

Illustrious Awards Recipients - Politics

The Illustrious Awards

Honoring Distinguished Latinos

T

here have been about 93 Latino Members of Congress since Dennis Chávez, the first Hispanic senator to serve an entire term, was elected in 1935 to represent New Mexico.

Other notable elected were: Member of U.S. Congress Joseph Marion Hernández, 1822, delegate from the Florida territory. Born in St. Augustine, Fla. (then a Spanish colony), August 4, 1793; transferred his allegiance to the United States; upon the formation of Florida Territory. He was elected as a Delegate to the Seventeenth Congress and served from September 30, 1822, to March 3, 1823.

U.S. Representative Romualdo Pacheco, a representative from California, was elected in 1876 by a one-vote margin. He served for four months before his opponent succeeded in contesting the results. In 1879 he was again elected to Congress, where he served for two terms.

U.S. Senator Octaviano Larrazolo was elected in 1928 to finish the term of New Mexico senator Andieus Jones, who had died in office. He served for six months before falling ill and stepping down; he died in 1930. As of July 1, 2018, there were 46 Hispanics or Latinos in the US Congress, 5 US Senators, and 41 in the U.S. House of Representatives, including 1 Delegate and the Resident Commissioner representing Puerto Rico. At the state and local levels, there were more than 5,600 Latinos elected officials across the United States and territories, including Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.



Illustrious Award Recipient - Politics

Pioneering

Carmen E. Arroyo is a pioneer legislator of Puerto Rican descent, who came to the mainland USA in 1964, in search for better opportunities. She worked long hours in a factory and saved money until she was able to bring her seven children from Puerto Rico. In 1965, she sent for her children, but unable to find day care services, she was forced to receive Public Assistance. While on Public Assistance for nine months, she organized the welfare mothers of her community and founded the South Bronx Action Group in 1966.

Her contributions range from serving and promoting Puerto Rican culture, to passing legislation to address a variety of issues including housing, children services, and the eradication of aids. She is a Puerto Rican matriarch who, among other Puerto Rican trailblazers, fought for the creation of institutions such as Hostos Community College.

Assemblywoman Carmen E. Arroyo is one of the most respected female leaders in the state and nation.

Carmen was born in the beautiful mountainous town of Corozal, Puerto Rico. She graduated from Corozal High School and Sixto Febus Business School, where she received her Secretarial-Bookkeeper degree. She has demonstrated that it is never too late to obtain your college education, graduating from Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College with an Associate of Arts degree in 1978, and from the College of New Rochelle with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1980 at the age of 44.

In 1994, Carmen E. Arroyo became the first and only Puerto Rican woman elected to the NYS Assembly, and the first Puerto Rican woman elected to any State Assembly in the US.

Mrs. Arroyo has written a book of poems called "Mis Poses." She is currently working on her next book, titled "The Life of a Puerto Rican Woman in the US". She is the mother of seven and the grandmother of thirteen.



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Pioneering

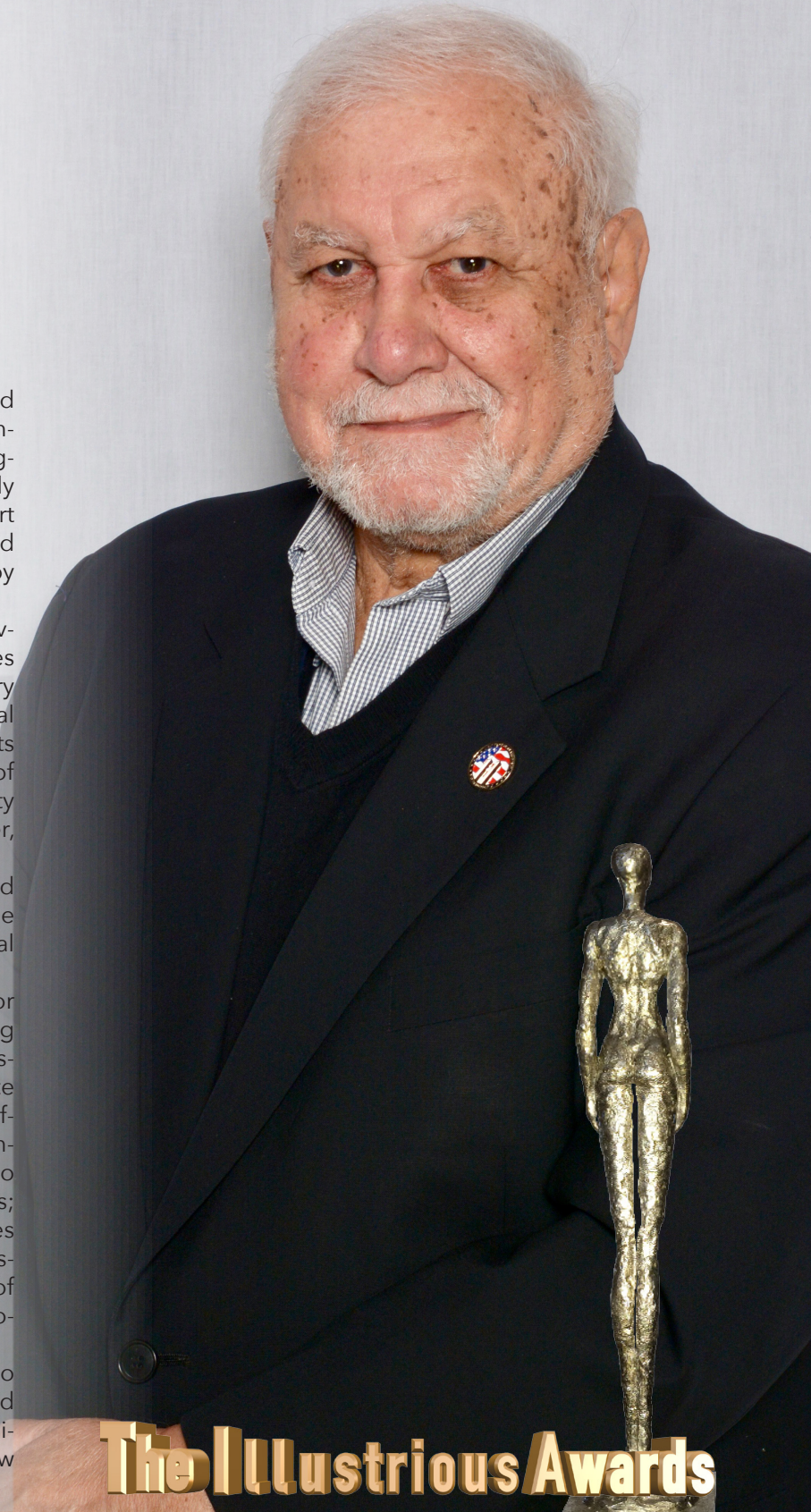
José Rivera was born in Puerto Rico, and raised under precarious conditions. He tells his family's story as one besieged by poverty. Coming originally from the mountains of Puerto Rico, his family moved to a place known as La Perla, a seashore, dirt poor, shanty town in the outskirts of San Juan, settled by the jobless and peasants adversely impacted by the Great Economic depression of the 1930s.

Assemblyman Rivera tells of his mother, later moving to the Bronx, NY in search of better opportunities for her children. Who was to know that half a century later, Jose Rivera would become a New York political kingmaker whose experiences range from grassroots community organizing to becoming the Chairman of the Bronx Democratic Party - being a New York City councilman, and New York State Assembly member, in between.

For the last three decades Jose Rivera has worked relentlessly as a street activist for the people of the Bronx struggling for jobs, better housing and social justice.

Assemblyman Rivera has been a champion for the oppressed and excluded of the world - opening doors for blacks and Latinos in the South Bronx; establishing the Martin Luther King holiday in the state of New York; founding the Latinos for a Free South Africa movement in 1986; combating xenophobic "English-only" initiatives; lecturing on the rights of Puerto Ricans to self-determination of their political status; spearheading a movement to expose the injustices suffered by the American citizens residing in the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico; and visiting the State of Israel, Nicaragua, Cuba, Bitburg, and Germany to protest Ronald Reagan's visit to a Nazi cemetery.

He raised his children to be proud Puerto Ricans who followed in his footsteps: Joel Rivera, Jr. was elected to the NYC Council and served as the youngest President of that body, and Noemi Rivera was elected New York State Assemblywoman.



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Illustrious Award Recipient - Politics

Outstanding Achievement

Héctor Lora, Mayor, is a young American politician/pastor of Dominican descent who was propelled to prominence following his election as Mayor of the City of Passaic, the eighth largest city in New Jersey. Previously, he served as Freeholder and Council Member.

Despite his young age, Lora has become one of the most admired and respected religious/political leaders in the New Jersey community for his convictions and impartiality, both within the community of faith and the political arena.

He is a pastor of Eastern Christian Free Methodist Church in Jersey City, NJ, who graduated from Liberty University. He is married and has three boys, one with special needs (autistic)

In addition to marrying his wife, he considers projects benefiting special needs children, his biggest accomplishments.

Mayor Lora brandishes a rare breed of leadership: a hands-on approach, good government and justice.

For Mayor Lora, people come first; not political parties or special interests. He believes and practices mentorship and public service, above all else.

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Illustrious Award Recipient - Politics

Outstanding Achievement



Marcos A. Crespo was born in Guayama, Puerto Rico, on July 29th 1980. He is one of four children of Ivette Fontanez and Alberto Crespo. At a young age, Marcos moved with his family to New York City, where he began his elementary studies in the New York City Public Schools System. Marcos would also spend three years living in Lima, Perú, where he completed his fourth and fifth grade studies while attending Santa Teresita.

He returned to Puerto Rico with his younger sister and his mother and completed High School at Carmen Bozello de Huyke High School, and soon thereafter, returned to New York to live with his father.

Politically, Crespo was a mentee of Rev. Ruben Díaz, Sr., and Ruben Díaz, Jr. From a political novice, he has become one of the youngest, most powerful and influential politicians in the state of New York.

Elected to the New York State Assembly at the age of 28, his hard work and outcome-proven-approach has allowed him to quickly move into leadership positions, including the chairmanship of the Bronx Democratic Party.

He has translated his personal experiences and international travels into a dynamic list of legislative priorities that are focused on community and economic development based on social justice principles.

Along his relatively short seven-and-half years as a State legislator, Marcos has authored major pieces of legislation that are now enacted into law.

Marcos is a graduate of John Jay College of Criminal Justice of The City University of New York. He is married and has two young daughters.

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Outstanding Achievement

Claribel Martínez-Marmolejos, is a legislator in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She was the first Dominican woman elected to the legislature in Puerto Rico.

She was born in Puerto Plata, where the first European city in the Western Hemisphere was built in the late 1400s. Her father was Agripino Martínez Santana and her mother Germania Marmolejos Flores. Claribel's mother became a political exile from the Dominican Republic, due to her opposition to Joaquin Balaguer's oppressive government. Claribel settled in Puerto Rico with her mother at the age of five.

Two elements would define her life: education and her love of politics. Her maternal grandfather, Ramón María Flores Rivera, a member of the leftist movement *Catorce de Junio*, who taught her how to read and discuss the news, at an early age, was her major political influence.

She attained a Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry from Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, and went on to accumulate 26 years of experience in all aspects of the pharmaceutical industry.

She has exerted community leadership at multiple levels: assisting with the formalization of immigration status of many, teaching English for citizenship exam, organizing political districts for voting participation, implementing programs in needy communities, serving in diverse community-based organizations, and presiding advocacy and professional organizations such as the *Dominican American National Roundtable*, the only nonprofit, nonpartisan corporation headquartered in Washington, DC, advocating for the advancement of all Dominicans residing in the United States and territories, including Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Most recently, Martínez-Marmolejos served as president of *Colegio de Químico de Puerto Rico*; its mission is to serve and advocate for the development and wellbeing of Puerto Rico; to develop and protect the profession, to sustain excellence in the profession, to promote unity among its members, and to protect its image at the local, national and international levels.

Her immediate political plans are to continue occupying a seat in San Juan legislature.

She resides in San Juan, Puerto Rico with her two children: Nallely, a historian and plastic artist, and Leo a pilot and college professor.



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Illustrious Award Recipient - Politics

Power Broker/Strategist

José Arango, is the Chair of Hudson County Republican Party - The 60 something-year-old- West New York man is a Republican in a county whose entire Congressional delegation is Democratic, as are all of its state legislators and most of its mayors. Still, Arango, who has led the Hudson County Republican Party for more than a decade, not only earned the respect of the establishment, but also that of the voters.

He was elected Chair of Chairs for the Association of New Jersey Republican County Chairs, where he's the top dog among the party's 21 county chairs. He's the first Cuban-American and first Hudson County man to hold the post of Chair of Chairs.

Migrating from Cuba, with his parents as a young child, Arango set out to be a trailblazer in politics in Hudson County, winning in 1985 the 33rd District Assembly Seat.



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Illustrious Award Recipient - Politics

Consultant/Strategist

*J***ulio Marengo** is a lawyer, teacher and political strategist who happens to be of Dominican-Salvadoran descent. Currently, he is Finance and Revenue Commissioner in the Township of North Bergen. He is a veteran of the US Navy Submarine service and is currently an Associate Board Member of the NJ State Parole.

Previously, Julio served as the President of the North Bergen Board of Education, a member of the library board, and of the parking authority board. He holds a Juris Doctorate from Seton Hall University School of Law and a Masters in Administration from Fairleigh Dickinson University where he was previously a professor and is currently an adjunct professor.

He was born in USA to a retired truck driver and factory worker. Julio is dedicated to serve his community, as a mentor, educator, and public servant.

Marengo, the lawyer, is best known for his advocacy on behalf of "Angelie's Law" for his family friends who lost an infant daughter, Angelie Parades, in a West New York commuter bus crash in 2013.



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