



# Vidal M. Treviño

## School of Communications and Fine Arts

Part of the Laredo Independent School District  
2102 East Lyon St., Laredo, Texas 78043  
Department of Print journalism/online media/creative writing/CTE

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January 31, 2019

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Justyne Bernal has proven herself a goal-oriented, self-directed person and is a valued 4-year member of the state- and nationally recognized Magnet Tribune student newspaper staff at Vidal M. Treviño School of Communications and Fine Arts.

She is the type of exemplary student-athlete who is most deserving of the Sorrell Scholarship in Print Journalism/Online Media.

In addition to her work as a reporter, photographer, and blogger, Justyne is also an op-ed columnist, writing a hard-hitting opinion column called The Bug.

Her work is located on The Magnet Tribune's website at <https://magnettribune.org/staff/?writer=Justyne%20Bernal>

A senior who also attends J.W. Nixon High School, Justyne has been on the staffs of three newspapers so far that have received awards for excellence from the National Scholastic Press Association and the Interscholastic League Press Conference (state scholastic press group).

This is often the way she works: Justyne approaches me with ideas she has for news or features stories or for The Bug, then works on her own, requiring little supervision. She contacts me when she wants advice or is ready for editing and revising.

One standout story she published last school year is a profile of Laredo Mayor Pete Saenz. In order to get this story, Justyne emailed and called the mayor's office, made an appointment for a particular day, asked me to arrange for an excused absence for the morning she spent at his office, and took a photograph of the mayor.

Recent examples of content Justyne has published include:

- The Bug opinion column on the government shutdown
- Photos of the school's 16 de septiembre celebration in 2017
- Helping to shoot a video of the school's 9/11 ceremony in 2017
- A feature story on a Laredo woman finding herself at the University of Texas at Austin
- The Bug op-ed columns on DACA recipients and on patriotism
- Photos and video of the Nixon-Martin "Hammer Bowl" game in 2017, and
- Blogs featuring her photography

Another standout story from last school year is a profile of Congressman Henry Cuellar. She scheduled a 5-minute telephone interview with him, and published the story Feb. 23.

In addition to what she has published online and in the print issues of The Magnet Tribune, Justyne participates in the newspaper staff's annual photography exhibition at the Laredo Center

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**Mark Webber**, print journalism/online media/creative writing/CTE instructor  
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for the Arts, which is held in April.

Justine has received journalism awards from a state organization, Texas Association of Journalism Educators: Superior in Multimedia Presentation, and Honorable Mention in General Column in spring 2017, and attended the National Press Photographers Advanced Storytelling Workshop (video) at Texas State University in April 2017.

She also volunteers at VMT's Hispanic Heritage Festival helping with setting up booths and managing tickets. She is also a member of The Magnet Tribune Newspaper Club, Chess Club, and Class of 2019.

Justyne has earned 12 hours so far with Dual Enrollment through Laredo Community College, is taking a course this fall, and plans to take another in the spring.

Justyne was also a Student Council member, is a 3-year member of Youth Leadership of Laredo, and is a member of her church's confirmation class.

As a volunteer, Justyne has assisted at VMT's Hispanic Heritage Festival, helps with local basketball tournaments, helps at her church's fall carnival, helps young girl scouts at their Christmas breakfast, and donates and delivers food at Bethany House.

Other major highlights of Justyne's high school career:

—Attended a McCombs School of Business program at UT-Austin, "Discover Yourself in Accounting Majors and Careers (DYNAMC) during summer 2017. (Note: in is correct.)

—Mock Trial at Municipal Court. Was part of the defense on a capital murder trial.

At her home school J.W. Nixon, Justyne has received athlete academic awards Triple A Silver Award 2017 and Triple A Gold Award 2018. In addition, she is active in Junior Achievement, Laredo Youth Leadership, and National Honor Society. She is also a member of the Spanish Honor Society.

This year, she plans to participate in UIL Accounting, Debate, and participate on the Homecoming Committee and Prom Committee in addition to the Student Council.

She is ranked 10th in her class of 479 with a GPA of 101.76455.

Justyne is also a member of Laredo Youth Leadership, and volunteers with St. Augustine basketball tournaments and the Salvation Army.

Justyne is a natural leader and is well liked and respected among her peers. I urge you to choose her as the Sorrell Scholarship in Print Journalism/Online Media recipient.

Sincerely,



Mark Webber

Instructor of journalism/online media/creative writing/CTE

Adviser, The Magnet Tribune student paper and Ruminations Creative Writing Magazine