



Joe Robles

“WE’VE HIRED MORE THAN 9,000 VETERANS AND MILITARY SPOUSES SINCE 2006. WE LEAD BY EXAMPLE, SHOWING OTHER COMPANIES THAT VETERANS MAKE A WONDERFUL WORKFORCE.”

LEADERSHIP LEGACY:

- ▶ Member of the USAA Board of Directors
- ▶ Special Assistant to the Chairman, President and CEO at USAA
- ▶ Chief Financial Officer, Controller and Corporate Treasurer at USAA
- ▶ Chief Administrative Officer at USAA
- ▶ President and Chief Executive Officer at USAA

IN THE COMMUNITY:

- ▶ Chairman, P16Plus Council of Greater Bexar County Foundation
- ▶ Former Chairman and current board member, CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health System
- ▶ Life Board Member, CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Children’s Hospital
- ▶ Board Member, San Antonio’s Early Childhood Education Municipal Development Corp.

BY ASHLEY FESTA

During his final week as president and CEO of USAA, Josue “Joe” Robles walked the floors one last time, expressing personal thanks to his employees before he retired.

“It’s the people that I’ll miss most, no question about it,” Robles said. “The employees are what make it happen, giving their best every day to take care of our members who have sacrificed so much for our nation.”

He wanted to make sure they all knew that he valued their contribution to the USAA team. Thanks to their help, Robles was able to build USAA into the good corporate citizen it has become.

“If you empower employees to do things, they’ll do it to the best of their abilities,” Robles said. “Don’t just sit in your office. Talk to employees, and ask for feedback. The more you get the employees and the leadership involved, the better off you’ll be.”

That is especially true when it comes to technology, Robles discovered. He

encouraged employees to submit innovative ideas to simplify life for USAA members. He also allowed employees to vote on the best ideas to pursue, rather than requiring high-level approval. That approach propelled the number of patents USAA held from five, when he took the helm in 2007, to more than 550 as he stepped down in 2015.

One of the most notable patents is the Deposit@Mobile app, which allows members to deposit checks into their accounts from anywhere. Simply snap a photo of the check, and the app instantly deposits the money.

While Robles wants to develop technology to make life better for members, he also has worked to improve the San Antonio community as a whole. Born in Puerto Rico, Robles moved to the U.S. as a youngster when his father took a job as a laborer in an industrial town in Ohio. He watched his hardworking father and saw the needs of the community, which didn’t offer the social programs of today.

“I decided if I ever had the chance, I’d give back, especially in communities that

have great need,” Robles said. “When I’m not working, I give back to make the city all it can be.”

That includes supporting community-minded programs, which he plans to continue serving post-retirement. Robles led the Bexar County United Way campaign to a record result in 2010, and he also co-chaired then-mayor Julián Castro’s Brainpower Initiative. Robles – along with the rest of the task force – visited other cities to create a model for education programs in San Antonio. Born from that research was the early childhood education initiative called Pre-K 4 SA, which is funded through sales tax and provides quality prekindergarten services for eligible 4-year-olds.

“It’s a unique opportunity to do something that’s forward-thinking in the community,” Robles said. “There are lots of economic and social needs in this community, and it’s in our best interest to help people who need help. First, because it’s the right thing to do, and also because we want local citizens to be educated in skills we need.”