

LOCKE LORD DIVERSITY AWARENESS

September 2016: National Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 to October 15) celebrates the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. With roots dating back to 1968, Hispanic Heritage Month begins each year on September 15, the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Mexico, Chile and Belize also celebrate their independence days during this period.

Hispanic and Latino Americans have had a profound and positive influence on our country through their strong commitment to family, faith, hard work and service. They have enhanced and shaped our national character with centuries-old traditions that reflect the multiethnic and multicultural customs of their community. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Hispanic population constituted 17.6% of the nation's total population. However, the most recent 2016 lawyer demographics report posted by the American Bar Association indicates that Hispanic lawyers make up 4% of the total lawyers licensed in the U.S.

One of the most recognized Hispanic lawyers in the country is U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice **Sonia Sotomayor**. She was appointed to the court in August 2009 and is the first justice of Hispanic heritage and the first Latina to serve. Here we highlight a few of the many prominent Hispanic and Latino Americans who have made significant contributions to the legal and political communities:



Mari Carmen Aponte was appointed Acting Assistant Secretary in the Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs in 2016. She previously served as the Ambassador of the United States to El Salvador from 2012–2016. In the mid 1970s, she was one of a few Puerto Rican women enrolled in a U.S. accredited law program at the time, and subsequently, the first Latina lawyer in Pennsylvania.



Rosemary Barkett was selected in 2013 by the U.S. Department of State to be a Judge of the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal, located in The Hague, Netherlands. She is a former U.S. Circuit Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, and the former Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court.



José Alberto Cabranes is a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and a member of the three-judge U.S. Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court of Review. Formerly a practicing lawyer, government official and law teacher, he was the first Puerto Rican appointed to a federal judgeship in the continental United States in 1979.



Julian and Joaquin Castro are twin brothers who rose to prominence in the political field. Joaquin Castro has served in the U.S. House of Representatives since 2013. Julian Castro served as mayor of San Antonio, Texas from 2009 to 2014 and currently serves as U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.



Carmen Cerezo was appointed to the U.S. District Court for the District of Puerto Rico in 1980. She was the first Latina to serve on a federal bench and the first female federal judge in Puerto Rico. She served as chief judge from 1993-1999.



Reynaldo Garza was the first Latino appointed to a federal court in 1961 as a judge for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas. He later became the first Latino appointed to any circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals in 1979.



Susana Martinez is the first woman to be elected governor of New Mexico and the first Hispanic female governor in the United States. In 2013, Martinez was named one of Time magazine's 100 most influential people in the world. She previously served as Assistant District Attorney, then District Attorney for the 3rd Judicial District in New Mexico.

The heart of Locke Lord lies within our people and the many different experiences and perspectives we share. We recognize, embrace and celebrate our differences and believe we can only provide our clients with the best possible representation if we reflect the diversity of the clients and communities we serve.

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