

‘SO LOVELY AND BOLD’

Lambda Theta Alpha, Lambda Sigma Upsilon, offers multicultural students ‘their own community and home’

By Jonathon Chiu
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When Christopher Karavas was searching for a fraternity to join, he had at minimum two requirements: it shouldn't be known for parties and it had to be a place where he could make a significant impact on campus.

His search led him to his first involvement fair in the fall of 2023, where he came across the Zikhari chapter of Lambda Sigma Upsilon (LSU) Latino Fraternity, Inc. Karavas, 21, of York, Pennsylvania, has remained a member ever since and now serves as the fraternity's president.

Karavas is of Native American heritage, but said this didn't detract from his experiences in the fraternity. Instead, it factored into the fraternity's culture of celebrating all of its members, regardless of their background.

"Until I came to college, I never really talked about my background or about my ethnicity," Karavas, a fourth-year studying chemical engineering, said. "This seemed like a fantastic opportunity to actually explore who I am. It gives me the resources and it gives me the support to talk more about myself."

Lambda Theta Alpha (LTA) Latin Sorority, Inc. President Mitzuko Zist, 21, of Saltsburg, Pennsylvania, said she wanted to find an organization that would allow her to forge strong relationships with those around her.

This was something Zist said she felt couldn't be accomplished by joining the Panhellenic side of Penn State's Greek life when she and her best friend rushed during their sophomore year.



Jonathon Chiu/Daily Collegian

A Lambda Theta Alpha keychain ornament sits on a table during the Latin sorority's biweekly Get A's with LTA study session.

"I didn't like how they were rushing, and where it's like, 'Hello, my name is,' and it didn't feel like really genuine conversations," Zist, a fourth-year studying aerospace engineering, said. "I really wanted to make sure I grow and also had a community."

She also said differences in her appearance and how she acted compared to other Panhellenic members contributed to her feeling like she didn't fit in with that part of Greek life. Zist said she first heard about LTA in fall 2024 through their Instagram page while searching online for a Latin sorority on campus.

Wanting to learn more about the sorority, Zist attended LTA's final informational session of that semester, where she heard from several Penn State alumni who explained why they had joined Lambda Theta Alpha.

"They just held themselves so lovely and bold that I wanted to

be a part of that atmosphere," Zist said. "I wanted to surround myself with people like them."

Alixannah Gonzalez, 21, of Union City, New Jersey, felt she wouldn't fit into either an Asian or Hispanic student organization because of her Chinese and Puerto Rican heritage. So, she joined Mu Sigma Upsilon (MSU) Sorority, Inc., Lambda Sigma Upsilon's sister organization, where she now serves as president.

"I didn't feel like I fit into any one group of people, and so when I found out MSU was multicultural, I thought that this is somewhere I could go and get to know people who have similar mindsets as me," Gonzalez, a fourth-year studying elementary and early childhood education, said. "Hearing about it and getting to know more and learning from other sisters who were here on campus really intrigued me and really drew me in close."

Those sisters, Gonzalez said, have now graduated from Penn State, leaving her as the oldest and last MSU sister left on campus. She said she has worked with the Multicultural Greek Council to ensure the sorority remains visible to the general student body and expects these efforts will allow Mu Sigma Upsilon and its mission to continue into the future.

"We don't cater to one specific culture, whether it's how you grew up or where you grew up," Gonzalez said. "We value having multiple backgrounds, and I think that's something that will continue on strongly."

Karavas is also in a similar situation to Gonzalez — being the only LSU member remaining on campus. He said the fraternity's two other members are currently at the Penn State Hershey Medical Center as part of the university's nursing degree.

This has caused Karavas' efforts as the fraternity's president to focus on keeping it visible, as well as recruiting new members prior to his graduation in spring 2027.

In spite of these challenges and the limited time to accomplish them, Karavas said Penn State's status as a predominantly white institution makes it important for Lambda Sigma Upsilon to endure as part of a community of other student organizations that encourage and support diversity on campus.

"It's hugely important that these underrepresented communities get their voices heard, and I feel like we're all trying to do that for our communities," Karavas said.

Several of Lambda Theta Alpha's officers, Zist added, are also expected to graduate in the near future. She said measures have been taken to train other sorority members so they feel "comfortable" to take up the positions she and others will soon vacate.

Zist said the continuation of LTA after her graduation — as well as the continuation of other fraternities and sororities like MSU and LSU — ensures there will be more places for students, especially those of Hispanic heritage, to have somewhere they're able to meet others with similar cultural backgrounds.

"It's a different home, it's a different feeling, and it's really important for those environments to still exist," Zist said. "They have their own tradition as well. They have their own community and home that people still go to, that people still need."

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Students say local ICE fear is ramping up

By Annabella Chaklos
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

For the past two years the United States has been under the Trump administration, the Department of Homeland Security has been deploying U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents and building detention centers to cities and small communities alike, including Happy Valley.

While there are no official reports of ICE on campus, dozens have been detained in Centre County, Moshannon Valley Processing Center just renewed a six-month contract with ICE and Spotlight PA reported an increase in State College Regional Airport being used for ICE flights.

The threat of it all lingers in the minds of many in the Penn State community. Andrew Andrade, 20, of Manor, Texas, said ICE mobilization under the Trump administration has looked like a slew of unmarked vehicles and discriminatory behavior.

"It disgusts me in the way that they are pretty much not following any sort of laws," Andrade said. "It seems like they're not even looking at immigration status at this point. They are just solely basing it on the color of people's skin, and whether or not they speak English, or whether or not they even are supportive of the government as of right now. It seems like a lot of the time, they do things first, ask questions later."

Andrade said he is concerned that his mother, a U.S. citizen who immigrated here, is at risk of being profiled by ICE.

ICE does not have explicitly stated guidelines to target non-English speakers or people of

specific races, but it has questioned and detained many citizens nationally, leading to public distrust of the agency. In State College, several students and community members have gathered to protest its operations.

A September 2025 U.S. Supreme Court opinion has also created worry around ICE profiling. In a stay granted to the Department of Homeland Security, Justice Brett Kavanaugh's written opinion allowed investigative stops based on the factors of employment type, "apparent race or ethnicity," speaking Spanish or speaking English with an accent.

"She follows all the guidelines they follow of, like, not perfect English. 'Wrong' skin tone. But she herself is an American citizen. She is a U.S. citizen. She went through the painstaking process of becoming a citizen. Not only did she get her bachelor's degree, she also got her master's degree here as well."

Andrade said he believes Penn State should use its "resources and authority" as an institution to protect their students.

"This campus is full of international students that more than deserve to be here, and were accepted to be here," Andrade said. "I think if they want to keep that public image of a top research institution that has an extremely expansive alumni network, they should definitely make steps towards preventing that sort of organization from tearing apart this kind of community."

Judith Rojas, 21, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, said local ICE presence and Moshannon Valley Processing Center — the

largest ICE detention facility in the Northeast — has angered her and led to a lot of discomfort across State College.

"The community members aren't feeling as safe as they used to be," Rojas said. "Not just that (ICE is) here — that they're also just hiding their identity, using these awful scare tactics to scare the community and make them feel like they don't have power."

Rojas, president of the Penn State Latino Caucus, said people can combat this by coming together as a community. The Latino Caucus has participated in multiple programs, including "Know Your Rights" events that inform students and community members on what to do if ICE approaches them.

Latino Caucus was recently a part of Happy Valley Latin Festival on Sept. 12. Rojas said this festival reminded her that no matter how much people in power try to stifle cultural identity, there are two things you cannot take from someone: food and language.

"I think just showing that we can come together as a community, and there's unity, and there's support from non-Latinos here at State College," Rojas said. "It's really impactful, and it's really opened my eyes."

Continue reading:



Community ofrenda welcomes everyone

By Sarah Price
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

On Thursday, Sept. 17, The Paul Robeson Cultural Center (PRCC), located in the HUB-Robeson Center, hosted a community ofrenda, where people came together to celebrate their loved ones who passed away in honor and remembrance. An ofrenda is a temporary altar built to welcome the deceased, and the word translates from Spanish into "offering."

For the opening of the ofrenda, there was a DJ who played Hispanic-inspired music, as well as complementary Venezuelan food from Juana's Venezuelan Cuisine. This included traditional food items such as chicken and beef empanadas and tequeños.

"I feel like there's not really too much Latino representation, and so I thought seeing [the ofrenda], was like, 'Oh my god, what's going on,'" Emeli Jarama-Morcho, a third-year studying pre-med, said.

Some students who came to the PRCC were drawn in by the music, as they could hear it from afar. Others were attracted by the energy the event brought.

"Everybody seems happy, and I'm friends with some of the people here, so it's a wonderful celebration that brings people together," Suri Phung, a PRCC liaison on the justice and equity board, said.

When people saw the ofrenda on display, as Shanna Lennox, a third-year studying chemistry, said, they stayed for the vibes and the food.

"The food was good, it

definitely brought me back to home a little bit," Christina Martinez, a student of Hispanic heritage, said.

On the altar, there was a gratitude and remembrance jar for attendees to participate in the tradition of the ofrenda. From the afterlife, the spirits of the loved ones visit the ofrenda to enjoy some of the things they loved while on Earth, according to the tradition. Some attendees were able to write a note to someone in their life who passed on and place it in the jar.

"I chose to write about my grandma, and I kind of shared about what's happening with my life and why I'm here, and why I'm hiding," Phung, a second-year studying political science, said.

The ofrenda was festively decorated with red, orange and yellow flowers, as well as a few small decorations like candles and calaveras throughout. These ornaments complimented the numerous framed photos of loved ones on the altar. Some loved ones were honored with food items near their photo such as honey, mango and tatin.

Martinez, a third-year studying human development and family studies, said she typically sits outside the PRCC in between classes but decided to come in when she realized there was a celebration happening.

"It was really cool to be able to see my heritage celebrated and just see the recognition of the things that are very important this month," Martinez said.

The ofrenda will be on display in the PRCC until Oct. 9.

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Heritage Lives Here



Sarah Price/Collegian

La Fiesta Band plays songs during the Happy Valley Latin Festival on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026 in State College, Pa.



Geraldine Cruz-Hernandez/Collegian

Two people dance during the Happy Valley Latin Festival on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026 in State College, Pa.



Geraldine Cruz-Hernandez/Collegian

Members of the Spanish Club paint a piñata during a meeting. The club used The Daily Collegian and The Phollegian newspapers to make piñatas.



Kenni Michels/Collegian

Photos of students' loved ones sit on the Community Ofrenda at the Paul Robeson Cultural Center in the HUB-Robeson Center on Sept. 17, 2026 in University Park, Pa.



Geraldine Cruz-Hernandez/Collegian

An attendee waves a Puerto Rican flag.



Geraldine Cruz-Hernandez/Collegian

Members of the Spanish Club paint a piñata during a meeting in Ferguson Building on Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2026 in University Park, Pa. The club used The Daily Collegian and The Phollegian newspapers to make piñatas.



Kenni Michels/Collegian

A calavera on the Community Ofrenda in the HUB.



Sarah Price/Collegian

A woman is decorated in shells during the Happy Valley Latin Festival on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026 in State College, Pa.



Kippi Hall/Collegian

Students study the “saber” verb conjugations in Spanish in the Penn State Learning office at the Boucke building on Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2026.



Geraldine Cruz-Hernandez/Collegian

An attendee cheers during the Happy Valley Latin Festival on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026 in State College, Pa.



Sarah Price/Collegian

A woman dances to La Fiesta Band during the Happy Valley Latin Festival on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026 in State College, Pa.



Geraldine Cruz-Hernandez/Collegian

Sumaiyah Mapp (left) and Kennedy Hudson (right) work on their piñata during a Spanish Club meeting in Ferguson Building. The club used The Daily Collegian and The Phollegian newspapers to make piñatas.



Geraldine Cruz-Hernandez/Collegian

An attendee sings and dances during the Happy Valley Latin Festival on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026 in State College, Pa.

Bad Bunny’s impact lingers at Penn State

By Stella John
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Six-time Grammy Award Winner Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio made history when he became the first ever Super Bowl solo headliner to perform almost entirely in Spanish during the 2026 Apple Music Super Bowl LX halftime show at Levi’s Stadium on Feb. 8.

More famously recognized by his stage name, Bad Bunny, he made every second count during his performance. His show was modeled as a display of his Puerto Rican history, unity and belonging.

The halftime show had such an impact that A.K. Sandoval-Strausz, director of Latina and Latino studies, scrapped his lesson plan the day after to discuss it.

He said his students emphasized that a lot of discourse surrounding Latinx culture in the current political climate comes from a place of anger. But students were emotional to see a show rooted in love for their culture and the diversity within it, he added.

“I heard many of them saying, ‘I’m really glad that somebody got up and said what he did, because we often feel very alone in the United States, even if we’re from here,’” Sandoval-Strausz said.

He said people have been fearful of ICE’s presence in their communities, and since Trump took office in 2025, being Latinx in the States means “being on the defensive.”

Many of his students told him they don’t speak Spanish in public anymore, he said, and others started carrying around documentation.

“A lot of them wanted to know, ‘Is this gonna change things? Are people gonna see this and realize how wrong some of these policies have been?’ Sometimes it takes one of the biggest recording artists in the world to say, ‘Aquí estamos, y no nos vamos.’ (We are here, and we are not leaving).”

Bad Bunny won all of his Grammys in the eight years since his debut album, “X 100PRE.” Exactly a week before he took to the field at Levi’s Stadium, his most recent album, “DeBÍ TiRAR MáS FOTos,” made history as the first fully Spanish-language album to win “Album of the Year” at the 2026 Grammys.

Sandoval-Strausz’s favorite song by Bad Bunny is “NEUVAYoL,” both because of his upbringing in the Bronx and for the song’s stylistic qualities. He said salsa being a central part of the performance was especially important, as it’s a traditional sound for Latinx New Yorkers and gives credence to generations of people and musicians.

Daniela Mendoza, who also grew up in New York, said her favorite song from the album was “LO QUE LE PASO HAWAii,” which tells the story of how damaging tourism has been for the land and locals of Hawaii.

In the song, Bad Bunny connects this to the creeping spread of tourism in Puerto Rico.



Courtesy of Stephen Lam/AP

Bad Bunny performs at the 2026 Apple Music Super Bowl LX halftime show at Levi’s Stadium on Feb. 8, 2026.

“I didn’t even know that,” Mendoza, a third-year studying criminology, said. “I’m not Puerto Rican, so this album brought me closer to the Puerto Rican friends I have here in college. It showed me that even within your own community, you’re always learning something new.”

It was announced that Bad Bunny would be the solo headliner for Super Bowl LX on Sept. 28, 2025. While there was a lot of excitement around the decision, there was also a lot of pushback, as the show was almost entirely in Spanish.

Sandoval-Strausz said the controversy was unsubstantiated. The idea of America being an immigrant and multicultural society, he said, has been around for a long time.

“There was a lot of ‘How dare he,’ That’s un-American,’” Sandoval-Strausz said. “Puerto Ricans, since 1917, have been birthright-born American citizens... The great majority of people speak English, but under the law, there’s no official language of the United States.”

Mendoza said she heard discourse about whether or not Bad Bunny would mention anything about the federal administration’s increased, aggressive immigration enforcement. His statement was clear, she said, when he didn’t have any concerts in America during his album’s world tour.

“I was shocked. I didn’t think they were gonna let him perform,” Mendoza said. “There are still people who think he shouldn’t have.”

Caterina McGuigan, a student under Sandoval-Straus, said the backlash made her laugh.

“People were like ‘He shouldn’t be performing. Justin Bieber should be performing,’ and I was like, ‘Justin Bieber... is not a U.S. citizen and Bad Bunny is,’” McGuigan, a fourth-year studying broadcast journalism, said. “It just showed the arrogance of so many people, even people my age, because Bad Bunny was a U.S. citizen before we were, literally because he was born before we were.”

McGuigan’s mother is an im-

migrant from Argentina, and her father is the biggest “Bostonian,” so she saw the halftime show as a meshing of her two worlds. It was a special experience being able to watch her favorite team, the Patriots, and hear songs in her first language.

At one point in the show, dancers looked to be throwing a party on the rooftop of a casita, and as Bad Bunny walked through the scene, he stopped to wake up a boy who’d fallen asleep despite the commotion all around him. This was McGuigan’s favorite part of the show, because it reminded her of growing up in the Bronx with her sister and going to parties at their grandparents’ bodega.

“That is literally a canon event,” McGuigan said. “Any Latino kid looked at that and was like, ‘Yeah, that’s totally happened to me.’”

For the entirety of the performance, Bad Bunny spoke only three words in English: “God Bless America!” followed by a list of every country in North and South America, dancers alongside him raising the respective flags for each.

McGuigan said she interpreted the sequence as a reminder that all Latin-American countries are “a part of this side of the world,” and that “we’re not strangers, we’re neighbors.”

“I think it reminded us that we all speak different dialects of Spanish, but we all have so many things in common,” McGuigan said. “We forgot about that until this performance and y’know what, God bless all of us. God bless the fact that my mom could come here, that my grandparents could come here — we can come here.”

On the jumbotron behind Bad Bunny was a message that read, “The only thing stronger than hate is love.”

“We’re still here through our music, our shared language, our traditions,” Mendoza said. “Even a 13-minute performance, maybe people think, ‘What did he really do for you guys?’ I think he did so much.”

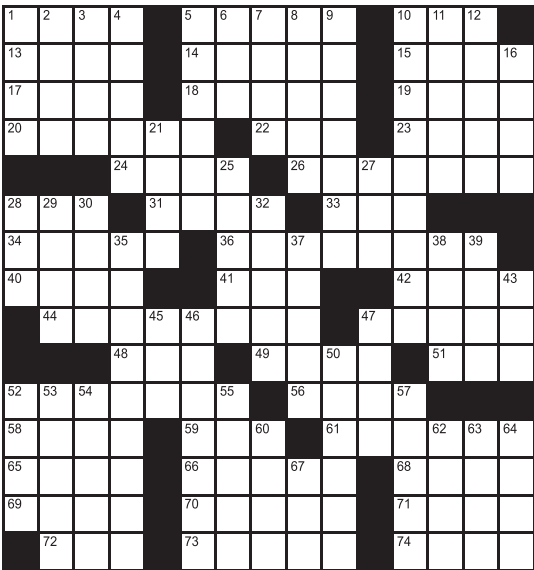
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CROSSWORD

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Across

- 1 Shaker contents
- 5 “___! Who goes there?”
- 10 Secreted
- 13 China setting
- 14 Fancy French house
- 15 Garden figure
- 17 Highway exit
- 18 Hot coal
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- 20 Materialize
- 22 Congeal
- 23 Gym equipment
- 24 Wood file
- 26 Releases, as a con
- 28 Fall mo.
- 31 Bridle part
- 33 Convent dweller
- 34 Investigate
- 36 Survey part
- 40 Fizzy drink
- 41 Samovar
- 42 Nile queen, informally
- 44 Seizure
- 47 Kind of fork
- 48 Press for payment
- 49 European tongue
- 51 Barbary beast
- 52 Ship’s officer
- 56 Tubers
- 58 Robin Cook thriller
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- 61 Acerb
- 65 Awestruck
- 66 Like the flu
- 68 Comic strip “___ & Janis”



- 69 Alliance acronym
- 70 Give the slip
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- 73 Imparts
- 74 Superman, to some

- 8 Siesta
- 9 Plaids
- 10 Small wind instrument
- 11 Utopian
- 12 “La vita nuova” poet

- 37 Vestibule
- 38 Cantina cooker
- 39 Half-moon tide
- 43 Lyric poem
- 45 Sine ___ non
- 46 Come apart
- 47 Big rig
- 50 Some stoles
- 52 Diagnostic test
- 53 Cloaks
- 54 Overact
- 55 Tee off
- 57 Flower holder
- 60 Persia, today
- 62 Steadfast
- 63 Dash
- 64 Defeat decisively
- 67 Append

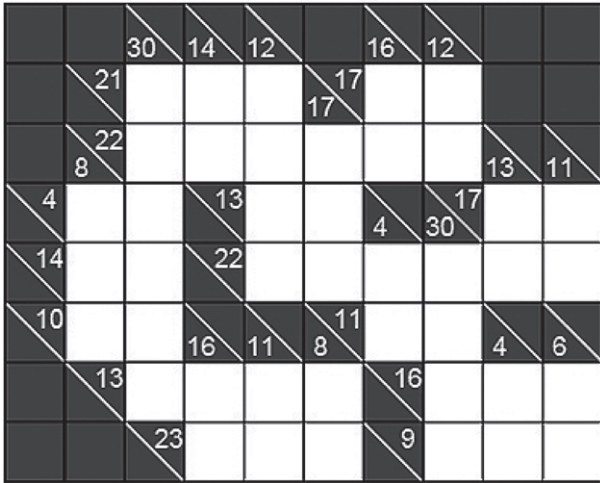
Down

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- 21 Swiss river
- 25 Nettle
- 27 Furrow
- 28 Saturn’s wife
- 29 Gator’s kin
- 30 Brouhaha
- 32 Kind of shark
- 35 Something to hop on

KAKURO

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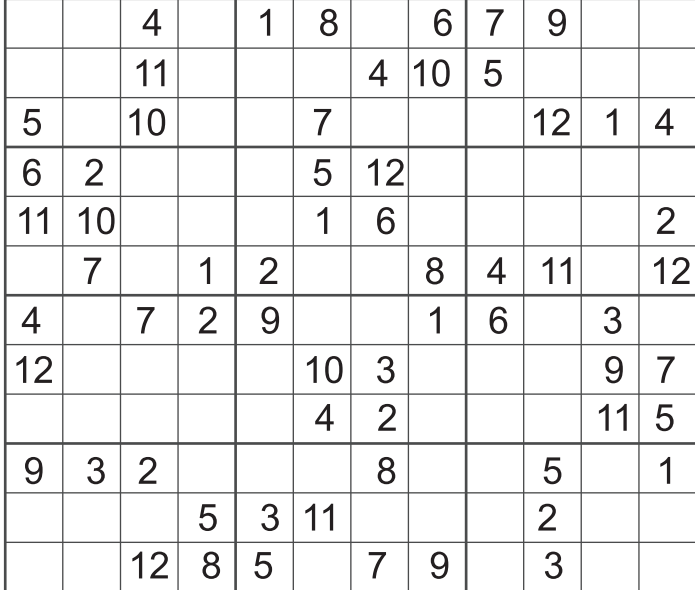


How to play:

A number above the diagonal line in a black square is the sum of the white squares to the right of it.
A number below the diagonal line is the sum of the white squares in the sequence below it.
You may only use the digits 1 to 9, and a digit can only be used once in any sequence.

SUDOKU

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How to play:

Only use digits 1 through 12. Digits can not repeat within a grid.

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month through media

By Alli Satterfield
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Hispanic Heritage Month is now in full swing. As we take time to celebrate the culture, it’s also important to learn about the history and importance of it through the media that represents and brings that culture to life.

If you’re looking for a book, film, or great song to embrace Hispanic culture, here are some recommendations.

Movies, TV

Roma

This 2018 film, directed by Alfonso Cuarón, follows a year in the life of a family in Mexico City in the early 1970s. It focuses on the family’s maid, Cleo, as the film’s protagonist, and it mirrors events in the life of the director’s childhood maid. In an interview with The Hollywood Reporter, Cuarón said he had an “emotional need” to make this film and explore the lives of the two most influential women in his childhood: his mother and his family’s maid.

The film also brings conversations about class divisions in Mexico to the big screen. The timeline of the film runs along some political turmoil there,

which heightens the emotional conflicts displayed in the film.

The Spirit of the Beehive

This film is from 1973, so a bit older, but it’s still as poignant today as it was then. “The Spirit of the Beehive” follows a girl in the 1940s during Mexico’s civil war. The young woman sees a traveling show of “Frankenstein” and becomes obsessed with it.

“The Spirit of the Beehive” investigates its protagonist’s life and psyche while simultaneously being visually stunning.

Vida

“Vida” is a television show that explores multiple facets of culture and identity. It follows two sisters who return to their hometown following their mother’s death, where they learn more about each other, their mother and their family.

The show recognizes and celebrates their Hispanic heritage while also exploring queer identities through raw, developed and intricate characters.

The show’s creator, Tanya Saracho, said she created the show to “re-inject” Latinx stories into popular culture. She works alongside other Hispanic writers to create a show that she thinks

is authentic, according to an interview with abcNews, and she said that having the creators and editors be “all women, all brown women, all Latinas,” makes the representation more valuable.

Elena of Avalor

Switching gears, I cannot recommend Disney’s “Elena of Avalor” highly enough. I loved this show when I was younger – and probably still too old to be watching a children’s show – and I love it now.

Elena is a fearless princess, and she defends her kingdom, Avalor, with a magical scepter. She is strong and ambitious, and I view her as an amazing role model for any girl and an especially important icon of representation for Latinx kiddos — and adults!

Music

ELLA by Ysrael Barajes and Samantha Barrón

This upbeat ballad expresses the love and longing of losing someone that you’re close to. It’s a cross-cultural and pretty universal experience for anyone who forms relationships, which is – really – all of us. The song explores love and loss, but also acceptance, as Barajes contemplates

moving on from his heartbreak.

While these themes aren’t uniquely Hispanic, media like this does a great job of showcasing the things that unite us within our humanity instead of what divides us.

“Bailando” by Enrique Iglesias featuring Gente de Zona and Descemer Bueno

Ranked No. 6 on Billboard’s The 50 Best Latin Songs of All Time list, “Bailando” holds the record for the longest-running number one on the Hot Latin Songs chart.

The song was co-written by Iglesias and Bueno, though the first released version of this song actually didn’t feature Iglesias. “Bailando” made history, crossing from Latin to pop radio stations and charts, and it even inspired its own “Spanglish” remix featuring Sean Paul.

Books

“Las Madres” by Esmerelda Santiago

This novel follows a group of female friends that have chosen to raise their daughters together

and form their own type of family. It explores race, sex and family as it simultaneously navigates the identities of all of the women, Puerto Rican-Americans, living in the Bronx.

Santiago wrote this book as a nod to her Puerto Rican culture and especially to her father. She aims to bring Puerto Rican stories to life while legitimizing the longing that she said many Puerto Ricans experience for their home.

“Magical Realism for Nonbelievers: A Memoir of Finding Family” by Anika Fajardo

In her memoir, Fajardo explores the bounds of family through exploring her own journey as a young woman searching for her estranged, Colombian father.

Fajardo, who was born in Columbia but raised in Minnesota, boarded a plane to Columbia in 1995 to find her father. Her memoir follows that story while also going back in time to explore her parents’ relationship and their different places in the world.

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What it means to be Latina

My favorite thing to do after I tell someone I'm Latina is ask them, "Do I look Latina?" But lately, I've been wondering why I still ask this question.

What do you envision? Is it someone with tan skin, black hair, brown eyes, short stature, a big, flat nose, bushy eyebrows and perhaps a rounded face? Do you ever envision someone who's Black? Do you envision someone with blonde hair and blue eyes? Chances are you don't, and neither did I.

For the longest time, when I looked in the mirror, I never saw a Latina girl looking back. I never saw what the world told me I needed to see to earn the right to call myself Latina.

The terms Latinx and Hispanic refer to ethnic groups, meaning we share a cultural background, heritage and ancestral identity. We're not a race; a race is a categorization of people based on physical traits, like skin color. Therefore,

we shouldn't be categorized into one universal, identifying appearance. However, people are still stuck on the notion of someone looking "Latinx," but what does that mean?

My father immigrated to the United States in the early 2000s from Paraguay, a landlocked country in the heart of South America. There he met my mother, a white woman from Philadelphia. They fell in love and had me: a light-skinned, brown-haired, predominantly white-looking girl.

My father's side of the family all lived in Paraguay, so I grew up speaking English and rarely interacting with other people who are Latinx. Still, I was taught by my father all there is to know about my Paraguayan culture. He taught me about Paraguay's beautiful history. He would do weekly asados, play traditional Paraguayan music, teach me simple phrases in Spanish and occasionally sit me down to FaceTime my abuela. That never felt like enough, though; I still felt out of place among the other Latinx kids because of my appearance.

Social media, movies and

society continued to make me feel out of place in my own identity. The stereotypical appearances and behaviors didn't quite fit me. Even people inside the Latinx community shamed those who couldn't fit the perfect part, such as those who didn't grow up speaking Spanish fluently. People who were too dark-skinned, or too light-skinned, were seen as anything but Latinx.

"For the longest time, when I looked in the mirror, I never saw a Latina girl looking back. I never saw what the world told me I needed to see to earn the right to call myself Latina."

Lailah Acuña

The things I've heard have stuck with me: "You don't sound Latina; you don't have the

accent," or "You're not Hispanic, dude, you're too light," were both told to me. "If your mom is Latina but dad is white, you are Latina, but if it's the other way around that doesn't count and you're just white." was a conversation I often heard debated online.

All representation of Latinx people in the media looked the same, were from the same places, all spoke Spanish or had an accent. I'd started to reject the idea of me being a real Latina because I didn't fit the part being portrayed and "accepted."

After years of growth, of exploring my identity and educating myself more on what it means to be Latina, I've come to a big acceptance: I'm white, but I'm also Paraguayan. I'm Hispanic and Latina.

Some Hispanics may share similar physical traits because of their common shared indigenous roots, but after decades of colonization, it results in a mix of skin colors, facial features and hair textures.

It's unfair to group the entire Hispanic population, an ethnic

population, under one singular "look." Doing so erases the deep-rooted heritage, culture, tradition and experiences millions of Hispanic people hold and share, but also differ in. The Latinx identity is complex, with roads of intersection. The one identifying factor isn't physical but biological.

I'm Latina because my father is Latinx; I share his DNA and heritage.

To be Latinx or Latina is to have these shared experiences and ancestry. As we celebrate this year's Hispanic Heritage Month, remember the great diversity the Hispanic and Latinx communities hold. Being mixed doesn't diminish you from celebrating your Latinx heritage. We should lift each other up and celebrate our differences, but our similarities in heritage, ancestry, and ethnic background.

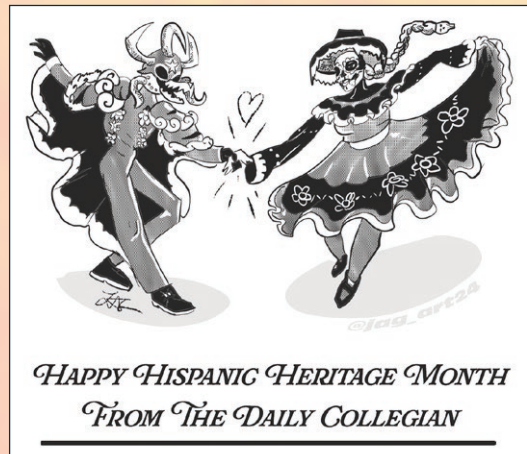
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MY VIEW | Kippi Hall

'One Hundred Years of Solitude' teaches us to change history

Memory is a tricky thing. John Locke theorized that your identity extends only to the boundary of your own conscious memory. Thousands of years of exploration has begged the question: what is memory worth, and is it even real?

In Gabriel García Márquez's epic, "One Hundred Years of Solitude," the endless ferris wheel of memory spins around for a century as the Buendía family navigates the pain that remembering entails and whether it's one worth suffering for.

The story, published in 1967, begins with a memory out of place, highlighting the violence of the world to come like a prophecy the reader cannot avoid: "Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice."

García Márquez transports the reader back to an Edenic time where the the first characters, José Arcadio Buendía and his wife Úrsula, acting as Adam and Eve, settle in a new Colombian village called Macondo without modern technology.

They had already sinned: they're first cousins and know it.

Úrsula fears any children they have will be monstrous, having the "tail of a pig" or other animalistic features, and José Arcadio Buendía finally convinces her it will be fine. Their two children, José Arcadio and Aureliano, are healthy.

The naming conventions behind carrying a family name are a type of remembrance, too. Those with a "junior" tacked onto their birth certificate, or the name of a grandparent becoming a grandchild's middle name, is a way of keeping the memory of the deceased with us.

With no new names, there can be no new experiences to differentiate the flaws of the past with current lessons, and there can be no learning from your mistakes.

The 20th century brought upon massive changes to the economic and governmental structures on the continent. After economic strife from the Great Depression and the outbreak of World War I, Latin America had a major economic boom that garnered attention from international companies to begin investing in local production.

This interest devolved into imperialism that derailed labor efforts, causing unrest among workers and even violent protests in Márquez's native

Colombia, directly inspiring the infiltration of the fictionalized Banana Company in Macondo with similar protests against unfair labor laws that led to a massacre that no one remembered occurring.

When we try to think back to our own lives, how many times do we repeat our mistakes? Like itches we can't quite scratch, our memories can become inaccessible at times because of our own obsession with the moment ahead, with the fire to put out in front of us, and memory becomes another knee-jerk reaction to continue spasming.

Change is incredibly difficult, but our pasts do not dictate the future or even the present if we don't let them.

Throughout the story, García Márquez writes the many Aurelianos and José Arcadios as having the same traits, their names like marks of Cain that slate them to the destinies of the previous Aureliano or José Arcadio.

An Aureliano, withdrawn and reflective, so starkly contrasts a José Arcadio, boisterous and impulsive, that Úrsula is convinced a set of twins in the family, named accordingly, were switched at birth because of their personalities matching the other's archetype.

"One Hundred Years of Solitude" details a journey of solitude over a century's worth of Buendía generations because of an inability to remember. A

priest says to the last Aureliano, "It's enough for me to be sure that you and I exist at this moment."

However, the town was doomed from this ideology, since the actions of the past and present are so indistinguishable that the reader themselves struggles to follow the story. T

Simultaneously, those cursed with too much overbearing nostalgia suffer in the book, locked to be surrounded by memories that suffocate all possibilities for change and escape. By the end of the book, with no one left in Macondo to remember its genesis, an old bookseller notes: "Wherever they might be they always remember that the past was a lie, that memory has no return, that every spring gone by could never be recovered, and that the wildest and most tenacious love was an ephemeral truth in the end."

"One Hundred Years of Solitude" makes a world from the cyclical nature of memory and how forgetting the past, or drowning in it, dooms us to repeat it. When we branch away from the pull of "destiny" as a sentence and begin to run towards it as a mere suggestion, then we break the cycle of solitude.

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‘INCREDIBLY HARD WORKER’

Adaptive Athletics’ Angel Guzman paves his own path

By Myles Hannak
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Angel Guzman embarked on the cross-country journey from his hometown of Moreno Valley to University Park for what was the culmination of years of training and work. After 2,500 miles, 40 hours of travel, he took a jump to see if it would pay off.

Born with Spina Bifida Myelomeningocele, clubfoot, hydrocephalus and strabismus, Guzman was diagnosed with long-term restrictions to his movement. However, with his parents’ support and his own dedication racing through him, Guzman found a way to directly overcome his obstacles in the form of adaptive athletics at 5 years old, only three years after he got his first wheelchair.

With his parents driving a car packed full, Guzman was on the road to become the first in his family to attend college.

“It’s not easy being the first one to go to college, especially going to such a great university like Penn State,” Guzman said. “It’s still tough, but something that I wish that was told to me is that there is a lot of help; there’s a lot of help around you — you just gotta look for it.”

With multiple hour-long trips to nearby facilities and limited ice time growing up, Guzman faced the odds in his development in sled hockey from the start. That didn’t stop the talent from prevailing, as Guzman quickly caught the eye of Penn State at the age of 14, when State College Coyotes coach DJ Wilson noticed his skills during a tournament.

“Having him come here, you ask a kid to move across the country quite literally for something like this, and you don’t expect them to just jump on board and say yes, especially after one random encounter,” Wilson said. “We even got a bonus out of it. His dad is now living in the area, and



Courtesy of DJ Wilson/State College Adaptive Recreation

Angel Guzman skates on ice for the State College Coyotes.

I mean, the two of them (are a) phenomenal family.”

Wilson also detailed a story of Guzman hitting him against the boards during that tournament when going against him, which gave him stitches. While he and his wife were tending to the injury, Wilson remembers Guzman coming up to him, and the pair first broached the topic of coming to Penn State.

Guzman kept working despite the barriers of being a person of color with a disability in a predominantly white sport, joining the LA Kings sled hockey program and scoring the team’s first championship goal in 2024.

“For someone who has a Hispanic background, for us, it’s a lot more difficult because we don’t get looked at. I feel like we don’t get looked at the same as others, but I feel like we should get that same recognition because we put in the work as much as anyone else, and there’s no difference because we’re all just a person,” Guzman said. “We put in a lot of dedication, and we’re super stubborn.”

Guzman got his first chance with the Coyotes and Wilson when

he came to Penn State, which unlocked unforeseen paths and opportunities. In January 2025, Penn State men’s hockey hosted the third annual Sled Hockey Classic, where Guzman’s Coyotes took on members from the Nittany Lions in a game for charity.

“I could just tell from the first time that I met him that we were going to get along, and it’s been great ever since,” Max Malec, Angel’s teammate, said. “He’s an incredibly hard worker, clearly set on his goals.”

Despite also being a part of an event that helped raise \$18,000 for sled hockey athletes, Guzman had a performance in the game that would change his life. After scoring two goals, including the game-winner, he earned an academic scholarship to join the adaptive athletics program with the Nittany Lions.

“We have a kid that’s from halfway across the country who adapted very well, so he’s doing very well for himself athletically and academically,” Malec said. “He’s thriving in a place like this — there’s no reason why somebody from somewhere else can’t come here and do the same.”

While sled hockey is his bread and butter, Guzman isn’t limited to just his on-ice work. The multi-sport athlete currently also participates in the 100m, 200m and 400m on the track and was a member of the Adaptive Athletics basketball team.

“For someone who’s in a spectator view, they would be surprised how much we can actually do,” Guzman said. “Whether it’s track, hockey or basketball, they would be surprised how competitive it is, and I feel like it’s also coming up on the rise.”

On top of majoring in business management and all of his sporting ventures, Guzman’s been able to be a part of historical moments on the ice.

Last season, he was a part of a trio of Penn State Adaptive Athletics sled hockey players to help the State College Coyotes take home the program’s first-ever Northeast Sled Hockey League Championship.

“It’s really a lot of ‘iron sharpens iron.’ We go into every practice, every lift, every training session, just trying to make each other better. We’ve both really seen the results of that, and

he’s made some noticeable strides since he’s gotten here,” Malec said.

The effort helped restore prominence to Adaptive Athletics after a transitional period during the highs and lows of the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw the program’s first-ever coach, Teri Jordan, step back. The operations side shifted to Student Affairs from Intercollegiate Athletics.

“We’ve already got a title under our belt, which says a lot about the group that we have — such a strong group, an incredible group, and we’re all highly dedicated toward our craft, and it shows in how we play,” Guzman said.

The Coyotes work in partnership with Adaptive Athletics and were founded in 2016 by Wilson. Since then, the size of the team has grown exponentially to now have teams for all ages, as it now has over double the number of athletes.

Last season, State College went 8-3 in the regular season, as it resumed play for this season’s NESHSL Champions in September and started so far this season at a perfect record over four games.

Through last year’s playoff, Guzman led the Coyotes in goals, which he’s also done for the last two seasons. Guzman said he’s planning on going international, mainly for hockey. For him, his decorated past and spectacular present is just the start.

“I’ve realized that as each tournament, as each practice has gone, I’ve realized that we’re making history, and it’s great. It’s a great feeling to be a part of it, to be able to represent Penn State in that way, because Penn State’s always been making history in every sport and so to be adding more sports to it is a great feeling,” Guzman said.

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1994 championship through Collegian archives

By Elliott Insko
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

In 1994, Penn State made history. Tom Peterson’s final season in charge of the **VOLLEYBALL** Nittany Lions concluded in Fort Wayne, Indiana,

with Penn State facing UCLA with a national title on the line.

The blue and white bested the Bruins in five sets to claim its first-ever national title and become the first non-Californian college to claim an NCAA men’s volleyball championship.

Three Hispanic players — outside hitter Ramón Hernández, middle blocker Iván Contreras and setter Carlos Ortiz — played key roles in the Nittany Lions’ title run. Take a look back at their 1994 campaign through the Collegian archives.

January

Penn State had been eliminated in the NCAA Final Four in three consecutive seasons preceding the run to the championship match.

Hernández, a San Juan, Puerto Rico, native, entered the new year with a wealth of newly found responsibility as a senior leader for the spikers after being named an AVCA Third Team All-American in 1992 and 1993.

“Since I am a senior, I have a big responsibility for the team,” Hernández told The Daily Collegian. “I see myself as the floor leader of the team... keeping the team together and making sure that everybody is doing the right things.”

He developed his chemistry with Ortiz, in their time together on the Puerto Rico Junior National Team, and the relationship carried over to Penn State.

“We are very good friends,” Ortiz said. “Off the court, we hang out, but we are not that close of friends. All of that changes when we get on the court.”

Penn State opened the season by taking down a different California powerhouse. In the first match of three consecutive clashes with the Cardinal, the No. 6 Nittany Lions swept No. 7 Stanford in Rec Hall on Jan. 20. In a 1994 debut, Hernández led the way with 17 kills.

“This win was a great start for us this year,” Ortiz said after the game. “We played together as a

team and everything just fell into place.”

In the next two days, Penn State played Stanford two more times, splitting the pair before sweeping three straight matches to end the month.

February

Penn State moved up to No. 4 in the rankings at the start of February. That position drew some controversy, as the Nittany Lions’ 5-1 record was better than two higher-ranked squads.

“Until we beat one of the top teams, we will not move up,” Peterson said. “It is a total dogfight out there — they get to play against the best teams every weekend, whereas we don’t have that opportunity.”

The blue and white went north of the border for Canadian clashes. Contreras found more time on the court, but the 6-foot-4 “die-hard dancer” spent some time on a different floor during the road trip.

“We went to Manitoba and we started dancing, and the girls that we were dancing with told Carlos [Ortiz] and me that they were impressed with our dancing,” Contreras said. “None of the guys in Manitoba knew how to dance.”

The passion didn’t hurt his skill, though. Through Feb. 24, the Tampico, Mexico, native was among the Nittany Lions’ leaders with 27 blocks and 91 kills on a .408 clip. It was enough of a performance to bounce Hernández from his previous position as a middle blocker to a new role as outside hitter.

“You can’t say that I am displacing him,” Contreras said. “Because he is such a good player, [the coaches] put him on the outside to give him more balls to hit.”

By the end of the month, Penn State had surged to an 11-2 record after dropping just a single match to the University of Manitoba, landing the Nittany Lions at No. 3 in the rankings.

March

The Nittany Lions continued the winning streak into March.

With the dominance that western schools held in the polls, dropping matches to lower-level schools in the east would have been fatal for Penn State in the race towards the postseason.

“We cannot lose any matches

against any eastern teams, so all of these wins are very important,” Peterson said. “We want to win our division, we want to win the east, we can’t lose for the polls. There’s a lot of reasons why this is important.”

Hernández and Ortiz led the way with 19 and 11 kills, respectively, in the blue and white’s victory over Ohio State on March 25, their ninth consecutive win.

By March 31, Contreras’ performance had reached an even higher level as Penn State rose to No. 2 in the polls. Through 20 matches, he ranked No. 9 nationally with a .453 hitting percentage and No. 20 with 1.4 blocks per set.

“I just try to play as good as I can,” Contreras said. “One of my goals this season is to make the All-Freshman team, if I can.”

April

The Nittany Lions lost their first two matches of the month, a five-set marathon to Ball State and a sweep by Indiana-Purdue at Fort Wayne. It was the first, and only, time all season that Penn State would lose back-to-back matches.

“I think that it is better to have to deal with the losses now than at the Final Four,” Contreras said. “I think we can all bounce back. I am looking forward to playing Brigham Young on Friday.”

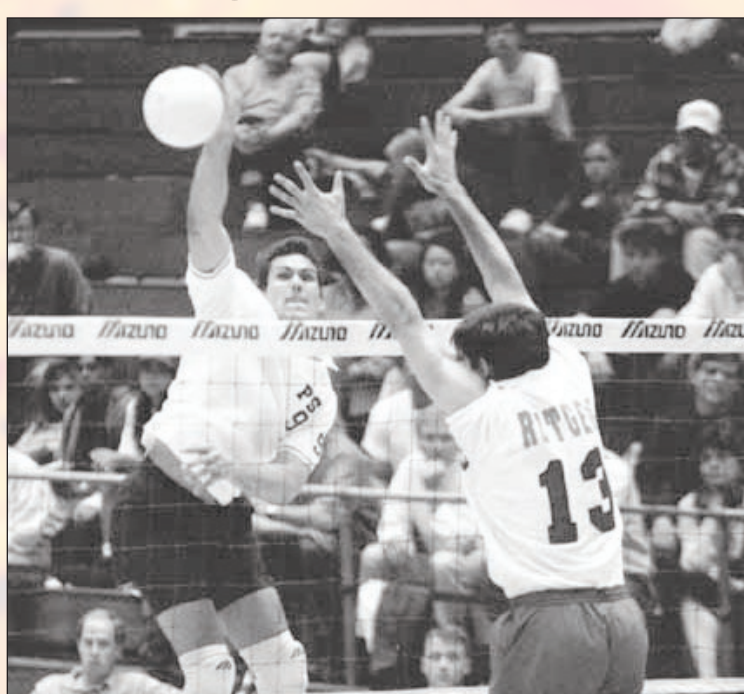
Hernández echoed Contreras’ sentiment, looking at his team to be more prepared as the postseason drew closer and closer.

“I know that we were not ready to play at all this weekend,” Hernández said. “If you are an athlete, you have to do some long-term preparation for the matches — sometimes hours, sometimes days. I think the team has to really practice this.”

In the remaining five matches, Penn State dropped just three sets. In the final regular-season match, Hernández and Ortiz were fueled by a contingent of fellow Puerto Ricans in the crowd as the Nittany Lions set up their berth in the EIVA Tournament.

Penn State delivered three straight sweeps, besting NJIT, Princeton and Rutgers-Newark, to claim the conference title and earn an automatic bid into the NCAA tournament, which was composed of just four teams at the time.

“It’s as good a chance as we’ve



Collegian Archives

Ramón Hernández spikes a ball against Rutgers.

had in a long time,” Peterson said. “If we play well, we can compete with anybody.”

May

To open the NCAA postseason, Penn State was faced with the season’s third match against Ball State after splitting the regular-season series. The Nittany Lions dropped the first set, but powered to win three straight and earn a bid in the national title match against UCLA.

They’d be faced with their toughest test of the season with the most on the line. UCLA entered the championship on a 27-match winning streak after dropping its season opener to BYU. It didn’t look great historically, either, as they held a 3-9-1 all-time record against the Bruins before the clash.

The blue and white dropped two of the first three sets, and trailed 11-4 in the fourth until Peterson called a timeout to regroup his squad.

Hernández pulled the Nittany Lions from the ashes.

“Ramon just put us on his back,” former Penn State coach Mark Pavlik said after Hernández was inducted into the EIVA Hall of Fame in 2014. “Next thing you know, the tidal wave started and it was all Ramon that really pulled it together for us.”

Penn State rallied back to claim

the set and level the match, and took an 8-4 lead in the decisive fifth frame. UCLA came back to even things at 12-12, but the Nittany Lions ripped off three straight points to seal the victory.

Hernández finished with a career-high 38 kills in the title match, the final of his time with Penn State. He’d go on to be named the tournament’s most outstanding player.

Building a legacy

Once his playing days were over, Hernández went into coaching. The three-time All-American led the Puerto Rican men’s national team in 2017 and spent time with Major League Volleyball’s Las Vegas Thrill in 2025.

Contreras would go on to be named the AVCA Player of the Year in 1997. He then started a professional career, playing for teams in Germany, Belgium, Turkey and Puerto Rico, and was enshrined in the EIVA Hall of Fame in 2013, a year prior to Hernández.

Ortiz finished sixth all-time with 4,609 assists for Penn State and was named an AVCA All-American in 1995.

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