

# Literary and Media Stars

## People who wrote the book on the literary and media scenes

By **Diane Holloway**

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Even if you don't watch KXAN's nightly newscasts, you've probably seen anchor Michelle Valles buzzing around town.



Amber Novak

FOR AMERICAN-STATESMAN

[\(enlarge photo\)](#)

Michelle Valles has become a local celebrity as co-anchor of KXAN's evening news. 'It is rewarding to be a good role model, especially with low-income kids,' says Valles, who started a \$2,000 scholarship at her alma mater, Bel Air High School in El Paso.

**Photo gallery**

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**Fortunate 500**

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[Movies](#)  
[Charity](#)  
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[The alphabetical list](#)

The petite El Paso native with the blinding smile visits local schools, serves as mistress of ceremonies at charity events and volunteers with do-good groups all over Austin. Dear to her heart is the Muscular Dystrophy Association, which she has been involved with for seven years, hosting the Jerry Lewis Telethon in El Paso before taking over here.

"I wouldn't want to spend my Labor Day weekend doing anything else," says Valles, 30.

Valles also works with the American Heart Association, the American Diabetes Association and the Aguila Awards, which honor Hispanics in Texas. She's especially proud of a \$2,000 scholarship she started for students at her alma mater, Bel Air High School in El Paso.

"I'm not looking for the highest GPA, and they don't have to be Hispanic," Valles says. "The only requirement is that they leave town for college. I want them to step outside their comfort zone."

Co-anchoring the news with Robert Hadlock gives Valles a degree of celebrity.

"It's a very strange power," she says. "You have to be careful and give the right message. But it is rewarding to be a good role model, especially with low-income kids. I tell them their disadvantages are advantages. When you've been given everything, you don't have that hunger for things to be better."

Valles comes from humble origins, too. Her father was a teacher who became an abusive alcoholic and left the family when Michelle was 9. Her mother went to work as a janitor.

Valles came to the University of Texas on a one-way plane ticket and worked at the Jalisco Bar to support herself. After graduating, she returned to El Paso and advanced from part-time reporter to weeknight anchor at the NBC station affiliate.

As for the future, Valles says she'd be "perfect on 'The View,' " but has no plans to leave Austin. She isn't longing for marriage and a family — and she feels guilty about that.

"I just don't know, but if I don't do those things, I better do *something*," she says. "So I really try to use my position to influence kids in a positive way."

**Lidia Agraz**

Time-Warner Cable

**John Aielli**

KUT

**Sammy Allred**

KVET

**Sarah Bird**

'The Flamenco Academy', Texas Monthly

**Olga Campos and Kevin Benz**

KVUE, News 8 Austin, Austin Junior League, March of Dimes, Girl Scouts

**Fred Cantú**

KEYE

**Gary Cartwright**

Texas Monthly

**Elizabeth Christian and Bruce Todd**

Elizabeth Christian Associates, public affairs consultant

**Bob Cole**

KVET

**Mary Anne Connolly**

Austin Woman, Conspirare

**Kevin Connor**

Music & Entertainment Television

**Monica Davis**

The Davis Group, International Association of Broadcast Monitors

**Zarghun and Eddaicsa (Eddy) Dean**

Tribeza, Austin magazine

**Jody Denberg**

KGSR

**Dale Dudley**

KLBJ

**Betty Sue Flowers**

LBJ Library and Museum

**Bob Fonseca**

KLBJ

**Robert Hadlock**

KXAN, CASA, Easter Seals

**Michael Hall**

Texas Monthly

**Stephen Harrigan**

'Challenger Park,' Texas Monthly

**Mary Herman**

Texas Book Festival

**Donna and Steve Hicks**

Stockton Hicks Laffey, Capstar Partners

**Jim Hornfischer**

Hornfischer Literary Management

**Molly Ivins**

Creators Syndicate

**Brette Lea**

UT Performing Arts Center

**David Lindsey**

'The Face of the Assassin'

**Jill McGuckin**

McGuckin Entertainment PR

**Judy Maggio**

KEYE-TV, Blue Santa, Children's Hospital of Austin

**Libby and Bruce Malon**

Professional Management Group, Austin Parks Foundation

**Lance Avery Morgan**  
Brilliant Magazine

**Jeff Nightbyrd**  
Acclaim Talent, Armadillo Podcasts

**Joe Nick Patoski**  
KGSR-FM

**Steven Phenix**  
Phenix Rising, Armadillo Podcasts

**Cactus Pryor**  
KLBJ

**Wayne Slater**  
Dallas Morning News

**Jim Spencer**  
KXAN, Jerry Lewis Telethon (MDA), Helping Hand Home for children, ARC of the Capitol Area

**Tom Spencer**  
KLRU

**Tom Staley**  
UT Ransom Center

**Bart Stephens**  
West Austin News

**Bruce Sterling**  
'Visionary in Residence'

**Bill Stotesbery**  
KLRU, Hart InterCivic

**Maury Sullivan**  
KLRU

**Kerry Tate**  
TateAustin

**Sally and Bill Wittliff**  
Southwestern Writers Collection and Wittliff Gallery of Southwestern and Mexican Photography at  
Texas State University The New Yorker, CAST

