



## Pan American Round Table of Laredo History

The Pan American Round Table of Laredo, founded in June 21, 1921, is the second oldest Table in the Americas. Founder Florence Terry Griswold assisted first Table Director Mrs. C.S. McKinney and the Laredo Charter Member to organize the PART of Laredo.

Our Table has been a part of two important landmarks in the city of Laredo. As stated in Lois Terry Marchbanks' book titled The Pan American Round Table, April 14, 1935, marked an outstanding event in the history of Laredo, Texas and of the entire United States. Table members and distinguished guests from U.S., Mexico, and other Pan American countries met at the Gateway to the Americas International Bridge for the formal dedication of the first Pan American Marker. This marker was sponsored by the Pan American Round Tables of Texas and dedicated to the women of the Americas. The ceremony was part of the 14th State Convention, which was hosted by the Laredo Table under the leadership of Director Mrs. Ney L. Brewer. This marker remains today at midpoint on the Gateway to the Americas Bridge as a symbol of the Pan American spirit that unites the United States with Mexico and the rest of the Americas.

An extraordinary event in our history took place on December 5, 1940. The PART of Laredo was privileged in hosting a public lecture featuring Eleanor Roosevelt, President Franklin Roosevelt's wife. Table Director Mrs. J.T. Halsell, Jr. and a group of Table members received the distinguished First Lady in the true spirit of Pan Americanism.

In 1986, our Table recognized and paid tribute to the Texas Sesquicentennial by donating a beautiful, one-of-a-kind wrought iron sculpture to the city. This second landmark stands near the entrance to Interstate Highway 35 for northbound travelers to enjoy. It was designed by Gerardo Salazar, under the direction of Mrs. Vidal Cantú Sesquicentennial Committee Co-Chairperson and the leadership of Director Mrs. Guillermo Zuniga.

Our Table has the distinction of being one of two Tables in the U.S. to receive the Banner of Peace on October 25, 2008, during the 80th Anniversary Celebration of the founding of the Mexico City PART. This banner was created after the signing of the Roerich Pact on April 15, 1953, at the White House by all the American Countries and ratified in 1937 by the League of Nations, which was a precursor to the United Nations. This Pact declared the necessity for protection for the cultural product and activity of the world and prescribed the method by which all sites of cultural value would be declared neutral and protected ([www.roerich.org](http://www.roerich.org)).

On April 18, 2009, the PART of Laredo at its Pan American Day Celebration unveiled its first Table Banner, another historic event in its history. The banner was designed by Table member, Mrs. Jorge Mendoza, under the leadership of Director Mrs. Jeffery J. Czar. The words Pan American Round Table of Laredo form a circle representing the eternity of time, encompassing the past, present, and future. Inside the circle are Laredo symbols: St. Augustine Cathedral and an international bridge. Above the circle are the Seven Flags that have flown over the city. The Pan American flags are at the bottom of the circle symbolizing the countries that are in unity through the Pan American Movement.

In 2011, under the Director Mrs. Vidal Cantú, the Pan American Round Table of Laredo celebrated its 90th Anniversary with a Grand Gala inviting dignitaries from Laredo, Texas and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas and past and present Alliance and State Directors. The celebration took place at the Laredo Country Club

The Pan American Round Table of Laredo under the direction of Director Mrs. Ana Carmela Peña Flores hosted the Pan American Round Tables of Texas State Board Meeting on March 11-12, 2012. In attendance were the state director, state officers, former state directors, PART of Laredo former directors and current active members.

Pan American Round Table of Laredo under Director, Ms. Angela Mannie V. Hachar, hosted the 57th Biennial PARTT State Convention, which was held at the La Posada Hotel on April 9-12, 2015. Mrs. Vidal Cantú served as Chairperson of the event with Mrs. Carlos Villarreal as her Co-Chair.

On April 3, 2016, Pan American Round Table of Laredo under the leadership of Table Director Mrs. Tomas M. Rodriguez Jr., hosted the unveiling of the restored Pan American Marker originally presented on April 14, 1935. The Pan American Marker which honors the Women of the Americas was the first monument presented by women for women in the Americas. The marker stands at the midpoint of the Gateway to the Americas International Bridge connecting Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico with Laredo, Texas, United States of America. The ceremony was coordinated by PARTT Director Isabel Vizzetti and dignitaries from the Alliance and several Pan American Round Tables from the Americas were present.



## Pan American Round Table of Laredo History (cont'd)

In light of the upcoming PART of Laredo's centennial celebration, Nora Varela-Acevedo (formerly Nora Varela de Pena), Director 2017-2019, with cooperation and support from TAMIU Special Collections & Archives, launched the PART of Laredo: Our Table in Review Project. The project highlighted the historical importance of PART of Laredo in the tapestry of women's history and reconnected members to the rich history to inspire them to carry on the Pan American Movement and humanitarian work into the future. The PART of Laredo Archive is the oldest preserved register of an organization comprised entirely of women dedicated to helping women.

Mary Ann B. Garcia, 2019-2021 Director, continued the PART of Laredo: Our Table in Review Project for the upcoming 100 Year Celebration. Everything took an unexpected turn when, in late 2019-2020, the entire world was affected by the coronavirus pandemic (aka COVID-19) which killed millions of people. All PART Tables of the Alliance, including Laredo, cancelled meetings, events and celebrations including the anticipated 100 Year Celebration. Although the pandemic kept everyone at home for many months, Mary Ann wholeheartedly united the members in spirit with monthly newsletters, emails, telephone calls and WhatsApp text messaging. The U.S. rapidly developed vaccines making it possible to celebrate the PART of Laredo 100 Year Anniversary on September 8, 2021, at La Posada Hotel - San Agustin Ballroom.

We, members of the Pan American Round Table of Laredo, promote the philosophy and objectives of Pan Americanism through Knowledge, Understanding, and Friendship, as we are "One for All and All for One". "Una para Todas y Todas para Una."