

THE TICKER



ESTRADA: "I have a big mouth."

FUNNY GIRL

Laura Estrada cheers for Dallas with vigor and a smile. BY DIANA KUNDE

SHE'S ENERGETIC AND FUNNY. AS A LEADER, SHE'S A CONSENSUS BUILDER. THAT'S WHAT people say who've worked with Laura Estrada on numerous nonprofit and civic boards.

Current chair of the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau, the president and owner of Garza Business Services Inc. has a community résumé as long as your arm.

Estrada chaired the Dallas Cultural Affairs Commission for four years. She's on Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert's downtown task force. She was president of the Dallas Women's Foundation and the Hispanic 100. She's co-chaired city bond campaigns. And that's just the short list.

"She has strong opinions, but she's always willing to listen to other opinions, and she builds consensus between very diverse communities and audiences. She's also very organized and methodical," says Pat Porter, CEO of North Texas Business for Culture and the Arts.

Talk to Estrada for five minutes and you'll get the energy part—and hear her deep and frequent laugh. This self-confessed lover of public speaking hasn't met a quip she doesn't like. "Hey," she says, "I'd rather be known as a comedian than a dull speaker."

As DCVB chair, she's a cheerleader for Dallas, "and I think I'm a really good cheerleader," Estrada says. "I have a big mouth, and I run around a lot." She's quick to tell you that Dallas was recently named the leading business and leisure destination in Texas in an independent survey—beating out San Antonio.

Estrada has played a big part helping bring events to Dallas, says Brooke Dieterlen, executive director, Hotel Association of Greater Dallas. And there's this, Dieterlen adds: "If you can sit in a meeting anywhere for an hour or two and come out with a smile on your face, it's one run by Laura Estrada."

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