



Distinguished Alumni Award Winners 2021

Cindy Perez, MEd'11 (Amarillo campus)

Cindy Perez started her Wayland journey in 2003 as an academic advisor and office manager. She earned her master's degree in education in 2011 and began teaching the BASC 1201 and Senior Seminar classes, now in her 10th year as an adjunct instructor. Cindy works for the City of Amarillo in April 2017 as the training coordinator.

When not working, Cindy volunteers with organizations related heavily to her children's activities, including East Amarillo Tennis Association, Caprock High Tennis Booster Club, and the Amarillo Wranglers Ice Sports. She has previously volunteered with the League of United Latin American Citizens, Lone Star Ballet and the United Way of Amarillo and Canyon, where she served as a loaned executive and a campaign coordinator.

Araceli "Sally" Jones, BSOE'08 (Anchorage campus)

Araceli "Sally" Jones earned her bachelor's degree in human services in 2008 from Wayland while working at the Anchorage Police Department and balancing roles as wife and mother to two growing children. Sally followed her military husband to Alaska in 2000 and joined the APD in 2001, serving as a patrol officer for 20 years. She trained as a crisis intervention team member in 2007 and has served the past 12 years with the Community Action Policing Team, accruing more hands-on experience with Anchorage's homelessness issue than any other active officer.

Sally earned the Lifesaver Award in 2005, the department's Medal of Valor in 2010 and many other commendations for her long service to the Anchorage community and the police department.

Rodolfo Arceo, MEd'18 (Clovis campus)

Rodolfo Arceo has been principal of Lockwood Elementary in Clovis since 2020. Rodolfo earned his Master of Education degree in education administration in 2018 from the Clovis campus. Prior to taking the leadership role at Lockwood, Rodolfo served as Spanish teacher from 2011 at Clovis High School, where he supervised the Spanish Club as well.

He is a graduate of Portales High School and Eastern New Mexico as well.

Lidia Delarosa, MEd'10 (Clovis campus)

Lidia Delarosa is principal of La Casita Elementary in Clovis, where she has served since 2019. Lidia earned her Master of Education degree in education literacy in 2010 from Wayland's Clovis Campus and her non-degree principal certification in 2017. Prior to her principal role, Lidia served as education literacy instructional coach from 2013-2019 for the Clovis schools after serving as dual language teacher for second grade from 2005-13.

A native of Mexico, Lidia came to the U.S. at age 13. She graduated from Portales High School, then earned her undergraduate degree at Eastern New Mexico University.

Jeff Ling, BSOE'08, MAM'19 (Fairbanks campus)

Jeff Ling is a bi-vocational pastor serving at First Baptist Church, North Pole, and is also a full-time Active Guard Reserve Superintendent in the Alaska Air National Guard. Since his conversion in 1992, Jeff has served the body as deacon, assistant pastor and associate pastor. After the retirement of Jeff's pastor and friend in 2013, Jeff began his service as senior pastor. Jeff also serves the broader work of Christ in Alaska through work with the Alaska Baptist Resource Network (formerly Alaska Baptist Convention) and the Tanana Valley Baptist Association.

Jeff earned his Bachelor of Science in Occupational Education in 2008, majoring in management, and in 2019, he earned a Master of Arts in Management, specializing in Human Resource Management.

Dr. Alberto Morales, MAM'11, MEd'13 (Hawaii campus)

Dr. Alberto Morales is Applied Research and Information Sharing (ARIS) Branch Chief at the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance, United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM). There he manages applied research, academic outreach, assessments and information-sharing programs focused on disaster management capacity building for 36 partner nations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. He also co-chairs an information sharing group for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs among other professional roles.

A 24-year veteran of the US Armed Forces, Morales earned two master's degrees from Wayland and teaches adjunctly for WBU as well. He volunteers with the U.S. Air Force Key Spouse Program (KSP), an official Air Force Unit Family Readiness Program designed to enhance personal/family resiliency and to establish a sense of Air Force community.

Betty Catherman, BSOE'00, MBA'04 (Lubbock campus)

Betty Catherman is Chief Financial Officer of Pro Petroleum LLC, now a Pilot Company headquartered in Knoxville, Tenn., holding several roles over her 25 years with the company. Over the past decade, Betty has partnered with other CFOs, accountants, lobbyists and tax managers in helping interpret, write, and legislate petroleum state and environmental tax codes for several West Coast states. She has been recognized many times over as an industry leader and pioneer for women in the petroleum industry.

While at Pro Petroleum, Betty was instrumental in designing and creating an industry-recognized software, helped expand the company's networking territories, worked to finance several multimillion-dollar fuel terminal and pipeline projects from the ground up and eventually helped in the merger between two industry-leading corporations. Betty is most notably known for mentorship to several women across the nation in a male-dominated industry and is often sought out to help foster and train other leaders.

Leslie Lepe, BAS'20 (Phoenix campus)

Leslie Lepe is a management assistant in the public works solid waste field services division for the City of Phoenix, a position she has held since October 2020. She has worked in the city since 2004, serving in both public works and in engineering and architectural services. She earned the Public Works Employee Excellence in Action Award in 2005 and the Dedicated Achiever Award in 2015, then earned Public Works Outstanding Employee Award in 2016.

She earned her bachelor's degree in management and her associate's degree in business in December 2020, balancing full-time work and family. As an employee of the city, Leslie has been an inspiration and encouragement to her work colleagues to continue their own educational journey at Wayland.

Dr. Gabe Trujillo, BA'93, MEd'95 (Plainview campus)

Dr. Gabriel Trujillo embarked on a career in public school education after completing his bachelor's degree in 1993 from Wayland and a Master of Education two years later. He spent eight years with the Plainview school district as an educator and principal before spending 12 years as a principal in Duncanville and nearly seven years in Grand Prairie in administration. In April 2020, he joined the Nacogdoches ISD as superintendent, where he oversees the work of 10 campuses serving 6,500 students.

Trujillo earned his doctorate at Texas A&M Commerce in 2018 and has superintendent certification from Texas Tech. In addition, he has participated in several leadership institutes to hone that craft as he mentors educators in his role. Along his journey, he has been named both National Distinguished Principal and Texas Secondary Principal of the Year.

Jack DeForrest III, BSOE'07 (San Antonio campus)

Jack De Forrest is executive director of transportation for North East ISD, the 13th largest public school district in the state. His team of more than 400 employees operates more than 200 bus routes travelling more than 17,000 miles per day to serve 70 campus and program locations during the 180-day school year. Nearly 15,000 students are in the team's care during the day. He joined the district in 2008 first as a substitute driver, working his way up to the leadership role.

A veteran of the U.S. Air Force, De Forrest retired as chief master sergeant after a 29-year career that involved 18 years as first sergeant in employee relations roles in both domestic and foreign locations. He also served as aircraft technician and supervised jet flight training detachment of B-1 Bomber pilots. He earned his undergraduate education while serving his country, with two associate's degrees from Community College of the Air Force and his Bachelor of Science in Occupational Education degree from Wayland, received in 2007. He then earned a Master of Public Administration degree in 2013 from Norwich University.

Dr. Angelica Landry, BAS'14, MBA'16, DMgmt'18 (Sierra Vista campus)

Dr. Angelica Landry works as an instructional designer for the U.S. Army on Fort Huachuca and teaches adjunctly for Wayland. She serves on the City Council in Sierra Vista and is active at First Baptist Church of Sierra Vista and with The Good Neighbor Alliance. She also serves on the Salvation Army Advisory Board and was nominated for Sierra Vista Citizen of the Year in 2019.

Dr. Landry returned to the classroom after her husband retired from the Army, earning her bachelor's degree with honors in 2014 and immediately beginning her MBA. Just after completing that degree in 2016, she enrolled in Wayland's new Doctor of Management degree program and graduated in December 2018 as one of the first to complete.

Carrie Richardson, BAS'19 (Wichita Falls campus)

Carrie Richardson is executive chef for Chartwells K12, working with the Wichita Falls ISD contract. Richardson earned her bachelor's degree in business from Wayland in 2019 after serving four years in the U.S. Navy and completing the Texas Culinary Academy. She had worked in various food service settings before joining Chartwells.

In her current role, Richardson has developed several unique programs, including a supper program to feed students after school, securing new kitchen equipment for schools across the district, hosting "Student Choice" events in which students choose what's on their menu, and helping students explore new foods through the "Discovery Kitchen" program. In 2020, Carrie was one of five chefs in the nation nominated and ultimately awarded recognition as a "Hero Behind the Food" for Chartwells K12 in light of her leadership in response to the pandemic.

Note: There was no winner chosen from Albuquerque for 2021