Associates



Cristina Barron, MTSIR; Cindy Baker, Black Haw Group;  
Christina Hutchinson, Mark Kamin & Associates



Siena Schickel  
Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty



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# CURRENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

## MARCH MEETING



Priscilla Massey-Hardy



Virginia Schneider Iloff



Mary Margaret Carroll



*Thank you to our Sustaining Members who joined us! Your continued support means so much to our chapter.*



Carolyn Torrigino



Cheri Ferguson



# CURRENTS OF GROWTH

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



### CURRENTS OF REFLECTION

*“How are you intentionally investing in your growth so you can better serve and strengthen your EWI community?”*



### CURRENT READS

**Read:** “The 10 Best Ways to Persuade”  
(Sources of Insight)

[Read It Here](#)

**Read:** “When” (Daniel H. Pink)

[Get the Book](#)



### CURRENTS OF CONVERSATION

**Podcast:** “Why You’re Smarter Than You Think”  
(Hidden Brain)



[Listen Here](#)



### 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

**DEADLINE: MARCH 31!!**



## ASIST SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Discover our Adult Students in  
Transition Scholarship

### Scholarship Details:

- Available to Students in the Greater Houston Area
- Scholarship benefits non-traditional students
- Apply for our Scholarship & Invest in your Education

**Application Deadline:**  
Tuesday, March 31, 2026  
by 11:59 PM

Apply  
Now!



# CURRENTS OF GROWTH

## NEWS FROM CORPORATE

### Professional Development Webinar: "Public Speaking Without the Panic"

Hosted by: Mali Locke

Date: April 15, 2026

Time: 12:00pm CST

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



### TEXOMA

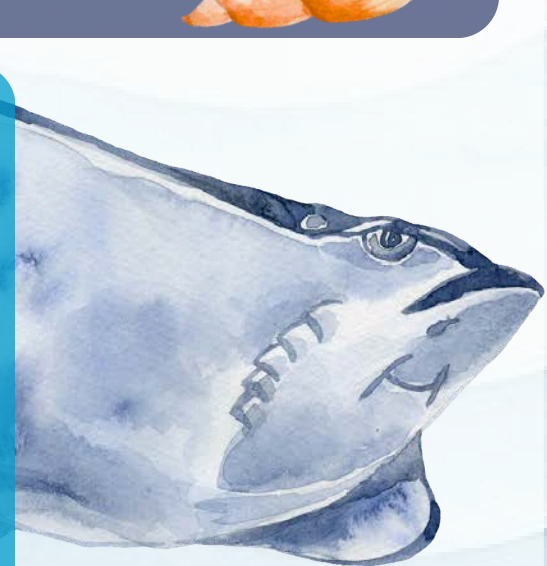
Date: July 31 - August 1, 2026

Chapter meeting: July 30

Corpus Christi, TX

Hotel accommodations: Omni Corpus Christi

More info to come!



### 2026 Leadership Conference & Annual Meeting - LCAM

Date: Sept 16 - 19, 2026

Mobile, AL

More info to come!



[Click here](#) to visit the EWI

Corporate site for past professional development webinars.

<https://ewihouston.org/>



## **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



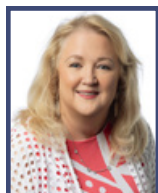
President Elect  
Elisa Garcia  
Houston First Corp  
egarcia@houstonfirst.com



Sergeant at Arms  
Anna Bryant  
H-E-B  
bryant.anna@heb.com



Membership Director  
Barbara Stokes  
Amegy Bank  
barbara.stokes@amegybank.com



Secretary/Treasurer  
Linda Petticrew  
Shell Energy Resources  
linda.petticrew@shell.com



Communications Director  
Victoria Maldonado  
Harvest Midstream  
vmaldonado@harvest  
midstream.com



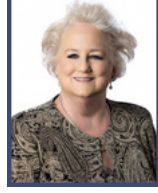
Program Director  
Isabel McKinney  
Hilcorp Energy Company  
imckinney@jdhcap.com



Director at Large  
Cristina Barron  
Martha Turner Sotheby's  
International Realty  
cristina.barron@sothebys.realty



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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