

Amanda R. Martinez

Early College High School

Mercurio Martinez, Jr. was born on July 25, 1937 in Laredo, Texas. He was the first of two children born to Mercurio and Cristina Martinez. His father was 63 years old when he was born while his mother was 42 years old. He was raised close to the downtown area known as "La Azteca" neighborhood and went to school at San Augustine which was then also downtown next to the San Augustine Cathedral. Mercurio graduated from high school in 1956 and from St. Mary's University of San Antonio in 1959. He then married his childhood sweet heart, Rosa Ancira, the same year and had their first child the next year. Mercurio received his master's degree shortly thereafter from North Texas State University which allowed him to become a college business and economics instructor at what was then known as Laredo Junior College where he worked until 1967 when he was offered a job as a banker at Union National Bank (now Wells Fargo Bank next to City Hall) . He was heavily involved in the community during this period becoming a board member and eventually president of both Laredo Junior College and Laredo Independent School District from 1968 to 1978. In 1978 he was elected to the City Council where he helped Laredo go from what was then known as a "Strong Mayor" form of government run by then Mayor Jose "Pepe" Martin to a "Weak Mayor" form of government when it elected Mayor Aldo Tatangelo to City Hall. Mercurio was then asked by the Administration of President Jimmy Carter to head the Small Business Administration Southwest Region headquartered in Dallas, Texas. When Ronald Reagan was elected President of the United States in 1982, Mercurio came back to Laredo to run for Mayor where he won the

primary election but lost in a runoff against then Mayor Tatangelo. In 1990, Mercurio was elected County Judge of Webb County where he stayed for 12 years until 2002. Since then Mercurio has taught accounting at Texas A&M International University at Laredo.