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## **SHPE ANNOUNCES ALL-NEW ANNUAL STAR AWARD HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF FOUNDER RODRIGO GARCIA**

Los Angeles, CA – SHPE has added a new award to the SHPE Technical Achievement and Recognition (STAR) Awards presented annually at the SHPE National Convention, the largest gathering of Hispanics in STEM in the U.S. The Rodrigo Garcia Founder’s Award honors SHPE’s founder, Rodrigo Garcia, who will be the first recipient at the convention in Orlando, Florida on November 10-14, 2021.

Rodrigo “Rod” Garcia is a licensed Professional Engineer in California. He has over 40 years of experience as a civil engineering businessman. His firm has been involved in several high-profile projects in Los Angeles including various rail projects for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Prior to establishing his firm, he worked for the City of Los Angeles in Public Works, Building and Safety as well as the Port of Los Angeles. Currently, he is the President of Century Diversified, Inc.

The story of SHPE’s founding begins in 1973. Rod was working as a civil engineer for the City of Los Angeles. When Rod was at work—even in the midst of a tech boom in California—he was a brown face in a sea of white. Recognizing the disparity and wanting to make a change, Rod gathered a cohort of fellow Hispanic engineers who shared his concerns. They held a meeting in his garage to determine how they could contribute to diversifying the STEM field. Each of them had overcome barriers to break into the engineering world and, after finally earning their places, they were still experiencing discrimination.

The team leveraged their vast connections to build support. And in 1974, they officially formed the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), an organization that has grown into a nationwide professional association serving more than 13,000 members.

Watch Rod speak in this video clip about how SHPE has been changing lives:  
[“What benefits the Hispanic community benefits the nation.”](#)

Many of SHPE’s members will tell you that Rod’s vision has changed their life, affording them access and opportunities they would not have had otherwise. Over close to 50 years, Rod’s limitless compassion and unwavering service to others has been critical to the success of SHPE. This award honors his accomplishments and memorializes him as the guiding light of the organization that is leading Hispanics in STEM.

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In 2022, the award will be open for nominations. Candidates must meet the following criteria for consideration:

- Demonstrates consistent dedication to SHPE's growth and advancement
- Demonstrates compassion and a commitment to service of others
- SHPE Lifetime member with Lifetime and/or Professional membership status for at least 10 years
- Cannot have previously received the Rodrigo Garcia Founder's Award

To learn more about SHPE's National Convention, the STAR Awards, the 2020 winners, and the nomination process, please visit the [STAR Awards at shpe.org/2021](https://shpe.org/2021).

### **ABOUT SHPE**

SHPE (Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers) is a nonprofit organization serving and advancing Hispanics in STEM. With more than 13,000 student and professional members, SHPE's mission is to change lives by empowering the Hispanic community to realize its fullest potential and to impact the world through STEM awareness, access, support, and development. To accomplish this, SHPE provides a variety of programming, services, resources, and events, including hosting the largest Hispanic STEM convention in the nation. For more information, visit <http://shpe.org>.

