

More Than A Dream:

Expanding Educational Achievement in the Latino Community



by Luis A. Ubiñas

Tomás Rivera lecture series



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF HISPANICS IN HIGHER EDUCATION 2012

More Than A Dream:

Expanding Educational Achievement in the Latino Community



The 28th Tomás Rivera Lecture

Presented at the Annual Conference of the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education

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PREFACE

Once again, Educational Testing Service (ETS) is honored to join with the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education in publishing its annual Tomás Rivera Lecture, named for a visionary educator and former trustee of ETS.

This year's speaker, Luis A. Ubiñas, President of the Ford Foundation, joins a group of outstanding lecturers who for more than a quarter century have focused our thinking and challenged us to find ways to improve education. Ubiñas brings unique perspectives to the nation's education needs, particularly in higher education. He draws on decades of commendable, innovative work by the Foundation and on his own experience growing up in the Bronx, New York City.

Fittingly, in our view, the Ford Foundation has focused its attention on community colleges, the principal point of entry for Latinos pursuing higher education. In the last two years, moreover, the Foundation has doubled the funding for the Ford Fellows program. Now 50 years old, the program had 120 very diverse participants last year, the largest number ever. It provides financial support for scholars at the pre-doctoral, dissertation and post-doctoral levels.

Ubiñas also presents a compelling case — drawing on demographic trends — for greater attention to a national calamity: how our nation is failing our Latino youngsters, failing to propel them into higher education, including education administration, and into successful, productive careers. "We must find ways to expand educational attainment in the Latino community," he said. "The future of this great country depends on our success."

This report — this lecture — is a "must read" for all of us. It lays out expertly the educational challenges, provides examples of best practices, and makes a call to action to work together. We will.

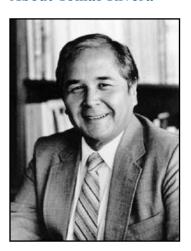
Kurt M. Landgraf President and CEO

Educational Testing Service

About the Tomás Rivera Lecture

Each year a distinguished scholar or prominent leader is selected to present the Tomás Rivera Lecture. In the tradition of the former Hispanic Caucus of the American Association for Higher Education, AAHHE is continuing this lecture at its annual conference. It is named in honor of the late Dr. Tomás Rivera, professor, scholar, poet and former president of the University of California, Riverside.

About Tomás Rivera



Author, poet, teacher and lifelong learner, Tomás Rivera was born in Texas to farm laborers who were Mexican immigrants. Neither parent had a formal education.

He received B.S. and M.Ed. degrees in English and administration from Southwest Texas State University, and his M.A. in Spanish literature and a Ph.D. in Romance languages and literature from the University of Oklahoma. Rivera also studied Spanish culture and civilization at the University of Texas, Austin and in Guadalajara, Mexico.

He taught at Sam Houston State University and was a member of the planning team that built the University of Texas, San Antonio, where he also served as chair of the Romance Languages Department, associate dean and vice president.

In 1978, Rivera became the chief executive officer at the University of Texas, El Paso, and in 1979, he became chancellor of the University of California, Riverside. Rivera was an active author, poet, and artist. By age 11 or 12, he was writing creatively about Chicano themes, documenting the struggles of migrant workers. He did not write about politics and did not view his work as political. He published several poems, short prose pieces, and essays on literature and higher education.

He served on the boards of Educational Testing Service, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the American Association for Higher Education, and the American Council on Education. In addition, Rivera was active in many charitable organizations and received many honors and awards. He was a founder and president of the National Council of Chicanos in Higher Education and served on commissions on higher education under Presidents Carter and Reagan.

Tomás Rivera Lecturers

2012	Luis Ubiñas	1997	Albert H. Kauffman
2011	Rachel F. Moran	1996	Rolando Hinojosa Smith
2010	Charles B. Reed & Jack Scott	1995	Ronald Takai
2009	Marta Tienda	1994	Norma Cantú
2008	Jaime Merisotis	1///	Tvorria Carita
2007	Sonia Nazario	1993	Gregory R. Anrig
2006	Michael A. Olivas	1992	Henry Cisneros
2005	Raúl Yzaguirre	1991	Toni Morrison
2004	Angela Oh	1990	Tomás Arciniega
2003	Piedad Robertson	1989	David Hamburg
2002	Harold L. Hodgkinson	1000	Arturo Madrid
2001	Félix Gutiérrez	1900	Arturo Madrid
2000	David Hayes-Bautista	1987	Ann Reynolds
1999	Jim Cummins	1986	Alfredo G. de los Santos Jr.
1998	Samuel Betances	1985	John Maguire

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This publication reproduces a keynote address delivered at the annual conference of AAHHE in March 2012, in Costa Mesa, California. AAHHE is grateful for the leadership of its Board of Directors and the members of its conference planning committee for their assistance in arranging for the speaker and coordinating his appearance.

At Educational Testing Service, editorial and production direction and support were provided by Sally Acquaviva, Eileen Kerrigan, Frank Gómez and Bill Petzinger. The author gratefully acknowledges the guidance and support of AAHHE and particularly its President, Loui Olivas, in the publication of the lectures by ETS. Errors of fact or interpretation are those of the author.

THE AAHHE-ETS ALLIANCE



Working in common cause with President Loui Olivas and the Board of Directors of the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education is a great pleasure. In addition to publishing the annual Tomás Rivera Lecture, ETS sponsors AAHHE's annual Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Competition of which the first prize is named for our President and CEO, Kurt M. Landgraf.

ETS also sponsors the annual Student Success Institute, an exploration of best practices for recruiting, retaining and graduating Latinos in

higher education that takes place at AAHHE's annual conference. Finally, we support Perspectivas, AAHHE's policy brief on Latino higher education issues, and I am proud to serve on its editorial board.

Yvette Donado

Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer

Ford Foundation President Delivers Tomás Rivera Lecture

Let me say that it's a great honor to be here today. There are few jobs more important in our society than that of a teacher, and there is no more important teacher than a professor. As academic leaders, your work, your teaching, your research are influencing not just the current intellectual discourse of our nation, but also the thinking of future generations of young leaders. To be asked to join such a distinguished group is an opportunity I deeply appreciate.

The institution I lead, the Ford Foundation, has for decades supported academic achievement, innovation and inclusion. It has supported great academic leaders for generations. Our commitment to those values is as strong as ever. I'm going to talk to you tonight about three very important ways that that commitment manifests itself, and I'm going to ask you, in every one of those three cases, to join us in the work.

It is my own personal belief that higher education and advanced academic research are more important and more central to the American future today than at any time in our history. In that respect I stand here today in the shadow of the man for whom this lecture is named: Tomás Rivera. Tomás was a trailblazer. His extraordinary life experience — from being the child of migrant workers to becoming the head of the University of California at Riverside — is a model for all of us focused on the issue of Latino education, and how we all make that migration from being poor to being a leader. In his life story we find the aspirations of all Latinos — and for that matter, all Americans, because that's what we are. We're Americans.

It is an aspiration that has long been part of the American story — that in this land of opportunity, anyone can find a better life for themselves and for their families. I'm speaking about people like Tomás Rivera's father, who imagined a better future for his son as he bent his back picking fruit. Or my own mother, who imagined a better future for me as she bent her back over a sewing machine. Or across this country, the millions of parents with similar aspirations for their children.

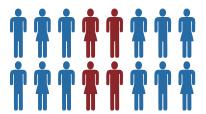
Like Tomás, and like many of you here, my family came to the United States as immigrants. When we arrived we had virtually nothing. You know, no one talks about being poor. But let me tell you something: We were poor. There wasn't food, there wasn't clothing, and sometimes we didn't have a place to live. We lived in the South Bronx at a time when the South Bronx was the most dangerous place in America. The window of educational and economic opportunity was narrow. The rungs in the ladder of success were far, far apart. And dreams were deferred as a matter of course.

It is that experience I draw on every day. And that experience drives the questions we ask ourselves at the Ford Foundation — questions about dreams attained and dreams deferred. Questions that are among the most important facing our nation today — important not only from a political perspective, but from an economic perspective and, perhaps most importantly, from the perspective of our nation's social fabric

These questions, questions of opportunity, are the questions that face all Americans. How do we restore the belief in limitless opportunity that has always defined our unique American experience? How do we make sure every American, rich or poor, new or old, knows that if he or she is willing to work hard — like my mother, like Tomás Rivera's father — this country is impatient for their contribution?

These are the questions of our time. But they are particularly relevant in the Latino community, because for all of the extraordinary progress that we have made over

U.S. Population 2022



25% of 18–29-year-olds will be Latino.

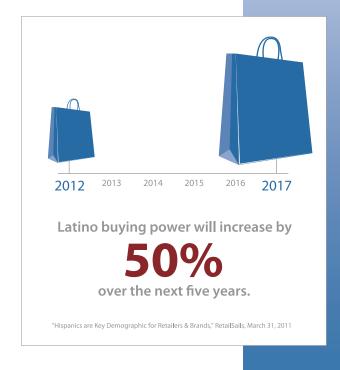
Santiago, Deborah and Patrick Callan (2010). "Ensuring America's Future: Benchmarking Latino College Completion to Meet National Goals: 2010 to 2020." ¡Excelencia in Education! the past two decades, there are still many more barriers for us to overcome.

The 2010 census, which the Ford Foundation aggressively funded, provided us with compelling evidence of how far we have come. Latinos are outgrowing the rest of the country, both in political and economic terms. Latinos are today 16 percent of the U.S. population — a 43 percent increase since 2000. Half of the total population increase in the U.S. over the last 10 years happened in the Latino community. If you are running a university, and many of you here are, remember that a decade from now — no time at all — fully 25 percent of 18-year-olds will be Latino.

But this surge in numbers translates into much more than simple demographics. It also means political and economic power. In key electoral states, Latino influence is growing. From a consumer standpoint, Latino buying power is already pivotal and it's going to increase by 50 percent in just the next five years — economic growth faster than that of India or China, right here in our country. In media, the top Spanish-language television network, Univision, is now America's number-four broadcaster, often ahead of NBC.

Quite simply, we are living in a very different world than when Tomás Rivera was alive. But maintaining this progress will depend, in large measure — it may depend exclusively, in fact — on the way we educate the current and coming generations of Latinos. I offer this thought not as pablum, but as recognition of the profound complexity of today's world.

The complexity of skills and knowledge required to contribute and succeed in our technology-driven world is unmatched in history. Academic rigor and pursuits have never been more essential to the progress of individuals and nations. It is that complexity, and the role of academic life in preparing citizens to tackle it, that makes the problem of Latino educational achievement critical.



As a community, Latinos remain behind. For example, since 1990, the Latino dropout rate has fallen by almost 50 percent. It's impressive, and a notable accomplishment. But that dropout rate is still double the national average and higher than that of any other group in the country. In math and reading, Latino fourth-graders and eighth-graders have shown significant improvement in their test scores, but they lag behind their White counterparts.

The root of this problem is all too familiar. As the Department of Education reported just last week, Latino students are far more likely to find themselves in underperforming schools with poor facilities and fewer-than-average resources. They are far more likely to be taught by ineffective and inexperienced teachers, and to be taught for too few hours and too few days. What does it mean for America to have a huge segment of the next generation — as much as 25 percent of the country — mired in these poor-performing schools?

Somewhere in a classroom today is a young Latino who has the potential to be the next Barack Obama, the next Mark Zuckerberg or the next Tomás Rivera ... and that potential is being lost to our nation. How can we make sure this child, with an idea that might change the world, is able to compete, to succeed, to contribute? How do we make sure that that child, in a below-average school, with no real access to technology, with few assets that will enable him or her to make their way in the world, isn't left behind?

I want to talk to you about some of the ways we are working at the Ford Foundation to answer these questions. We are supporting a host of initiatives to improve academic performance in underserved communities across the country. The one that we are most excited about, the one that I spend the most time thinking about, is an effort gathering momentum daily: extended learning time.

Our support for this effort is based on the belief — grounded in significant empirical research — that the more time kids spend in school with teachers, the better off they're going to be. It's based on the idea that we need a school calendar that moves us toward longer school days, longer school weeks and longer school years.

Remember that when we close a school in the middle of the afternoon, at three or even earlier, children don't go home to the idyllic wonderland of 1950s TV, with the proverbial Mrs. Cleaver with milk and cookies and a hug waiting for them. For most kids, especially those in poor or under-resourced communities, there is no afternoon snack, no cartoons on television, no hug. The hours of 3 to 6 p.m. are the most important hours of the day for the most vulnerable of our nation's children. These are the 180 minutes when, for millions of kids, destiny is decided — when choices are made or not made that have the potential to determine what happens to them for the rest of their lives.

Will they join their friends in experimenting with drugs and alcohol? Will they run with gangs in committing crimes? Will they have unprotected sex, scarring not one but potentially two lives? These are the things happening in the time when schools sit idle. And it doesn't have to be this way. We know that when kids are in classrooms longer, with teachers longer, the results are transformative: lower crime rates, lower rates of drug use, lower levels of sexual activity. We also know that when kids spend more time in school they're better behaved, have higher attendance rates, score better on standardized tests, are less likely to drop out, and graduate at a higher rate.

For students in extended learning time schools, it means a more well-rounded and comprehensive education. More exposure to not only the essential subjects of reading, writing and arithmetic, but also those areas that are increasingly shortchanged: art, music, drama and athletics. Quite simply, for the 15 million kids who have nowhere to go after school — many of whom are already starting the educational race one or two steps behind — an extended school day can mean the difference between success and failure. And let's not forget the parents: we know that they lose time, we know that they lose work. For parents, extended learning time means more time and attention at work earning a wage.

"We need a school calendar that moves us toward longer school days, longer school weeks and longer school years."

It is the cascading positive outcomes of a longer school day that make it a powerful and transformational tool. At the Ford Foundation, we view expanded learning time as more than just a way to build better schools. It is a means for building stronger and more self-sustaining communities, particularly in our nation's poorest neighborhoods.

Let me give you an example: Brooklyn's Generation High School, in New York. In collaboration with teachers, they have used creative staffing, staggered vacation time and outside internships to increase the number of school days from 180 to 200, at no added cost. In the school's most recent graduating class, 90 percent of its seniors finished on time and the same percentage went to college. By the way, when these students entered Generation High from a part-time, part-year middle school, only about 20 percent of them were reading at close to grade level.

On April 19 of this year, the Ford Foundation will be part of a partnership launching a national campaign advocating for an expanded and redesigned school day. It's called Time to Succeed. I ask that everyone here today, no matter where and what you teach, join us in this effort by engaging local political and education leaders — the people who matter in your communities — in an effort to make the school day longer for children in your community. It is vital to realizing the vast educational potential of our nation's children and of our community that leaders in higher education like yourselves lend your voice to evidence-driven, nonpartisan efforts such as this one. I urge you to become involved.

Now, this is just one aspect of Ford's current commitment to education in America. The future of our children and the future of this country will be defined not just by what we do in primary and secondary schools, but by what we do in higher education. Here, our progress as a community remains uncertain and incomplete. And I'll be tough about this: That lack of progress in higher education in the Latino community is, simply put, unacceptable.

At a time when academic achievement is so vitally important to the world around us — from public policy to the development of new technologies — leaving a quarter of our population behind undermines the future of America. It's not about the Latino community; it's about the country. To compete in a challenging global environment, we simply cannot have a generation of Latino students for whom four-year college is the exception rather than the norm. It simply cannot be.

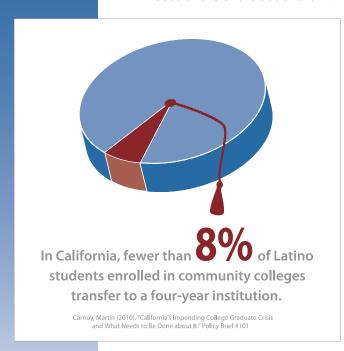
But we know that for far too many Latinos, the road to college remains shrouded and impenetrable. And here I speak again from personal experience. I remember

"To compete in a challenging global environment, we simply cannot have a generation of Latino students for whom four-year college is the exception rather than the norm. It simply cannot be."

decades ago, my first meeting with a college counselor. I brought my mother, who had not even graduated from high school. The counselor's first question was, where would I like to go? What college meant the most to me? The most basic question. You know what my answer was? "I have no idea." I had no idea about a place like UC Irvine; I certainly had no idea about Harvard. Because the road was unclear. Because outreach was inadequate. Because even in my environment, in a very good school on scholarship, it wasn't part of my aspiration set to the extent that I would have a vision of where I might go.

At Ford, we're approaching this problem from two angles. One is improving how community colleges work. The second is creating the next generation of Latino educational leaders like Tomás Rivera.

The importance of community colleges to Latino education should be obvious to all of us here. More than half of all Latino college students attend a community college. I've seen firsthand the work of these institutions. In Brownsville, Texas, where under the leadership of Juliet García, the University of Texas at Brownsville has become a true community university combining the best elements of a community college with the academic standards of a university. I've seen it in New York, where Félix Rodríguez and his predecessor Dolores Fernández have turned Hostos Community College into not only one of the finest community colleges in the country, but also a place that serves the educational and cultural needs of the entire South Bronx. A community hub.



Over the years we at Ford have supported these institutions and many others institutions that offer a professional and educational gateway for millions of young Latinos. Not only are they providing training that is academically rigorous, they are offering a foot in the door on the path toward higher education.

But that path from community college to a four-year college is truly difficult. When I heard the following statistic I could hardly believe it: In the state of California, fewer than eight percent of Latino students who enroll in community college end up successfully making their way through a four-year

institution. Eight percent. One in 12. That's an outcome our country simply cannot afford.

At Ford, we are focused on supporting efforts to ensure universal transfer for community college credits, so that kids don't spend their hard-earned money and their loan dollars getting an associate's degree and then being shut out of four-year schools. We are focused on helping to improve the performance of community colleges by holding them to standards that ensure they are gateways to the future for students. And we are focused on ensuring that the curricula at these institutions match the needs of the jobs marketplace.

We cannot succeed in improving Latino education if we don't make the strengthening of community colleges a national priority. I hope everyone here will join me in doing everything we can at a local and national level to build those pathways to four-year college or to work.

The second thing we are doing in higher education is deeply familiar to many of you. Some young Latinos have broken through. Some have the opportunity to not just graduate from college, but to enter academia. To join the ranks of those whose job it is to build the future. That's why two years ago we doubled funding to our Ford Fellows program, which, by the way, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. We had the largest Ford Fellows class in the history of the program this year: 120 aspiring, young, diverse academics.

The idea behind Ford Fellows is a simple one: Increasing the diversity of our nation's higher education institutions begins by increasing the diversity of students at those same institutions. Through our Fellows program, we provide financial support for scholars at the pre-doctoral, dissertation and post-doctoral levels and make it possible for them to move up the academic ladder. The Ford Fellows program has, for the past 50 years, been opening up opportunities for thousands of scholars. In all, more than 5,000 academics have received a Ford fellowship. I'm sure a good number of you here today were Ford Fellows.

What we've seen over the years is that the Fellows program has made an enormous difference for scholars from many diverse backgrounds, including Latinos. I'm told that there are about 2,000 Latino Ford Fellows. According to a recent survey of Ford Fellows done by this very organization, more than a third reported that the fellowship gave them the opportunity to enter a doctoral program. Seventy-seven percent said that a Ford fellowship made it possible for them to complete their dissertation work. A similar percentage viewed the opportunity as integral to securing an appointment in the academy.

We've found that the fellowships are providing a critical helping hand in the development and mentoring of a whole generation of diverse scholars. According to this recent survey, "Most Fellows simply could not have completed their degrees or dissertations, advanced in their careers, and fulfilled important academic roles as professors, initiators of programs and as academic leaders" without a Ford fellowship.

I mentioned Juliet García at the University of Texas in Brownsville. She was a Ford Fellow. But I could have also mentioned Dr. Alexander González, President of the Cal State University, Sacramento. He did his post-doctoral work at Stanford, as a Ford Fellow. Or Elsa Núñez, the President of Eastern Connecticut University, who received her doctorate in linguistics from Rutgers as a Ford Fellow. Or Ileana Rodríguez-García, the President of the Carlos Albizu University, who received a Ford fellowship to work on leadership training for community college administration. I could go on.

I was struck by a letter we received recently from Patricia Penn Hilden, professor emerita at the University of California, Berkeley, who had this to say about the program:

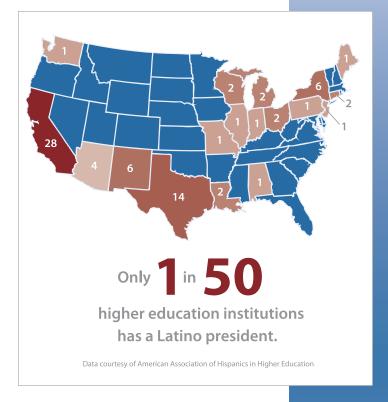
"Over my many years, I watched many of our very best students find financial, intellectual, and emotional support from their Ford Foundation awards. Today, almost all of those who were Ford recipients are themselves young professors. I smile when I reflect on their accomplishments — books, articles, teaching awards. Because the world of minority scholars has grown, the entire scholarly world has broadened and deepened."

When I read words like these I can't help but ask: What would happen to the world of education if we were able to produce 100 new Latino professors a year? What would happen if we replicated that success for 25 years and brought 2,500 new Latino professors into the academy? What would academia look like in 2037? How much broader and how much deeper would it be?

I challenge each and every one of you to go home and find the most promising, most brilliant Ph.D. student or young academic you know and ask him or her to apply for this fellowship. And I ask you to do this each and every year. These young Ph.D.s are the seed corn of our future.

Right now, only two percent of higher education institutions have a Latino president. Fewer Latinos run higher educational institutions than run Fortune 500 companies. One in 50, in a country that is one-sixth Latino. What we do today to build a cadre of promising young academic leaders will determine whether that gap is filled tomorrow.

I am sometimes astonished by how much we've accomplished as a community. In many ways, we're the newest Americans — following the path, in all its complexity and challenge, of the many great migrations before us, the migrations that have populated this country. We've made extraordinary progress: Our ranks have grown, our influence has increased, our political and economic power is a growing force.



But the work that lies ahead is the toughest. We need to take these advances and turn them into an agenda for positive change. And we need to ensure that our growing economic and political clout can be utilized as a tool for opening the doors to higher education for more young Latinos. An agenda: Longer school days to ensure basic education. Community colleges as gateways rather than end points. And, perhaps most important, paths to academia so that we have people building the future.

Let me close by saying again: Never before have academia and academic achievement been more important. The path to success in our society today passes through college and advanced degrees. But let me also say that this is our responsibility. This is your responsibility. We are the vanguard of a giant generational wave. We must find ways to expand educational attainment in the Latino community. The future of this great country depends on our success.

Tomás Rivera bequeathed to us the responsibility to change the world of education for the better. Our charge is to fully realize that vision. The poet Carl Sandberg reminds us, "Nothing happens unless first a dream." It is our job to turn those dreams into a reality.

Luis A. Ubiñas Biography

Luis A. Ubiñas is President of the Ford Foundation, the second-largest philanthropy in the United States, with more than \$10 billion in assets and \$500 million in annual giving. The foundation operates worldwide and has offices in Asia, Africa, and Central and South America.

Since taking leadership at Ford in 2008, Ubiñas has built a program strategy focused on increasing the participation of poor and marginalized individuals and communities in the economic, social and political opportunities afforded by their societies. He has focused on how new technology and social media can reshape the way nonprofits deliver results for those they serve. To maximize the resources available to grantees, Ubiñas also led the restructuring of the foundation's operations and endowment management.

Prior to joining the Ford Foundation, Ubiñas was a director at McKinsey & Company, leading the firm's media practice on the West Coast, where he worked with technology, telecommunications and media companies to develop and implement strategies and improve operations. Much of his work focused on the opportunities and challenges represented by the growth of Internet and wireless technologies.

Ubiñas serves on several nonprofit, government and corporate boards and advisory committees, including the World Bank Advisory Council of Global Foundation Leaders, the Advisory Committee for the U.S.-China 100,000 Strong Initiative, and the boards of the New York Public Library and the Collegiate School for Boys. He also serves on the Board of Electronic Arts and on the U.S. Advisory Committee on Trade Policy and Negotiation.

Ubiñas is a graduate of Harvard College, where he was named a Truman Scholar, and Harvard Business School, where he graduated with highest honors. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

He is married to Deborah L. Tolman, professor of social welfare and psychology at Hunter College School of Social Work and The Graduate Center, City University of New York. They have two sons.

About ETS

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