

Letters to the UMB Community

UMB Celebrates Latine/Hispanic Heritage Month

September 15, 2023

To the UMB Community:

¡Feliz Mes de la Herencia Hispana/Latine! Happy Hispanic/Latine Heritage Month!

Hispanic/Latine Heritage Month, celebrated Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, is a time when we highlight and celebrate Hispanic/Latine Americans — those with ancestry from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, or South America — and their legacies, contributions, and influence on the culture, history, and achievements of the United States and our University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) community.

This month at UMB, we affirm our commitment to and support for Hispanic/Latine colleagues and friends, celebrate their achievements, and continue to collaborate to foster a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse community. As of 2020, the number of Hispanic/Latine residents in Maryland was about 730,000, comprising a group of active contributors to our economy, community, and social life.

As we celebrate, we also acknowledge the struggles related to education, immigration, economics, and health that disproportionately impact our Hispanic/Latine family members, co-workers, and friends. Our nation and the world are greatly impacted by the dedication and innovations of Hispanic people.

For example, Hector Hugo Gonzalez, PhD, RN, became the nation's first Mexican American registered nurse (RN) to obtain a doctorate in 1974. Gonzalez continued to break new ground in his career as the first Hispanic district president within the Texas Nurses Association. As chairman of the Department of Nursing Education at San Antonio College, he designed flexible curriculum options for students from underrepresented communities to become licensed RNs.

Sonia Sotomayor, who was sworn in Aug. 8, 2009, as the first Hispanic and the third woman to serve on the Supreme Court, is known for fighting for affirmative action protections. This was evident in her 58-page dissent in the 2014 *Schuette v. Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action* ruling, which held that the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment does not prevent states from enacting bans on affirmative action in education.

Another trailblazer, Helen Rodríguez Trías, MD, was a public health expert, pediatrician, and activist whose work greatly impacted the health of underserved communities and the women's health movement. In the 1980s, as medical director of the New York State Department of Health's AIDS Institute, she advocated for women and children with HIV. In 1971, Rodríguez Trías co-founded the Women's Caucus and the Hispanic Caucus of the American Public Health Association (APHA); in 1993, she became the first Latina elected as president of APHA. For her work advocating on behalf of poor, underrepresented communities and people with HIV and AIDS, she was awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal in 2001.

Ana Sol Gutiérrez made history in November 2002 as the first Latina elected to the Maryland House of Delegates, where she served for 16 years. She served on the House Appropriations Committee and as vice-chair of its Public Safety and Administration Subcommittee. A chemist and computer systems engineer by profession, Gutiérrez was appointed in 1994 by President Bill Clinton as deputy administrator for research and special programs at the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT); worked for over 30 years in computers with major IT firms that had contracts with NASA, the Federal Aviation Administration, USDOT, and the U.S. Departments of Education and State; and is a recognized leader/role model for women in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math.

During Hispanic/Latine Heritage Month, we affirm our commitment to support and promote excellence by celebrating this vibrant community as we continue to collaborate to foster a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse UMB.

Please join us as we celebrate Hispanic/Latine Heritage Month at the on-campus events listed below. And keep an eye on The Elm website and The Elm Weekly newsletter for more ways to celebrate Hispanic/Latine Heritage Month at UMB.

Recognizing the Rise, Progress, and Power of Latino Nurses in Health Care
Sept. 18 | Noon to 1 p.m. | Virtual | [Register Here](#)

This panel discussion will feature Priscilla Aguirre, DNP, CRNA, CRNP-AC, assistant professor, University of Maryland School of Nursing (UMSON), and Wendy Bonilla, co-president, Latinx Association of Nurses at the University of Maryland. The event also will be livestreamed in Room 503 of the UMSON building.

'The Table Dialogue': Generational Differences in Latinx Families
Sept. 20 | Noon to 1 p.m. | Virtual (Zoom) | [Register Here](#)

How does being the first, 1.5, second, or later generation to arrive in the U.S. show up in Latinx family dynamics? In this month's dialogue, we will focus on generational differences within these families and discuss how these differences may shape the perspectives and lived experiences of our Latinx clients and patients.

Conversations with St. Clare Medical Outreach: Caring for the Baltimore Immigrant Community
Sept. 29 | Noon | Taylor Lecture Hall, Bressler Research Building | [Register Here](#)

Medical director Joana Saba, MD, and nurse practitioner Gabriella Fortunato, CRNP, will share their experiences working at a clinic whose primary patient populations are immigrants in Baltimore County who don't have access to health insurance, most of whom are Spanish speakers.

Noche Latina
Oct. 11 | 5:15 to 6:30 p.m. | SMC Campus Center, Elm Room A | [Register Here](#)

Join the Intercultural Center for a night celebrating Latine culture! Play a game of dominoes or paint your own ceramics to represent your culture. There will be music and dinner served.

¡Bailamos! Latin Dance Lessons with SalsaNow
Oct. 10 | 5 to 6:30 p.m. | Living History Museum Lobby, School of Nursing | [Register Here](#)

Celebrate Hispanic/Latine culture through the joy of music and dance. Instructors from local dance company SalsaNow will teach Latin dance styles. Dinner will be served afterward.

En solidaridad (In solidarity),
Diane Forbes Berthoud, PhD, MA
Chief Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer and Vice President, UMB
Professor, Graduate School