

Austin College Posey Leadership \$100,000 Award honoring Maria Teresa Kumar Upcoming at Perot Museum of Nature & Science

Austin College will host Emmy-nominated national journalist and civic innovator Maria Teresa Kumar as the recipient of the College's 2019 Posey Leadership Award March 27 at 7:30 p.m. at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science on "**Moving Forward in an Inclusive America.**" Tickets to the event start at \$50 and are [available online](#). Lauded as one of the most influential American Latinos under 40, Kumar will also speak to students at Austin College on campus north of Dallas in Sherman, Texas on Tuesday, March 26.



Kumar's speech will be followed by a question-and-answer session with the audience, moderated by Stella M. Chávez, education reporter with KERA. To close the evening, Austin College President Steven P. O'Day and the college's board chair David Corrigan will present the Austin College Posey Leadership Award and accompanying check for \$100,000 to Kumar.

A widely sought-after political analyst, Kumar owned a successful corporate and political consulting business when she realized that her clients, including Fortune 500 companies and nonprofit organizations, were failing to connect with young Latinos, the fastest-growing demographic in the country. Believing that Latinos can improve their quality of life as well as contribute to building a healthy, strong America by understanding the electoral process, Kumar co-founded Voto Latino in 2004 to increase the population's involvement in civic life.

As the founding president and CEO of Voto Latino, Kumar led the group to wide recognition in the 2008 presidential election for what was deemed "groundbreaking work" in increasing Latino voter participation above the national average in five states. She since expanded Voto Latino from a public service announcement campaign to what is now a full-fledged organization that leverages new media, technology, and celebrity spokespeople to mobilize Latino voters, encourage civic participation, and act to change negative cultural stereotypes.

Kumar appears regularly as a commentator on several television programs including *HardBall with Chris Matthews* and *Morning Joe*, and last fall marked 10 years working with MSNBC. She is also a frequent guest on media outlets such as NPR and Telemundo, a frequent opinion writer for national publications, and a speaker at major international conferences.

Accolades and recognitions for Kumar's work are numerous. *Fast Company* named Kumar among the 1000 Most Creative Minds in Business Worldwide for her unique use of technology, media, and celebrity to make transformative change and mobilize American Latinos. In 2013, *Elle* named her one of the 10 Most Influential Women in Washington, D.C., and *Hispanic Business* included her among the 100 Most Influential Latinos in America. She has received leadership awards from The White House Project, the Imagen Foundation, and the New York Legislature, among others. Last year, *Washington Life* magazine placed Kumar on the cover of its issue highlighting the most influential Washingtonians

under 40. She is a Council of Foreign Relations term member, an Ambassador Swanee Hunt Prime Mover Fellow, a Women's Media Center Fellow, and a Woodrow Wilson Public Policy International Affairs Fellow.

Kumar earned a bachelor's degree in international relations from the University of California at Davis and a master's degree in public policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

The Austin College Posey Leadership Award recognizes Kumar's leadership as evidenced in all aspects of her career and advocacy, particularly her efforts to engage Latino youth in local neighborhoods and their greater communities.

Prior to the evening presentation, [Kumar](#) will meet with nearly 500 Dallas-area high school students at Parish Episcopal School in an invitation-only event hosted by the Dallas World Affairs Council's Global Young Leaders program. She also will appear in an on-air interview with Krys Boyd of KERA Radio's THINK Program from Noon to 1 p.m.

Dallas-area sponsors include Goldman Sachs; Stan and Judy Woodward; Drs. John and Anne Andersen; Brent Christopher; David and Emily Corrigan; Mrs. Henry Estess; Rebecca and Ron Gafford; Jim and Anne Hartnett; Ann Ross; and Becky and Larry Sykes. Additional sponsors are Ira and Frances Anderson of Houston; San Angelo physician Fazlur Rahman, M.D. and his wife Jahanara Rahman; Bank of Texas, the Sherman Economic Development Corporation, and Carleen and David Stone and Family, all of Sherman, Texas. Event partners are DHD Films, the World Affairs Council of Dallas, Parish Episcopal School Dallas, Univision, the National Hispanic Institute (NHI), and the Perot Museum of Nature & Science.

The Austin College Leadership Award was created in March 2006 through the generosity of Sally and Lee Posey, founder of Palm Harbor Homes. The Posey name was added to the award upon Lee Posey's death in 2008. The award was designed to bring leaders in contact with Austin College students who could benefit from their experiences in values-based leadership, integrity, courage, and vision.

The award honors outstanding individuals who, through their work, demonstrate principles of servant leadership, specifically by taking a courageous stand on a public policy issue that advances a humanitarian or educational purpose; serving the youth of a state, nation, or international community to improve the quality of health, educational, or community services; creating opportunities for young people that help them enhance their educational experience and move to a new level of service to society.

Past recipients include Wendy Kopp, founder of Teach For America; Paul Farmer, noted Harvard physician and humanitarian; Geoffrey Canada, president and CEO of Harlem Children's Zone; Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and founder of Grameen Bank; Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund; Salman Khan, founder of Khan Academy; Nathan Wolfe, epidemiologist and author of the "The Viral Storm"; Shigeru Ban, humanitarian architect and founder of the Voluntary Architects' Network; co-recipients Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, founders of Half the Sky Movement and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists; and Vikram Patel, psychiatrist and director of international mental health programs; and Barbara Pierce Bush, global activist for health equity, CEO of Global Health Corps. .

Austin College, a private national liberal arts college located north of Dallas in Sherman, Texas, has earned a reputation for excellence in academic preparation, international study, pre-professional foundations, leadership development, committed faculty, and hands-on, adventurous learning opportunities. One of 40 schools profiled in Loren Pope's influential book [*Colleges That Change Lives*](#), Austin College boasts a welcoming community that embraces diversity and individuality, with 46 percent of students identifying as persons of color. The residential student body of approximately 1,300 students and more than 100 expert faculty members allow a 13:1 student-faculty ratio and personalized attention. This year, the campus recognizes 100 years of co-education and has had several opportunities to recognize the history of women and accomplishments of current alumnae. Austin College is related by covenant to the Presbyterian Church (USA) and cultivates an inclusive atmosphere that supports students' faith journeys regardless of religious tradition. Founded in 1849, the College is the oldest institution of higher education in Texas operating under original name and charter.