



## EXCELLENCE in EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

**Cecilia Phalen Abbott**

**TEXAS FIRST LADY**



Cecilia Abbott has devoted her life to serving others. She has been a teacher, vice-principal and the principal at several schools across Texas. Most recently, she served as the principal of the Cathedral School of Saint Mary in Austin from 1996 to 2001. Cecilia was appointed to the State Board of Educator Certification by Governor Rick Perry, where she served from 2001 to 2008.

Cecilia has also devoted much of her career to health care for seniors. From 2004 to 2013, she served as the managing director of community relations at Harden Healthcare, a network of senior adult health care facilities and services.

Cecilia is a product of the American Dream. The granddaughter of immigrants from Mexico, Cecilia was raised in San Antonio by parents who were both educators. They instilled in Cecilia, her sister and two brothers the power of education. Cecilia took that lesson to heart and went on to study for two years at the University of Texas in Austin and subsequently earned three degrees from the University of St. Thomas in Houston, a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, a Master's degree in Education and a Master's degree in Theology.

Cecilia believes strongly in giving back to the community that has given her so much. She serves on the University of St. Thomas Board of Directors and the Huston-Tillotson University Board of Directors, as well as the advisory boards for the Holy Trinity Seminary, and the Austin Diocesan School. She is also a member of the Women's Symphony League, the National Charity League, and the Dell Children's Women's Trust. She is a former member of the advisory board for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Ballet Austin and the Principals' Center at Harvard Graduate School of Education.

A prolific animal lover, Cecilia has nurtured numerous dogs into their late teens. She has raised a variety of pets including a Nubian goat named Petunia and the Abbott family dogs, Oreo and Pancake.

Cecilia is a classical music devotee, having begun playing the piano at the age of six. Her piano training came in handy when she moved into the Castilian Dorm at UT where she serenaded her future husband from behind the keyboard with music, the likes of which he had never heard.

Cecilia is a proud wife and mother, and made history when her husband Greg became Governor by becoming the first Hispanic First Lady of Texas in the history of the state. She and Greg have been married for 33 years, and they live in Austin with their daughter, Audrey.

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RSVP by May 28, 2015**