

TCFV 2024 Father's Day Honorees



Before **Representative Abel Herrero** attached “Representative” to the front of his name, he was just a young man growing up in Robstown, TX, near Corpus Christi. After graduating Robstown High School, he packed up a dorm’s worth of stuff and moved four hours north to Texas A&M University, where he graduated with a B.A. in Political Science. He also attended the University of Texas Law School and was a Fellow of the Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) – which aims to increase the number of

underrepresented students in the legal profession – before moving back home to do some good!

He returned to Robstown and campaigned for a seat in the Texas House of Representatives, achieving the District 34 seat, covering Nueces County and much of Corpus Christi. He immediately set about bettering the community for those in his jurisdiction.

When asked what prompted his servant leadership, he doesn’t mince words.

“I just want to help people,” is his honest, straight-forward answer.

Serving nine terms in the House from 2005-2011 and 2013-2024, Rep. Herrero has championed key public education bills and budgets, as well as served as a crucial ally to anti-domestic violence initiatives. He also chairs the House Corrections Committee. For nearly two decades, he has fervently pursued positive change in communities that make the Lone Star State a great place to call home.

Which is why his announcement in 2023 to not seek re-election was bittersweet for District 34 and Texans all over the state.

“I have worked hard to bring people together for common goals and purposes to create better opportunities for all Texans,” Herrero said in a statement. “I hope that I have been able to make our communities and state a better place.”

But Rep. Herrero's impact on Texas policy is not the only legacy he has cultivated. He counts his beautiful family as his biggest triumph.

A father of five, Rep. Herrero hopes his children have learned about the importance of standing up for those in need by watching his career. He hopes other leaders in the House continue to build a Texas where his children and others their age can not only feel safe, but also have access to reach their full potential – through education, career, relationships and every aspect of their lives.

His most memorable moments as a father are the moments each of his children entered the world. The promise of who each of them would grow up to be and how they would add light to the world was indescribably inspiring. For Annalisa (24), Andrea (19), Abel Jr. (17), Alexia (15) and Aliana (13), he hopes his line of work has contributed to a future where they can thrive.

Thank you, Rep. Herrero, for being a father who chose to dedicate his career to the service of others. TCFV honors you this Father's Day for your positive impact on Texans in District 34 and beyond and for exhibiting healthy relationships within your own family.



Ankur Chopra, born in India as a single child, credits his upbringing with instilling in him a passion for putting others first and empowering them. His parents and cousins – whom he grew up extremely close to – knitted a supportive community together and always prioritized uplifting each other.

So, when he graduated from the University of Delhi with a Bachelor of Commerce and immigrated to the U.S. to achieve an MBA and widen his international experience, he looked for ways to serve his new community. Enter, Family Violence Prevention Services. Ankur joined the San Antonio-based agency, drawn to its mission of eradicating domestic violence. He wanted to help make their vision a reality in whatever way he could. Using his experience as an auditor for nonprofit entities – where he learned a lot about philanthropic leadership by observing management styles and leaders’ decision-making processes – he became the program’s executive vice president and chief financial and personnel officer.

While stateside, he met one of his best friends. She eventually became his wife.

“She still puts up with me, so I guess I’m doing something right,” he jokes.

Sometime after, Ankur and Jennifer got ready to welcome a new addition to the Chopra family. Ankur vividly recalls his fondest memory of fatherhood so far: “It was before our son officially arrived in this world. I remember the day I went with Jennifer for the first ultrasound, and they placed this apparatus on her body, and suddenly we heard his miraculous little heart beating. I fell in love with him right then and there, though he was probably only the size of a grape.”

Now, Rishi Lee Chopra is eight years old, but still making Ankur and Jennifer fall in love with him. Recently, Ankur returned home after a long, difficult day and was greeted by Rishi with a few simple words that completely flipped the day.

“You’re not just my dad; You are my best friend,” Rishi said.

As a father, Ankur hopes the rest of his life is chock-full of these moments with Rishi. He also hopes to leave a legacy for his son.

“I hope my line of work is a compass to guide my son toward purpose, resilience and a better world – one where he thrives and makes a positive difference in the lives of others.”

Thank you, Ankur, for being a father who understands and values the importance of unity and lifting up others. TCFV honors you this Father’s Day for choosing to use your personal and professional life to promote healthy relationships and a more caring, loving world.



Jim Ward took the long way around finding his calling. He entered the workforce immediately after high school and ended up in a well-paying union ironwork job. When a quarter-life crisis inspired him to go back to school, he quit and enrolled in Austin Community College, flipping bicycles on Craigslist to pay the bills.

Then he wandered into a social work class and found a job at the Austin Resource Center for the homeless. It was life changing. From the moment he stepped through the center's doors, he knew he'd found his place in the world. He's been working to end homelessness for more than 15 years now. Currently, he's the director of planning

for the Texas Homeless Network. And he doesn't flip bicycles anymore.

Jim describes homelessness as the intersection of so many systems of oppression, and similar to domestic violence, it is most effectively addressed when issues of safety, stability and support are addressed in the context of those systems. He stands at the center of the issue, strategically bringing all aspects of the homeless experience together to form a comprehensive solution.

The social work course may have been the doorway to his career, but it was Jim's mother who planted the seed of servant leadership. And though everyone else sees the incredible leadership Jim displays daily, he still hesitates to call himself that: "I have never really considered myself to be a leader. I just do what I think would make my mom proud."

Coming from a single-parent household, Jim was constantly impressed with how his mother made it all work – multiple jobs, harsh work hours and the responsibility of caring for a son alone. She not only kept things afloat, but also modeled the vital values of empathy, humility, integrity and unconditional positive regard.

Jim hopes he's doing a good job passing those onto his own son. James Dylan Ward arrived in Jim's life four years ago, and Jim vividly remembers the impact it had.

"The moment it all got real was when I first held him. Things got really hot, my vision focused, and I knew my life had changed in the most profound way. I'm still learning what it means to be a dad, but that was the moment where life just flipped," he smiles in remembrance.

As James continues to grow up, Jim hopes his line of work means something to him.

“Right now, he may not understand why I give water to a person panhandling or why some people are forced to live outside. And that’s ok. I want him to be a kid for as long as he can,” Jim says. “And ideally, I’d work myself out of a job and he’d find another cause that fills his cup. But no matter what he does, I want him to know that while he may not be able to change the whole world, he can make a world of difference to an individual.”

Thank you, Jim, for being a father who sees the dire need of an individual and runs forward. TCFV honors you this Father’s Day for seeking solutions that honor the complex realities of our lives and promoting a better world by helping one person at a time.