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## 2019 NCHS Daniel E. Kilgore History Award Recipients

### **Officers**

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*John Montalvo*

#### ***Vice-President***

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*Tom Stewart*

*Debbie Zuniga*

### **Laura Zavala Garcia**

Laura Zavala Garcia, although a native of Arizona, has lived in Corpus Christi most of her life. The daughter of migrant farm workers she has fond memories of growing up in North Beach and attending North Beach Elementary. She began her career with the La Retama Library in the early 70s as part of a summer youth work program. Her first position with the City of Corpus Christi was as a part-time library aide. During her senior year she obtained a full-time job with the media department of the South Texas Library System. She has held various positions throughout the Corpus Christi Public Libraries system including that of overseeing the Local History/Genealogy department. In 2001, she was instrumental in obtaining grant funding to begin the preservation and digitation of the local history archive collections, which is an ongoing project. As part of the preservation process the library has been able to make the digital images available on its website which is often used by researchers and those interested in Corpus Christi history. Laura is a graduate of W. B. Ray High School. She has a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, formerly Corpus Christi State University, and a Master's in Library and Information Science from the University of Texas at Austin. In 2013, after serving as Interim Library Director, for a little over a year, she became the first Hispanic female Library Director of Corpus Christi Public Libraries. Laura has a daughter, two sons, and four grandchildren.

### **Rick Pratt**

Rick Pratt has worked as chief of the Fort Worth Nature Center, where he expanded the organization's area from 33 acres to 3,600, built a museum building, wrote educational programs and hired staff, among other duties and accomplishments. He later became founding director of the Armand Bayou Nature Center in Houston where he secured land, drew up a master plan and managed the design and construction of all of the center's facilities. He managed a staff of 12 and a volunteer force of nearly 100.

Rick and his wife, Cameron, lived in the historic Lydia Ann Lighthouse for nearly 20 years. During that time, he rebuilt the station, created an educational program for visitors and relit the tower as a working aid to navigation after a 50-year period of darkness. In 2003, he began volunteering with the Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association (PAPHA). He led a drive to acquire an historic building that at the time was known as the Mercer House. The drive also meant securing a new site for the structure and restoring it. It was moved next to the Port Aransas Community Center and now houses the Port Aransas Museum. He was director of the museum from 2009-2018. He led efforts to purchase the land and buildings that once held a boat-building business called Farley Boat Works. It became an arm of the museum and now provides classes in old-fashioned wooden boat building to anyone who'd like to show up for them. Rick states that he is an interpretive historian...he wants the past to come alive and let visitors know what it felt like to be there and he wants visitors to know how the special demands of living on an island affects both our history and our present. Rick and Cameron have purchased a 100+ year old home in Fort Davis. They are currently splitting their time between the Davis Mountains and Mustang Island.