

July 29, 2021

Vanessa Guadalupe Montes, Class of 2000



This month's alumni spotlight features Vanessa Montes-Cazarez from the Class of 2000.

Coming from St. Aloysius Gonzaga Middle School in Los Angeles, Vanessa moved to the Valley starting at Bourgade in 1997. Vanessa was heavily involved in the student life aspect of Bourgade. Participating in Student Council, Earthwatch Club, Key Club and many others kept her busy, in addition to four years of basketball and National Art Honor Society. Vanessa recalls fond memories of games with Carol Caruso, art class with Ms. Scully, Ms. Moriarty's English class and Mr. Henke's theology class. Vanessa's time at Bourgade was succeeded by her sister, Claudia '05, her nephews, Andy '11, Aaron '18, and Hector '16, and her niece Amber '17. To this day, Vanessa keeps Bourgade in a special place of her heart as she navigates the world of an entrepreneur.

After graduating from Bourgade in 2000, Vanessa attended Glendale Community College, earning her associate's degree in Social Work, and later attended Arizona State University for her bachelor's degree in Business from the ASU School of Global Management and Leadership.

Coming from a family of entrepreneurs, Vanessa felt called to make a change during her time studying social work. After earning her bachelor's degree while becoming a new mom, Vanessa opened a chain of wireless retail stores. In an effort to diversify her business, she began leasing out venues and producing events, which would lead to her founding and ownership of Legends Event Center.

Legends Event Center offers 52,000 square feet of event space. Located on the northeast corner of 43rd Avenue and Camelback Road, the venue serves a variety of events including weddings, quinceaneras, job fairs, networking events, beauty pageants, proms, concerts, boxing events, fundraisers, food drives, blood drives and more. In October of 2020, Vanessa had the honor of greeting President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris on their campaign visit to Arizona as Legends Event Center served as one of the campaign sites. Vanessa delivered the opening address for the television broadcast that aired Biden's welcome.

In the limited free time away from owning her own business, Vanessa serves on the Hispanic Advisory Board for the Phoenix Police Department. Having served on the board for a few years, Vanessa enjoys meeting and working with the women and men who sacrifice so much in serving. Legends Event Center recently hosted a Phoenix Police event with Chief of Police, Jeri Williams in attendance.

In thinking about ways that Bourgade shaped her, Vanessa focuses on becoming a woman of faith. Her love for God has helped her through many struggles and triumphs and growing up in an academic environment serves as a foundation for God's presence in the center of her life. Vanessa and her husband currently have six children, all of who are continuing the legacy of Catholic education within their family.

Congratulations to Vanessa on all of her success!