

# Latinxs and Hispanics in Mathematical Sciences



## Javier Rojo

Growing up in México, Javier Rojo's goal was to become a major league player—playing for the NY Yankees. His parents had a lot of influence on his early development, pushing him to be the best he could be. Not having had an opportunity to go beyond a few years of elementary education, his parents understood that education was the way to a better life. Javier played college baseball as an undergraduate at UTEP, and played in semi-pro leagues in México. He was selected to play in the 1968 Pan-American games, but playing in a state tournament he broke his ankle and the dream of becoming a professional baseball player suddenly disappeared. As a consequence, he had to concentrate on pursuing a graduate degree. As a graduate student in Berkeley, he had tremendous support from his wife and children who constantly encouraged him and never allowed him to give up. Javier had excellent support in Berkeley working with Erich Lehmann and Julie Shaffer. He is currently the Seneca C. and Mary B. Weeks endowed chair of statistics and Chair of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Nevada at Reno.

The REU program (RUSIS@UNR) has also been a source of great professional satisfaction for Javier. More than two hundred students have gone through the program. A substantial percentage of these students have pursued graduate degrees in the mathematical and statistical sciences. The American Mathematical Society, in 2014, recognized RUSIS with the award “Programs that make a difference” in recognition of the impact of the program in mentoring of students and encouraging them to pursue graduate studies. About 61% of the participants are members of underrepresented and nontraditional groups in the mathematical and statistical sciences.

Javier is an elected Fellow of the following societies: American Statistical Association, The Institute of Mathematical Statistics, The American Association for the Advancement of Science, and is an elected member of the International Statistical Institute. He also received the 2010 Don Owen award from the American Statistical Association. He has served (1998-1999) as program director in the statistics and probability programs in NSF and has participated as a member and as chair of two subcommittees in the 2013 NSF-DMS Committee of Visitors. He will again be serving in the NSF-DMS Committee of Visitors in 2016.

*“The number of Ph.D. degrees earned by Hispanics continues to grow and the diversity of areas within the mathematical and statistical sciences where Hispanics are making headway is also on the increase. In parallel with this growth, the need to have better and more easily available mentorship has increased. The need for institutionalizing mentoring programs for Hispanics and other underrepresented students has never been more critical. SACNAS, for many years, and the Math Alliance in the last few years, has been doing an excellent job in providing a forum for Hispanic and other students to develop their professional skills. It is hoped, however, that more mathematics and statistics departments join these and other associations in providing an environment where Hispanic, and more generally underrepresented, students can receive mentorship and encouragement in pursuing graduate degrees in the mathematical and statistical sciences.”*

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Lathisms was founded in 2016 in order to showcase the contributions of Latinx and Hispanic mathematicians during Hispanic Heritage Month, which is celebrated in the United States from September 15 and October 15 every year. During this time, we feature/reveal a prominent Latinx/Hispanic mathematician daily. See all the featured mathematical scientists at [LATHISMS.ORG](http://LATHISMS.ORG).

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