

NEWS RELEASE



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Texas Restaurateur to Receive Immigrant Entrepreneur Award from National Immigration Forum

Rubén Sepulveda, Sr. honored with Carvel Immigrant Entrepreneur Award

(Washington, DC) Restaurateur and National Restaurant Association member Rubén Sepulveda, Sr. will be presented with the prestigious *Thomas Carvel Immigrant Entrepreneur Award* by the [National Immigration Forum](#) this evening at their annual Keepers of the American Dream Awards Dinner in Washington, DC.

"Rubén Sepulveda embodies the entrepreneurial spirit of the restaurant industry and deserves all the accolades bestowed upon him. Rubén's inspiring story exemplifies why the restaurant industry is the cornerstone of career opportunities," said Association Chairman Theodore M. Fowler, president and chief executive officer, Golden Corral Corp., who will present the award to Sepulveda tonight. "His story tells the millions of restaurant-and-foodservice employees, immigrants or not, that everything is possible through hard work and dedication."

The National Immigration Forum's Keepers of the American Dream Awards Dinner is a celebration of the heroes who embrace the spirit of immigrant achievement and the American Dream, who contribute significantly to the well being of immigrants in America, and who enhance our appreciation of immigrants and the immigrant tradition.

"Rubén Sepulveda and all of the Keepers of the American Dream Award winners personify the American immigrant tradition. Mr. Sepulveda is the quintessential immigrant entrepreneur who truly is living the American dream. It is our hope that the standard he has set through his dedication and devotion to his business and his community will inspire others to follow his path," said Frank Sharry, Executive Director of the National Immigration Forum.

The *Thomas Carvel Immigrant Entrepreneur Award* is presented to an immigrant entrepreneur whose success embodies the American Dream. Past recipients of this award include John Tu and David Sun, Founders, Kingston Technology Company and Carlos Saladrigas, CEO of ADP TotalSource.

Sepulveda's story is both touching and inspiring. Born and raised in Monterrey, Mexico, he left school for better opportunities in the United States where he worked until he was drafted by the U.S. Navy to serve in the Korean War. Not long after his honorable discharge, he

returned to Mexico and became a dairy farmer until disease struck his cattle and he and his young family lost everything.

In 1972, once again looking for opportunity, Sepulveda moved his family to San Antonio, Texas. His sister had immigrated to Texas four years earlier and opened a small Mexican food restaurant called Don Pedro. He started working at the restaurant immediately as a waiter and his wife, Leticia, worked as a cook. Within a year they were both promoted, he as the night shift manager and she as the head cook. In 1979, Sepulveda seized the opportunity to purchase Don Pedro Mexican Restaurant and through hard work, attention to detail and a belief in providing outstanding customer service, the restaurant continued to prosper and grow. In 1997, Rubén and Leticia welcomed retirement and sold the restaurant to their three sons. Today, after 33 years, Don Pedro Mexican Restaurant continues to flourish under the direction of Rubén's three sons. Currently employing 165 full-time and part-time workers, the restaurant serves 1,600 customers on an average day.

"As the nation's largest private-sector employer and largest employer of immigrants, currently 1.4 million, the restaurant industry has a long and proud history of providing career opportunities to people from all cultures and backgrounds. Within our industry there are many stories like Mr. Sepulveda's, and it is our hope that through his example more people with his commitment and enthusiasm will reach the level of success he has, and continues to enjoy," added Fowler.

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The National Restaurant Association, founded in 1919, is the leading business association for the restaurant industry, which is comprised of 925,000 restaurant and foodservice outlets and a work force of 12.5 million employees - making it the cornerstone of the economy, career opportunities and community involvement. Along with the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, the Association works to represent, educate and promote the rapidly growing industry. For more information, visit our Web site at www.restaurant.org.