

VICTOR CRUZ, SONIA MANZANO, CARMELO ANTHONY, MAYRA SANTOS-FEBRES, AND MORE, AT NATIONAL PUERTO RICAN DAY PARADE 2012

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New York City, NY - New York's landmark Fifth Avenue will once again shine with Puerto Rican pride and culture, as the **17th Annual National Puerto Rican Day Parade** (55th annual Puerto Rican Day Parade since the event's inception as a local organization), will take place on Sunday, June 10, 2012.

In a press conference held Tuesday, May 15th, at **Banco Popular** in Lower Manhattan, **Madelyn Lugo**, the Parade's Chairperson, announced that this year's Parade theme is "**Puerto Ricans and Higher Education**", in recognition of the outstanding achievements and contribution of Puerto Ricans at all-levels in adult and continuing education. The Parade's Grand Marshal is **Dr. Félix Matos-Rodríguez**, President of **Hostos Community College** (CUNY). The Godfather is **Manuel J. Fernós**, President of Puerto Rico's **Inter-American University**.

"The National Puerto Rican Day Parade remains the premiere family event that celebrates Puerto Rican pride and culture from around the world. This year we have an exciting line-up of honorees whose work has empowered and inspired countless others. I invite everyone to join us on June 10th for our glorious Parade celebration", Lugo said.

New York Giants' superstar **Victor Cruz** will march as Athlete of the Year. The 2012 New York Godmother is actress and author **Sonia Manzano**, a pioneer in Public Television. The Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to **María Román Dumén**, Co-Founder of the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, Inc. The Executive of the Year is **Raul Russi**, CEO of Acacia Network, Inc., for his outstanding contribution to the Parade.

The Parade will be dedicated to the hometown of **Guayama** (38 miles south of San Juan), marking the 276th anniversary of its foundation. The State dedication went to **Ohio**, where the Puerto Rican population reached 94,965 in 2010, according to the U.S. Census.

Other 2012 NPRDP dedications announced today are:

State Grand Marshal: Andrés González, Vice Chairperson, Ohio Latino Affairs Commission; Director of Diversity and Community Outreach, Cleveland Clinic.

Guests of Honor: Sal Abbatiello (Music Executive, creator of the legendary freestyle sensation "The Cover Girls"), **Carmelo Anthony** (NBA Star), **Carlos Cabrera** (DJ Casanova, Radio Personality), **Mario Enrique Calderon** (Broadcaster), **Javier Colon** (Music Artist, NBC's *The Voice*), **Yoshlie S. Garcia** (DJ Bacan Bacan, Radio Personality), **Tania Lopez** (Local Entrepreneur, "*Coqui The Chef*"), **E & J** (Latin Music Group), **Nilda Rosario** (Journalist, Univision 41), **Mayra Santos-Febres** (Author, Poet and Educator).

International Guest of Honor: Rafael Pineda (Legendary Broadcaster, b. Cuba)

Ambassador of Good Will: Jessenia Filomeno (Volunteer and Community Activist)

Ambassador of Music: Alex Sensation

Corporate Acknowledgment: La Rosa del Monte

Puerto Rican Immortals (for Puerto Rican luminaries who have recently passed):

- Δρ. Ριχαρδο Αλεγρία (1921–2011), κνοων ασ τη Φατηερ οφ Μοδερν Πυερτο Ριχαν Αρχηεολογψ .
- Χαρδιναλ Λυισ Αποντε Μαρτίνεζ (1922–2012), φηρστ ανδ ονλψ Πυερτο Ριχαν Χαρδιναλ ιν ηιστορψ.
- Ρυτη Φερνάνδεζ (1919–2012), λεγενδαρψ εντερταινερ ανδ φορμερ Πυερτο Ριχο Χομμονωεαλτη Σενατορ

Lugo announced that the Parade will conduct a voter registration awareness campaign called “*Voto Boricua*” (Puerto Rican Vote). The Parade will also continue its environmental awareness campaign in partnership with the **Sierra Club**, and will pay a special tribute to Puerto Rico's Inter-American University on its 100th Anniversary.

The 17th Annual National Puerto Rican Day Parade (55th Annual Puerto Rican Day Parade in New York) will begin at 11:00 am on 44th Street, making its way north along Fifth Avenue to 79th Street. The event will be broadcast live by **Fox 5/MY9**, and in Puerto Rico through **Telemundo of Puerto Rico**.

Lugo and the Parade's Board of Directors called on parade marchers and spectators to display Puerto Rican flags without any symbols.

For up-to-date information, FAQ's, Parade guidelines, and the entire calendar of events leading up to the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, the public can visit www.nationalpuertoricandayparade.org or call 718-401-0404. The Parade and related events can also be followed on **Facebook**, **Twitter**, **MySpace**, and **YouTube**.

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