



Texas Representative Terry (Thompson) Meza

Texas Representative Terry (Thompson) Meza has lived a life in service to others as ROTC Sweetheart, military spouse, educator, director of nonprofits, private attorney, and Texas State Representative. She has dedicated more than 50 years of service to her community, state, and nation. Terry was born in Irving, Texas, to one of the city's founding families. A member of the National Honor Society, she graduated from Irving High School in 1966 and enrolled at UTA. Her family has a strong military heritage; her father served in WWII, and her three brothers served in the Army, Coast Guard, and Navy. Her mother was thankful she would not lose her daughter to the military. While pursuing her degree and teaching certification, Terry's dedicated support of the Corps of Cadets was highlighted by her selection as Cadet Honorary CPT, representing the Rifle Team as their Sweetheart from 1969 to 1971. In 1970, Terry was elected Queen of the Military Ball and promoted to Cadet Hon MAJ, and in 1971, she was elected Cadet Corps Sweetheart and promoted to Cadet Hon LTC. Terry was a member of En Ami Sorority (later Alpha Phi National), committed to lifelong friendships, leadership, academic excellence, personal growth, and community involvement. She graduated from UT Arlington in 1972 with a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and in History, and a teaching certification. Terry married a cadet, and upon his commissioning, they were assigned to Fort Bragg, NC, with a follow-on assignment to the TCU ROTC program in Fort Worth. She later earned her Doctor of Jurisprudence from Texas Wesleyan University School of Law, with continuing education from the UTA Institute of Urban Affairs and an Urban Fellowship from the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

As an educator, Terry taught at every level from kindergarten to college. She also taught special programs (in Spanish) for police, teachers, city employees, and the military, in addition

to teaching cultural awareness/sensitivity training programs. As an attorney, she served in the Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Disaster Assistance as Attorney Advisor for Gulf Coast Storms and Superstorm Sandy, providing legal guidance in the real estate loan-closing process for disaster victims. She practiced law in municipal courts, justice of the peace courts, family courts, criminal courts, county courts-at-law, civil courts, and immigration courts in Dallas and Harlingen, with administrative hearings with the Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas Education Agency. Terry served as Executive Director of an affiliate of SER—Jobs for Progress, a national nonprofit dedicated to job placement, training, alternative education, after-school programs, worksite-based training, and language programs. Under her leadership they doubled the number of programs and improved the financial and program status and accountability of the organization. She served as Senior Certification Specialist and Acting Executive Director, North Central Texas Regional Certification Agency, certifying minority and women-owned businesses to do business with local governments, all while she was attending law school. As the Nonprofit Executive Director, Abilene Economic Development Company, she led the program with emphasis on small and minority economic development. Later, as the Nonprofit Executive Director, Polytechnic Heights Main Street, she led the neighborhood-revitalization program using historic preservation as an economic development tool for both commercial and residential areas. Terry Meza's extensive commitment to participation and leadership in community renewal, voting rights, fine arts, workforce development, youth, women's rights, IMAGE, LULAC, Lions Club, and many other programs established her as a recognized and honored leader in these areas throughout the community, state, and the Southwest.

Terry was elected to the Texas State Legislature in 2018, representing District 105. She has been recognized with the Hunger Leadership Award from Feeding America (for her work on the Human Services Committee in the 86th Legislature), the Community Service Award from the American Muslim Women Physicians Association (2019), and the Dr. Mae Jackson Outstanding Democratic Woman Officeholder Award (2020). She is highly committed to serving and representing all the constituents of District 105. Terry has been nominated as a UTA Distinguished Alumnus and continues to support and honor the University of Texas at Arlington and the Corps of Cadets with her lifelong service to her community, state, and nation.