

BJ. Do – Vietnam In 1975, B.J. and his three sisters barely escaped the collapse of the South Vietnamese government. After being picked up by an American commercial ship, they came to the U.S. where they were separated from their parents and other siblings for several years. They were 4 of 15000 refugees from Southeast Asian bussed to Iowa, arriving with no food or money. At the time of his arrival, B.J. was just 13 years old and spoke no English. The siblings settled in Iowa City, where they lived in married students housing on the University of Iowa campus. Before leaving Iowa City, B.J. was awarded both B.S. and M.S. degrees in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the University of Iowa. He also received executive training from Harvard University. B.J.'s professional career began at Rockwell International, an experience that prepared him to later take on the role of Systems Engineering Manager at Northwest Mortgage (Now Wells Fargo Home Mortgage). Currently B.J. is co-founder and chief executive officer of ABC Virtual communications. He has more than 15 years of experience in software development and management and has a reputation for effectively delivering large-scale projects for Fortune 500 companies. B.J. has received a number of awards for his professional and community involvement achievements. He has served as president of the Iowa Asian Alliance and is involved with the Young Presidents Organization.

Joe Gonzalez – Mexico Originally from Yurecuaro Michoacan, Mexico, Joe Gonzalez immigrated to Des Moines in 1957. He began work with the Des Moines Police Department as a Police Cadet in 1971 and graduated from the Regional Police Academy in 1975. Throughout his career, he has worked in the Narcotics Unit, Tactical Unit, and the Uniform patrol Section. Since December of 2000 he has been assigned to the HONRA (Hispanic Outreach Neighborhood Resource Advocate) Unit. During his many years with the Des Moines Police Department, Officer Gonzalez has received many awards and accomplished a lot. In 2001 he received the Law Enforcement Victim Service certificate of appreciation from the United States Attorney's Office, an award from the Latino Service Providers in the City Council chambers for his work with the Hispanic community, and an award from the Domestic Abuse Coordinating Council for his work with victims of domestic and sexual abuse. In 2003 Officer Gonzalez was named Police Officer of the Year by the Rotary Club and was given a key to the city by Mayor Preston Daniels.

Juliet Cunningham – Iraq Juliet immigrated in 1979 from Kirkuk, Iraq, with minimal resources and a degree in Petroleum and Mining Engineering from Baghdad University. She completed her Master of Civil Engineering degree at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia while working as a civil engineer for the city of Newport News. During this time, she met her husband, Colby Cunningham, a fellow civil engineer. In 1984, they moved to Houston, Texas, where they started a family. They later relocated to Iowa and founded TEAM Services Inc, a soil, environmental, and materials consulting firm. Juliet has been involved in over 4,000 projects with TEAM Services. Of special note is her recognition on the EMC Expansion Quality Assurance Team that built the EMB tower in Downtown Des Moines. She was the only female member of the team. Since 1991 Juliet has successfully sponsored and helped her mother, all her siblings, and their families, to leave the oppression of Iraq and immigrate to the U.S. or other countries en route to the U.S. She has sponsored for over 50 immigrants. Juliet is fluent in Arabic, Aramaic, and English. She is active in Rotary international, West Des Moines United Methodist Church, Compass Club, the Society of Women Engineers, and local politics.

Liansuo Xie – China Liansuo worked as a mechanic in a paper manufacturing plant in Hebei Province for four years before being admitted to Beijing Agricultural Engineering University in 1977. He received a B.S. degree in 1982, and married his wife, Zhi Li, a year later. Soon after marrying, they arrived in the U.S. so Liansuo could pursue graduate studies at Iowa State University. He earned his MS and PhD degrees in Agricultural Engineering and graduated with a Research Excellence Award. Since 1990 he has worked for Townsend Engineering Company. He is considered an expert and has written more than 30 utility programs to enhance engineering design productivity. Liansuo's contributions to the community are numerous. He was a founding member and current board member of the Iowa Chinese Language School and has served as a committee member and as a volunteer for the Sister States of Iowa Committee. Liansuo has also served as president for the Chinese Association of Iowa and has volunteered for various activities within the organization.

Sonia Parras Konrad – Spain Sonia attended the University of Granada (Spain) Faculty of Law and graduated in 1996. Soon after, she immigrated to the U.S. to attend Central College in Pella, Iowa. Sonia then attended the University of Illinois College of Law before furthering her study of law at Drake University Law School. She is currently a member of the Iowa Board. While attending Drake University, Sonia volunteered at the Children & Families of Iowa Family Violence Center, primary fielding emergency calls from Spanish-speaking domestic abuse victims. It was this experience that sparked her passion for working with immigrant victims of domestic and other forms of violence. Starting in 1997 with a part-time position, Sonia has been with the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence ever since, providing outreach to immigrant survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, statewide. Sonia has founded several community-based service organizations. The first was the Mujeres Unidas por un Nuevo Amanecer (Women United for a New Dawn, MUNA) program in conjunction with ICADV. MUNA allows victims of domestic violence and other crimes to obtain legal services without fear of deportation. Sonia also serves as co-director of ASISTA (Advanced Special Immigrant Survivors Technical Assistance), which provides technical assistance on complex questions arising in immigration cases for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors.