

The Institute for Latino Studies Bestows Illustrious Awards Upon Distinguished Men and Women

The Initiative is part of a research study of the Institute for Latino Studies at Berkeley about Latino socio-economic and political contribution to the United States of America



Partial view of an audience of over 350 participants of the *Illustrious Awards Ceremony* held on Friday, September 14, 2018 at the Graduate School of The City University of New York (CUNY). Photographer Eduardo Hoepelman captures a moment during the event when honorees and attendees were attentively enjoying the *Illustrious Latinos* research presentation produced by Nestor Montilla, Sr.

New York, NY.- The Institute for Latino Studies at Berkeley College at Berkeley College, dedicated to quality research for better advocacy, presented the third installment of *The Illustrious Awards*, on Friday, September 14, 2018, at the Graduate Center of The City University of New York.

"The Board of Directors of the Institute for Latino Studies at Berkeley College is proud to present Illustrious Awards to fifty distinguished Latinos, whose life stories inspire society to reach for excellence by encouraging respect and performance; their contributions have enriched and positively influenced the United States of America," said Dr. Maria Teresa Montilla, ILS executive director.

"The Illustrious Award honorees are examples of illustrious men and women leading the way to inspire and empower students from all backgrounds to achieve their goals. They are excellent role models for our students," said Mr. Michael J. Smith, Berkeley College President, as part of his opening remarks at the ceremony. "They inspire our students to pursue their dreams."

Fifty distinguished Latinos were honored with Illustrious Awards in eleven fields:

Arts - Aurora Flores, Dinorah Coronado & Nitza Tufiño - **Business & Entrepreneurship** - Alfredo Rodriguez, Carlos Guzman, Lenny Caro, Pedro Diaz-Ballester, Raymond Lamboy & Victor Alvarez - **Communications** - Denisse Oller, Nancy Alvarez, Ph.D., & Julio Malone - **Education** - Antonio Perez, PhD., David Badillo, PhD., Angelica Infante-Green, Vasthi Reyes-Acosta, Ph.D., Victor Capellan, Alberto Correa, Ph.D., Dan-el Padilla, Ph.D., Ginetta Candelario, Ph.D., Rafael Nunez-Cedeno, Ph.D., and Louis Hernandez - **Leadership** - Ramon Jimenez, Esq., In-Memoriam, Laila Roman Jimenez, Amilkar Velez-Lopez, Wendy Martinez, Zenaida Mendez & Julio Pabon - **Literature** - Rhina Espailat - **Medicine** - Juan De Dios De La Cruz, MD, Carlos Lugo, MD, Hugo Morales, MD, Gladys Crispin Halvorsen, MD In-Memoriam, & Miguel Hernandez, MD - **Politics** - Assembly members Carmen Arroyo, Jose Rivera, and Marcos Crespo, PR Legislator Claribel Martinez-Marmolejos, Mayor Hector Lora, Julio Marenco, Esq., Republican State Chair Jose Arango - **Religion** - Rev. Ephraim Rivera & Pastor David Greco - **Social Sciences** - Jose Holguin-Veras & Silvio Torres-Saillant, Ph.D., and **Sports** - Alfredo "Freddy" De Los Santos.

THE 2018 ILLUSTRIOUS HONOREES

The Illustrious Awards

Honoring Distinguished Latinos

The Illustrious Awards is a signature initiative of The Institute for Latino Studies at Berkeley to document and highlight the contributions of Latinos to the advancement of the United States of America. Their life stories are video-featured and honored in a professionally produced formal ceremony, collectible Tribute Journal and original film documentary.

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Dr. Montilla stated: "The award ceremony is a component of the ILS' Illustrious Latinos Research Project aimed at documenting valuable examples of where we Latinos, as a people, have come from and how we have contributed to community and national life in the United States. The project includes a commemorative Tribute Journal and an original film-documentary showcasing the stories of men and women who have advanced our collective struggle for dignity and equality, enriched the quality of our lives with their knowledge and entrepreneurship, and expressed our shared humanity through words, music, art, craft and calling. Both, the Journal and the documentary are more than a collection of photos, film footage and stories. They offer a collective narrative of the multiple ways we have succeeded by contributing to our communities, to the nation, to mankind. The journeys of the famous, and the not-so-famous individuals featured, matter more to us than their names or faces. They inspire us to pursue excellence, not for fame or recognition, but moved by our desire, as Latinos and as Americans, to leave this world a better place than we found it."



Four Lifetime Illustrious Awards were bestowed upon distinguished Latinos:

The Late Frank Bonilla, Ph.D.

Honored with a *Lifetime Illustrious Award in Leadership in higher Education In-Memoriam*, for being one of the greatest pioneering educators and visionaries of our time. Dr. Bonilla was the founder and director of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College. The award was received by representatives from El Centro Para Estudios Puertorriqueños.

Dr. Ramon Antonio Veras (El Negro Veras)

Honored with a *Lifetime Illustrious Award in Social Justice*, a re-known attorney, prolific writer and advocate of human rights. Dr. Veras has published nine books, and has thirty-eight unedited books. His collection of more than 2,000 articles, written between 1969 and 2007, can be found at the Dominican Republic National Archives.

Danny Rivera

Honored with a *Lifetime Illustrious Award in Music* for being a popular singer and songwriter along the past five decades.

Rev. Ruben Diaz, Sr.

Rev. Diaz was honored with a *Lifetime Illustrious Award in Political Religious Pioneering* for his extraordinary accomplishments, among them, being the first Latino Evangelical Pastor elected to public office in the US.



Congressman Jose Serrano, NYS Assemblyman Jose Rivera, NYC Councilman Rev. Ruben Diaz, Sr., NYS Assemblywoman Carmen Arroyo, Dr. Maria Teresa and Nestor Montilla, Sr., posed for the cameras at a special moment during the ceremony after Reverend Ruben Diaz, Sr. received The Lifetime Illustrious Awards. Photo by Eduardo Hoepelman.

Following the *Illustrious Awards Ceremony*, Congressman Jose Serrano shared his impression about the Illustrious Latino Project with Dr. Maria Teresa and Nestor Montilla, Sr.: "Congratulations to The Institute for Latino Studies at Berkeley College for such a magnanimous event, celebrating the contributions of Latinos to the United States. It is unprecedented; unlike anything I have seen. It should be replicated in other parts of the country."

"I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely acknowledge the Institute for Latino Studies at Berkeley College for its vision and leadership in conducting research to produce new knowledge about Latinos' immigration experience and their substantial contributions to the enrichment and development of the United States of America," said Dr. Hugo M. Morales. "Please join me in extending our respect to the Board of Directors of the Institute for Latino Studies, and particularly to Dr. María Teresa and Néstor Montilla, Sr., for their effective leadership and commitment to document how Latinos are transforming the United States of America into a more inclusive, diverse and prosperous country."

Dr. Morales was among the honorees. His life story and contributions were exalted in the commemorative journal and included in the presentation. Among his many accomplishments as a trustee of the City University of New York (CUNY), Dr. Morales proudly mentioned the realization of *Nueva York*, a multiple Emmy Award Winning television series about Latinos, which was originally conceptualized and proposed by Néstor Montilla, Sr., and subsequently produced by staff of Channel 75, the television station of The City University of New York.

"The Illustrious Awards commemorative-collectible journal is a rare and unprecedented-must-have research treasure,

highlighting Latino heroes whose stories, professions and contributions have indeed made the United States a great country and, more importantly, a better place to raise a family, build prosperity, live in peace, practice religion, and pursue happiness for many years to come," stressed Nestor Montilla, Sr., executive director and producer of the *Illustrious Awards*. The journal is available online via <http://instituteforlatinostudies.org/illustrious-awards-2018-commemorative-journal/>.

"It is my pleasure to recognize the *Illustrious Awards 2018*, an event that allows us to reflect and be proud of all that the Institute for Latino Studies at Berkeley and its members have accomplished through the years," said Ruben Diaz, Jr. "This wonderful event allows us the opportunity to recognize your organization's efforts and commitment to creating and sustaining a supportive community for the Hispanic community throughout The Bronx, New York City and across the region. Over the years, ILS has actively promoted and advanced the achievements of our community, while providing support for the next generation of Hispanic leaders that will help The Bronx continue its prosperity and upward trend."

ILS received accolades from several attendees and honorees: "For me, it was a coming around in full circle to a city that saw me graduate from High School in Spanish Harlem, relocate to Minnesota and Chicago, and return to this great city to receive this honor," commented Rafael Nunez-Cedeno, Ph.D., tenured professor at the University of Illinois. I'm humbled by the fact that the honor is being bestowed by my own people. Heartfelt thanks to Dr. Maria Teresa, Nestor Montilla, Sr. and The Institute's Board of Directors for selecting me for this recognition, and for the opportunity to be with my wife Yulissa, around so many distinguished Latinos."

"The Institute for Latino Studies' *Illustrious Awards Ceremony* is a meaningful event and enriching experience. The distinguished and diverse Latino individuals honored in this, and the previous two installments of *The Illustrious* are a testament of Latino leadership and diversity of abilities in all segments of society: education, economy, sciences, arts, politics and religion," noted Rev. Ephraim Rivera. "My respect and congratulations to The Institute for Latino Studies, and to Dr. Maria Teresa and Nestor Montilla Sr., in particular, for taking on such a meaningful and relevant project."

Illustrious Award recipient Dr. Vasthi Acosta, director of Amber Charter School, published a thankful note in *El Diario La Prensa* (<https://eldiariiony.com/2018/09/18/los-premios-ilustres/>) to praise the Institute for Latino Studies and its executive director Dr. Maria Teresa Montilla: "Last Friday I was honored with an Illustrious Award. It was an exciting event at the CUNY Graduate Center. I am grateful for Dr. Montilla's work and recognition of me. It is always nice to be recognized."

This year, ILS partnered with the Center for Latin American, Caribbean & Latino Studies (CLACLS), Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Berkeley College, Hostos Community College and BabyLionProductions.org to make this installment of the *Illustrious Awards* a memorable and rewarding milestone in the history of Latinos in the United States of America.





Victoria Stone

Michael Smith
President
Berkeley College

Dr. Miguel Hernandez and family



Dr. Hugo Morales, Dr. Miguel Hernandez, Dr. Carlos Lugo, Dr. Juan De Dios de La Cruz, Dr. Elizabeth Halvorsen and husband



Julio Marenco and Jose Arango



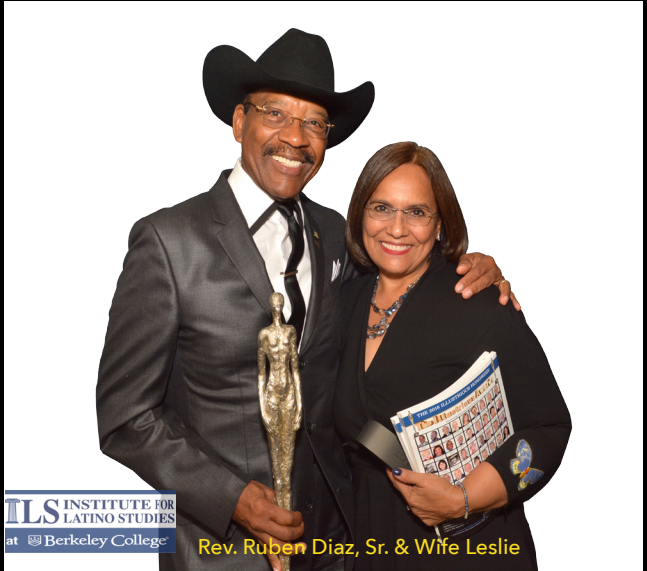
Dr. Silvio Torres Saillant, Dr. Jose Saillant, Dr. Carlos Lugo



Dr. Elizabeth Halvorsen and family receiving the Illustrious Award In-Memoriam bestowed upon the late Dr. Gladys Halvorsen



Don Pedro Diaz Ballester and family



Rev. Ruben Diaz, Sr. & Wife Leslie



Assemblywoman Carmen Arroyo



Officials from Centro Puertorriquenos



Dr. Silvio Torres Saillant with Berkeley College President Michael Smith and Dr. Maria Teresa Montilla



Dr. Victor Alvarez, Pedro Diaz Ballester, Lenny Caro, Carlos Guzman, Alfredo Rodriguez, Raymond Landa



Berkeley College President Michael Smith, Congressman Jose Serrano, and Dr. Maria Teresa Montilla



Rev. Ephraim Rivera



Dr. Rafael Nunez Cedeno



Dr. Louis Hernandez, Dr. Rafael Nunez Cedeno, Dr. Candelario, Dr. Dan-el Padilla, Dr. Alberto Correa

The Illustrious Awards, a research initiative of The Institute for Latino Studies at Berkeley, documents and highlights the contributions of Latinos to the advancement of the United States of America. www.illustriousawards.com www.instituteforlatinostudies.org