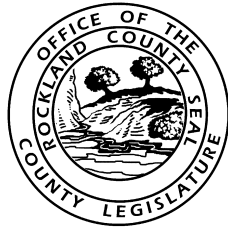


# Press



# Release

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## For Immediate Release

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## Legislature Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

### Legislators Wolfe, Grant & Hood Present Distinguished Service Awards To Vilma Lopez, Nancy Genova And Carlos Martinez

**New City, NY (Oct. 7, 2021)** – The Rockland County Legislature celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month by recognizing the outstanding achievements, successes and service of three local residents - Vilma Lopez, Nancy Genova and Carlos Martinez.

“Hispanic Heritage Month is an opportunity to recognize and honor the culture and contributions of Latinos in the story of Rockland County and America,” **Rockland County Legislature Chairman Alden H. Wolfe** said. “Latinos have helped shape the social, cultural, and economic fabric of our county and our country and we are here to honor three local individuals whose important contributions are deserving of commendation.”

**Legislator Jay Hood** said Hispanic Heritage Month is his favorite time of year.

“This month always means a lot to me, representing the highest population of Hispanic Americans (in Rockland County),” Legislator Hood said. “I get a lot of support from the community and I’m very happy to be here tonight to give out this award and to take part in this. Our Hispanic and Latino residents and businesses contribute to the betterment of life in Rockland County on a daily basis.”

Hispanic Heritage Month traces its roots to 1968 when President Lyndon Johnson designated a week to honor contributions by the Latino community. In 1988, Ronald Reagan expanded the observance to a full month – from September 15 through October 15 of each year.

Latinos have made significant contributions in many fields, becoming well known and historic figures in the process - actress Rita Moreno, singer Marc Anthony, baseball legend Roberto Clemente, activist Cesar Chavez, writer Julia Alvarez, astronaut Ellen Ochoa, and notably, Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the first Latina Supreme Court Justice.

When it comes to our local honorees, **Vilma Lopez** started baking cakes alongside her grandmother when she was a young girl in the Dominican Republic. In 1998, she relocated to the United States with her husband and children, ultimately finding her way to the village of Haverstraw. She baked cakes from her home until realizing her dream of opening her own bakery in 2011.

This year, Vilma's Bakery celebrates ten years of notable accomplishments and success selling delectable pastries to the entire Rockland County community. Vilma has been recognized with several awards, including the Business of the Year award from the New York State Small Business Development Center.

**Nancy Genova** has 28 years of public administration experience as a healthcare administrator and is currently a Lecturer in the Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences for Hostos Community College in the Bronx.

She served as a Commissioner on the Rockland County Commission on Human Rights from 2008 to 2018.

Nancy is President and spokesperson for 100 Hispanic Women National, an organization that is dedicated to inspiring Latinas “to maximize their strengths and potential to become equal partners in an empowered world of equal justice, recognition, respect and dignity.” The organization recently launched its efforts to expand, with the formation of new chapters, also known as programs, near areas with a large Hispanic populations and Rockland County will be home to one of these new programs.

**Carlos Martinez** graduated from Nyack College and Fordham University with a Master’s in Social Work, Leadership and Macro Practice. He is Executive Director for BRIDGES, which is” a community based, peer-driven, cross-disability, not-for-profit organization” dedicated to advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities.

Carlos has empowered countless individuals to live their lives to their fullest potential and in the manner they choose. His leadership, commitment, and unwavering focus strives to create an accessible, integrated community, promoting health and autonomy for people with disabilities, thereby enhancing their quality of life.

The event ended with special individually packaged desserts provided by Vilma direct from her popular bakery, and **Legislator Michael Grant** urged everyone to visit the shop, stating the Dominican pound cakes were particularly tasty.

“Our honorees do so much for others, and they have achieved so much as individuals,” Legislator Grant said. “I’m honored to recognize Vilma Lopez, Nancy Genova and Carlos Martinez and to express my gratitude for their many contributions to our community that continue to make it better place.”

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