

# Latinxs and Hispanics in Mathematical Sciences



## Hortensia Soto

*“Hispanic Heritage Month means we are part of this country, we contribute to this country, and we are here to stay. It means that the sacrifice that my parents made for us was not in vain. It means that the work that my elementary teachers did for me is recognized. It means that I have a voice and that I can serve as a role model for others—regardless of their gender, their race, their sexual orientation, their religion, etc. It means that as a Hispanic mathematics educator, I am valued.”*

Hortensia Soto was born in Jalisco, Mexico. When she was one, she, her older sister, and her parents immigrated to rural western Nebraska where she was raised on a farm. This is where she learned the value of a strong work ethic; it is also where she learned that she wanted an education. Her parents, who both have a third-grade education, taught her and modeled that through hard work, anything was possible. Hortensia is extremely grateful to her teachers who were patient with her, especially when she was first learning English. A pivotal moment in Hortensia’s life was when her 5th grade teacher, Mrs. Calvert, kept her in during recess so that Hortensia could catch up and be part of the group with the high grades. In high school, Hortensia was the substitute mathematics teacher when needed. Although she was certain she did not want to teach, today it is her passion. Hortensia earned her degrees from Chadron State College, University of Arizona, and University of Northern Colorado. She is currently a professor in the School of Mathematical Sciences at the University of Northern Colorado, where she works with prospective and in-service K-16 mathematics teachers. Hortensia is fortunate to be at an institution where she has the opportunity to blend her research and teaching and, thus, continually revises her teaching. Through her teaching, outreach efforts, and professional development, she always strives to “pay it forward” by opening doors for others as her teachers did for her. Most importantly, Hortensia is the mom of a good-hearted young man named Miguel.

As a mathematics educator, Hortensia’s work overlaps research, teaching, mentoring, and service endeavors. She has published in various areas of mathematics education including assessment, mathematical preparation of elementary teachers, outreach programs for high school girls, and especially in the area of teaching and learning of undergraduate mathematics. Her current research efforts related to the teaching and learning of complex analysis are paving the road in a new content domain and inform how to teach the course by blending geometric and algebraic reasoning.

Hortensia has also been involved with facilitating professional development for K-16 teachers in Nebraska, Colorado, and California. She has also taught teachers from rural Nebraska as part of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln NSF-funded project, Math in the Middle. Currently, she is delivering professional development to collegiate teachers as part of Project PROMESAS SSC (Pathways with Regional Outreach and Mathematics Excellence for Student Achievement in STEM). Most recently, Hortensia received the MAA Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics.

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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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