

Celebration and Recognition of Influential Hispanic Americans

Hispanic Heritage Month

Sylvia Mendez

I believe everyone should know about Sylvia Mendez and her story because it was crucial for ending segregation and providing everyone an undivided system for education today.

- Born June 7th, 1936 in Santa Ana, California
- In 1944, Sylvia's parents were trying to enroll her into Westminister Elementary School, a "whites-only" school, but her application got denied because she was of darker color & had a hispanic last name
- Her parents took this up to court in what is now known as the "Mendez v. Westminster" case in 1946, & on April 14th, 1947, they won the case
- After the ruling, Sylvia & her siblings were one of the first Hispanics to attend an all-white school, & California's governor, Earl Warren, moved to desegregate all public schools and other public areas in the state
- Not only that, but the Mendez v. Westminster case set an important precedent for ending segregation in the United States



Mario Molina

Was a Mexican chemist who played a pivotal role in the discovery of the antarctic ozone hole. He was the 3rd Mexican-born person to receive a Nobel Prize. As well as the 1st Mexican-born scientist to receive the nobel prize in chemistry. Molina was a also a climate policy advisor to the President of Mexico. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Barack Obama for his contributions as a “visionary chemist and environmental scientist.”

Everyone should know who Molina is because of his important role in discovering the threat to Earth's ozone layer from chlorofluorocarbon gases.

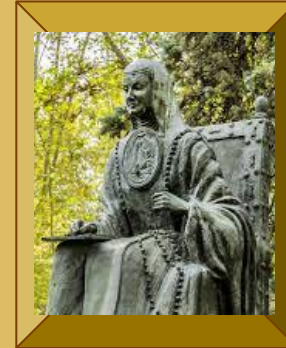
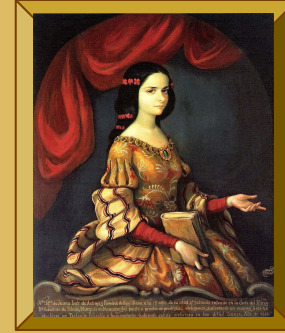
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ENksmSbqpU>



SOR JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ NOVEMBER 12, 1651 – APRIL 17, 1695

Doña Inés de Asbaje y Ramírez de Santillana, better known as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz was a writer of many books. Including Primero Sueño en Respuesta a sor Filotea de la Cruz. She is credited as the first published feminist of the New World. Cruz believed in women's rights and was a strong advocate. Due to her advocacy and her intelligence, she was subject to many misogynistic attacks. Cruz's legacy still lives on strong today. The University of the Cloister of Sor Juana honored her many scholarly achievements with a symbolic altar and a tag at the end of the school's name. Her image appears on Mexican currency, the 200 peso bill.

She is important to know about because she was the first person to call out the hypocrisy of men blaming women for issues that they themselves created.



Aida Giachello

Is a respected educator and researcher on Hispanic/Latino health who has long been involved in community mobilization and action. She founded several organizations including the Midwest Hispanic AIDS Coalition. She has served on numerous local and national boards. Helping address health and human services issues of racial and ethnic minorities. Currently, she is a research professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine.

Everyone should know who she is because she is a strong advocate for increasing cultural proficiency & competency in health services delivery, ensuring a greater number of Hispanic health care professionals and researcher.



Raúl Rafael Carlos Juliá Arcelay March 9, 1940 – October 24, 1994

Raul Julia opened the doors to many Latino artists in film and television from the 1970s through the 1990s. Every role he stepped into, he tried to rethink and redefine what it meant to be Hispanic in America. His infamous role in *Kiss of Spider Woman*, brought him roles in *Street Fighter* and what people know him for, Gomez Addams in *Addams Family Values*. He brought attention to world hunger and Puerto Rico independence, along with using his status to give voices to young people of color trying to make it in the acting scene. He is remembered as a caring and loving father, always wanting to be the best for his son and wife.

People should know who we really is because he fought and spoke for people who weren't able to. He believed in following your dreams and providing a pathway for Latinos everywhere that they can have a dream, and it can come true.



Dolores Huerta

Dolores Huerta is an American labor leader and civil rights activist who worked alongside Cesar Chavez. She co-founded the National Farmworkers Association. She was breaking gender barriers while improving working conditions. Advocated for family participation with non-violence movements. Taught poor immigrants their rights, benefits, agencies that protect them and their personal powers they have to stop being taken advantage of as farm workers. She was just as influential as Cesar Chavez, helping countless workers and their families yet doesn't get nearly as much recognition.



María Lorena Ramírez

- María Lorena Ramírez Hernández is an indigenous long-distance runner
- Ramírez made international news for winning the Ultra Trail Cerro Rojo 50-kilometer(31 miles) race in Tlatlauquitepec, Puebla, Mexico.
- Ramírez ran the race in **seven hours and three minutes**,
- she runs in a long skirt and sandals made from recycled rubber
- In 2019, Netflix made a documentary about her

[Link for trailer](#)



Demi Lovato

- Her full name is Demetria Devonne Lovato and she was born on August 20, 1992 (age 30 years), Albuquerque, NM
- Her parents are Dianna De La Garza and Patrick Lovato
- She is a singer, model, guitarist, songwriter, businessperson, child actor, dancer, pianist, lyricist, film score composer, TV personality, and philanthropist
- Lovato has been a mental health activist since 2015 when they revealed they were diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Wanting to help others struggling with mental illness, Lovato started the Mental Health Fund, which provides people with free counseling during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Cesar Chavez

Born in Arizona to a Mexican American family, Cesar Chavez grew up around the people he later helped through his activism. The defining moment in Chavez's life came when his family moved to California during the Great Depression to become farm workers, cementing his fight for farmers rights. He should be remembered because he helped with the struggle of farm workers in the United States to improve their working and living conditions through organizing and negotiating contracts with their employers.

Video link : <https://youtu.be/Wznw9TA2jXk>



Octaviano Larrazolo

Nickname: Silver-Tongued Orator
Due to his eloquent rhetoric in Spanish and English.

Who Is He?

Larrazolo is a Republican lawyer from New Mexico immigrated to the United States. He was the first Hispanic Senator elected in U.S. history.



Importance: Larrazolo built a political career around his persistent defense of Hispanic civil rights. He had forced both parties to acknowledge the concerns of Hispanic New Mexicans, and in doing so he became the most vocal leader of his generation.

Who Is He?

Jorge Ramos is a Mexican-American journalist. He became the anchorman for Noticiero Univision, a popular Spanish language news program.



Jorge Ramos (Born March 16, 1958)

Nickname:

Ramos is known as "Walter Cronkite of Latino America."

Full Name:

Jorge Gilberto Ramos Ávalos

His Importance:

The books that he wrote talked about the importance of immigration rights. Instead of staying quiet, he "spoke" by writing and publishing books. He didn't just speak up for himself, but for many other immigrants around the world.

Quote: If we don't do it, no one else will," he states. "I'm completely convinced that on certain issues you have to take a stand. You can't remain neutral....I'm an immigrant and immigrants are under attack. I cannot remain silent."

Antonia Novello

Who Is She?

Novello is a physician and public health administrator. She was a vice admiral in the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. Not only that but she served as 14th Surgeon General of the United States from 1990 to 1993.

Importance:

Novello was the first woman and first Hispanic to serve as Surgeon General. At this moment, she has retired from being an Executive Director of Public Health Policy. However, she still contributes her time and energy to helping those who are in need.

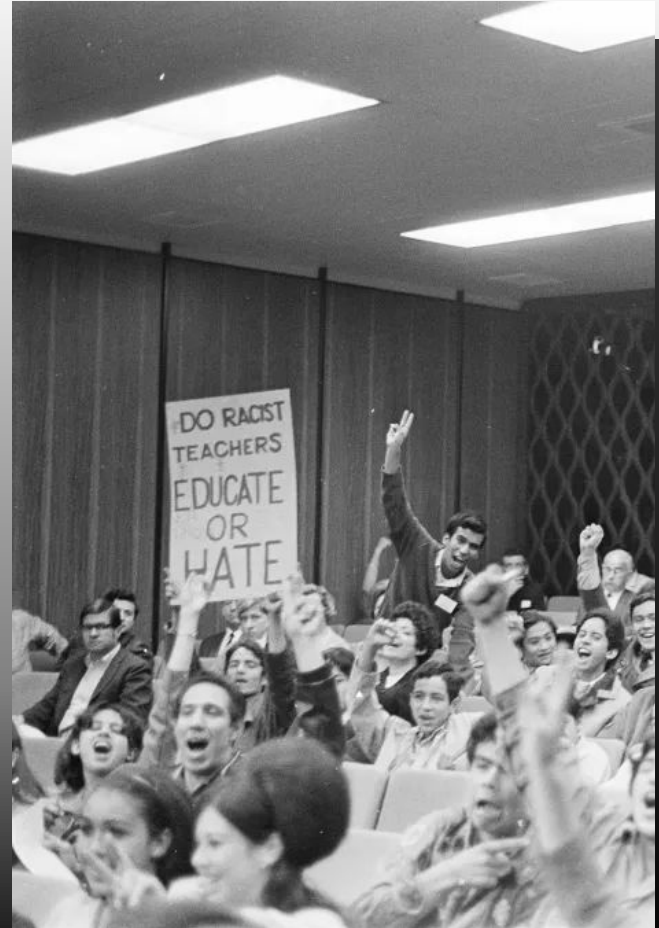


Quote:

"I believe that fortitude is key. More than anything, be consistent. Go at it. Go at it. Go at it. When you succeed, don't forget the responsibility of making somebody else succeed with you."

Vickie Castro

- American educator and political activist known for her work with the East L.A. walkouts.
- She was a founding member of Young Chicanos For Community Action, which became the Brown Berets.
- The East L.A. walkouts were a series of 1968 protests by Chicano students against unequal conditions in Los Angeles Unified School District high schools.
- All the high schools involved in the walkout had the highest dropout rates in the city. Garfield had the highest rate in the city at 58%, with Roosevelt in second at 45%.
- [More Reading](#)



Guillermo del Toro

Guillermo del Toro Gomez is a filmmaker and author focusing on personal low budget Spanish language films. He has produced countless works of arts and has created many unique films like Pan's Labyrinth and The Shape of Water. He also was a writer for hit movies like Pacific Rim, all Hellboy movies, all three Hobbit movies as well as directed most of the popular Dreamworks animated films including Kung Fu Panda, Puss in Boots and Rise of the Guardians. Focusing on mostly fantasy and horror, while creating abstract yet beautiful cinema, has put him in a position which has allowed him to shape the 21st century in film culture. He has influenced so much of our modern cinema and most of us know and recognize his works of art, yet some don't connect the name to the work. He has truly cemented himself into current media culture.



Mr. Worldwide / Mr. 305



Armando Christian Pérez also known as Pitbull was born on January 15, 1981, in Miami, Florida to Cuban immigrant parents. He is the first generation American

PitBull founded the Sports Leadership And Management, SLAM for short, a public charter school for grades 6-12 located in Miami and Las Vegas.

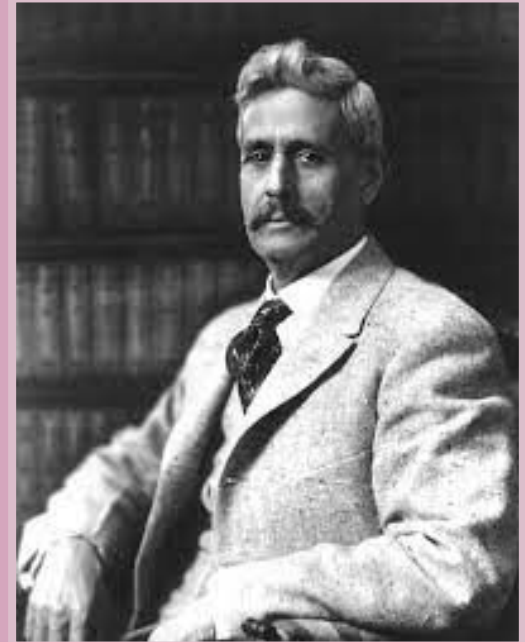
He is also one of the world's most successful Latin recording artists releasing hits such a Gasolina, Timber, Feel This Moment , and hotel Room. He has about 1,000 songs in total.

In 2017 Pitbull sent his private plane to Puerto Rico during Hurricane Maria to transport cancer patients to the US for chemotherapy treatments. The hurricane left Puerto Rico in ruins, with many power outages. It also left half the residents without drinking water.

Octaviano Larrazolo

- Octaviano Ambrosio Larrazolo was born on December 1859
- Octaviano is a republican lawyer from New Mexico
- He immigrated to the United States at a young age
- He became a U.S citizen on December 11th, 1884 and became apart of the Texas democratic party
- Octaviano married Rosalia Cobos in 1881, and they had children together

Octaviano Larrazolo is an important piece of hispanic heritage because, he represents those who weren't able to be recognized for their achievements as a hispanic man or woman.



<https://history.house.gov/People/Detail/15032401304#biography>

Sylvia Rivera

- Sylvia's grandmother kicked her out of the house at age 11 because of her femininity, and she was taken in by a group of drag queens.
- Sylvia was very prominent in the Stonewall Riots in June of 1969.
- At Gay Pride in 1973 she gave her very famous, "Ya'll Better Quiet Down" speech.
 - "I believe in the gay power! I believe in us getting our rights or else I would not be out there fighting for our rights!"
- Along with Marsha P Johnson she started the STAR organization, which was a space to discuss transgender issues throughout New York City. It also provided a home for transgender youth who needed it.
- Sylvia's legacy is carried out through the Silvia Rivera Law Project, which works to serve low income or people of color who are transgender, intersex, or gender-nonconforming.
- Sylvia was a very important idol and advocate for transgender youth and should never be forgotten for all of the work did and progress she made.
- [More Reading](#)





Sofia Vergara

**kiva COVID-19
RESPONSE FUND**

Sofia Vergara is a Columbian American actress & model. She is mainly known for her roll in the show Modern Family which she has won an award for. Sofia Vergara co-chairs for the gala Be-Live which actively fundraises for Columbian non-profit groups. In May of 2020, she announced her partnerships with Kiva in hopes of raising \$50 million dollars to the crowdfund support for more than 1 million organizations and individuals impacted by COVID-19. She has also donated her money and time for St. Judes.

Jenni Rivera

Jenni Rivera(Dolores Janney Rivera Saaverda) was a Mexican American singer, author and even actress. She was mostly known for her songs in the Regional Mexican music genre.

Not only was Jenni an amazing singer, she also worked with charities and even created one herself!

The charity centers around helping single moms back on their feet from domestic,emotional and sexual abuse.

Jenni was also a spokeswoman for the National Coalition Against Domestic violence.



<https://www.jenniriveralovefoundation.org/>

Lin Manuel Miranda



Lin Manuel Miranda is a playwright, filmmaker, and actor.

- In 2008 he his Broadway debut with *In the Heights*
- He created the musical *Hamilton* in 2015
 - Which has nominated him for 16 Tony Nominations
- His first film as a director, *Tick Tick...Boom*, was nominated for two Oscars
- In 2021 the Disney film *Encanto* was released with the soundtrack created by Lin Manuel Miranda

Ellen Ochoa

- Dr. Ochoa is known for being the first Hispanic woman to go to space in when she went on a 9 day mission in 1993.
- She was the Johnson Space Center's first Hispanic director & its second female director.
- She spent a total of almost 1,000 hours in space.
- She received the Distinguished Service Medal, which is NASA's highest award.
- There are six schools named after her.
- Ellen Ochoa should be known because she made significant contributions in NASA such as co-inventing patents and writing many technical papers.



Yalitza Aparicio Martinez

Yalitza is a Mexican actress and preschool teacher who was in Alfonso Cuarón's 2018 drama Roma.

- Born in Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca, Mexico on December 11th of 1993
- She was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress in a leading role
- She modeled for VOGUE Mexico and many other modeling magazines
- TIME Magazine also named her one of the 100 most influential people in the world

She was admired by many because Indigenous Mexican Women were never represented in big films/ modeling magazines.



BERTA CÁCERES

Indigenous Honduran activist, Berta Cáceres, was most known for her successful campaign opposing a proposed dam on the Gualcarque River, which is considered sacred by the Lencas, the Indigenous tribe that Cáceres belonged to. She also co founded the Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras, which advocates for indigenous communities in Honduras. Cáceres was assassinated in 2016; her death sparked worldwide outrage and brought much-needed attention to the high rate of deaths among environmental activists.



Ana Gabriel

María Guadalupe Araujo Yong better known as “Ana Gabriel” was born on December 10th, 1955 in Guamuchil, Sinaloa, Mexico

- She started singing at the age of 6
- She signed with Sony Music Entertainment
- Ana Gabriel is known for her very unique voice that very famously controls to an extreme level

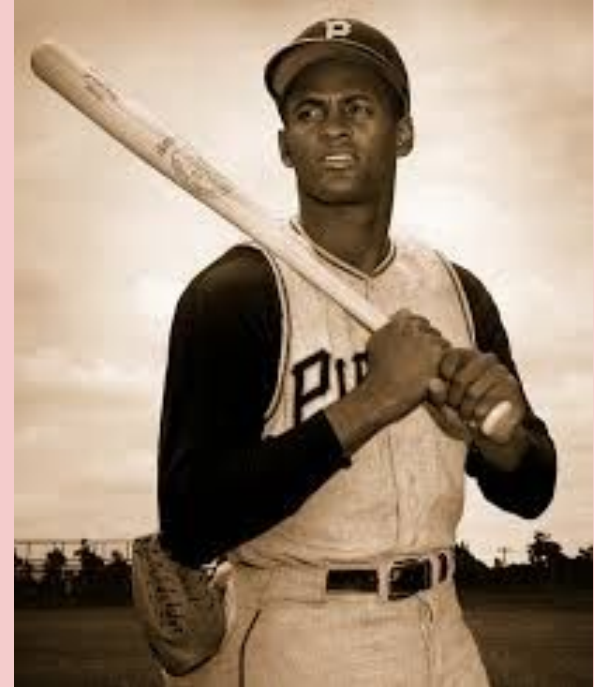
To this day, her music is enjoyed by many Mexican people, mainly Mexican woman



Roberto Clemente - “The Great One”

- ❑ Born August 18, 1939 in Carolina, Puerto Rico
- ❑ Began playing for the Puerto Rican Baseball League when he was 17 years old
- ❑ Was signed by the Dodgers when he was 18 years old
- ❑ Won the 1966 National League MVP Award
- ❑ Elected to the American Baseball Hall of Fame in 1973
- ❑ Died in a plane crash in 1972 while he was on his way back to Puerto Rico to assist with earthquake relief

The world should know about Roberto Clemente because he paved the way for players of Hispanic descent in American Baseball (now a large percentage of baseball players on MLB teams) and because of his honorable decision to continue to support his home nation, for which he unfortunately died.



Juan Toscano-Anderson

- Juan Toscano-Anderson is a black Mexican-American NBA player
- He was born in Oakland CA, in 1993
- Also referred to as JTA, he played on the Golden State Warriors for three seasons (2020-2022) until he recently got traded to the Los Angeles Lakers (July 2022)
- He won his first championship ring earlier this year (June 2022) with the Warriors
- The number on his jersey (95) comes from 95th avenue in Oakland (where he grew up)

JTA represents an underwhelming amount of Mexican NBA players and is only the 5th in history. He also supports children and families in Oakland/other locations by donating money, clothes, school materials for students, fundraising, and taking money out of his own pockets to bless those who are in need.



Carolina Herrera

- Venezuelan fashion designer (born January 8th, 1939)
- Designed her first dress at the age of 14, of which she took inspiration from 30's-40's fashion
- Throughout the 1980's, she came out with a few clothing collections, mostly containing dresses, and she launched her first perfume
- In 2008, she launched more casual clothing lines, including menswear, womenswear, children's wear, accessories, and a home collection
- Herrera's designs have been worn by several high-profile people, including Laura Bush, Renée Zellweger, Tina Fey, Lady Gaga, Lucy Liu and Taylor Swift

People should know who she is because she started out with no experience or knowledge of the fashion industry, but she still made a name for herself.



Frida Kahlo



A Mexican Artist well known for her many self portraits. She contracted Polio at the age of 6, and suffered a near-fatal accident at the age of 18, causing her body to be fragmented. She was stuck in bed for a long time, and this is when she began to paint her famous self portraits. She was awarded the National Prize of Arts and Sciences in 1946. She is considered one of Mexico's greatest artists and is still remembered and looked up to in today's day.

Selena Quintanilla

Selena Quintanilla Pérez was Born April 16, 1971, Lake Jackson, TX to Abraham Quintanilla and Marcella Quintanilla. She was a Mexican-American singer. She is considered the "Queen of Tejano music. Her contributions to music and fashion made her one of the most celebrated Mexican-American entertainers of the late 20th century. Selena, her brother A.B. III (bass), and their sister, Suzette (drums) started a band under the management of their father and began to slowly gain popularity. Soon Selena was a household name for her talent and beauty. Unfortunately her life was cut short by her jealous friend and manager Yolanda Salvador, when on March 31, 1995 Yolanda shot the young Tejano star after being confronted on mismanaging her funds. Selena Quintanilla was survived by her husband, Chris Perez.



Salma Hayek

- Salma Hayek is a Mexican-American actress and producer
- She was born in Coatzacoalcas, Mexico on September 2, 1966
- Salma was enrolled at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City and became widely noticed by television producers
- After being casted in *Teresa* (1989), she moved to Los Angeles to pursue her career in the acting industry
- Towards the end of the 20th century, she broke barriers as one of the first Latina actresses in the United States to build a successful film career

Salma Hayek has not only changed the film industry with her wide range of movies and shows, but has also supported organizations that help bring awareness to women who have been sexually/physically abused as well as children in Mexico who are at a disadvantage because of lack of support and resources.

