

Eduardo DÃ-az Named Director of the Smithsonian Latino Center

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Washington, DC (**CapitalWirePR**) November 7, 2008 - Eduardo DÍaz has been named director of the Smithsonian Latino Center, effective Dec. 8.

DÍaz is the executive director of the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque, N.M., a position he has held since August 2005. It is the largest Latino cultural center in the United States, and as director, DÍaz oversees the programming and operations at this facility, which is a division of New Mexico's Department of Cultural Affairs. The center offers year-round programs in the visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, history and education. The complex includes a museum and permanent collection, performing arts center, resource library and archives, genealogy center, restaurant, gift store and a new educational center, scheduled to open next year. The center also houses the operations of the Instituto Cervantes and the Spanish Resource Center, two Spanish government entities that teach Spanish and prepare Spanish teachers, respectively.

DÍaz has been responsible for two major initiatives: "African Presence in Mexico" and "Africa's Legacy in Mexico and New Mexico," and "From Field to Feast," exploring shared cultural connections with African-based cultures and Native American communities, respectively. In addition, he oversaw a statewide outreach initiative to take performances and exhibitions to several underserved communities throughout New Mexico. The center also collaborates with institutions outside of New Mexico.

"We're delighted that Eduardo DÍaz will lead the Smithsonian Latino Center in its commitment to reach more Americans with the vital story of Latino art, culture, history and heritage," said G. Wayne Clough, Smithsonian Secretary. "Eduardo's experience, expertise and leadership skills will be invaluable as he expands the center's influence. I look forward to working with him."

"I am very excited about joining the Smithsonian and the dedicated staff at its Latino Center," said DÍaz. "I have watched and supported the development of the center for years and am now happy to be able to lead it, ensuring a continuing and influential Latino presence throughout the Institution, and reaching out and collaborating with Latino communities and cultural centers nationwide so that, whether operating at Smithsonian sites or in the field, the Institution and its Latino Center exercise a viable cultural leadership position for, by and about our diverse Latino communities."

Before joining the National Hispanic Cultural Center, DÍaz operated a small consulting firm, serving arts organizations, local arts agencies, statewide advocacy organizations and community-based organizations, specializing in grant-making programs, business and strategic planning, cultural facilities planning and cultural and heritage tourism. In 2001, DÍaz co-founded the International Accordion Festival, a free outdoor music festival, in San Antonio. He continues to serve on the Festival's board and participates in the event each year.

From 1989 to 1999, DÍaz served as director of Cultural Affairs for the city of San Antonio. DÍaz serves on the board of the Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Albuquerque Advisory Committee of the New Mexico Community Foundation.

Díaz earned a law degree (1976) at the University of California, Davis, and a bachelor's degree (1972) in Latin American Studies at San Diego State University. He is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese.

About the Smithsonian Latino Center

The Smithsonian Latino Center is a division of the Smithsonian Institution that ensures Latino contributions to art, science and the humanities are highlighted, understood and advanced through the development and support of public programs, scholarly research, museum collections and educational opportunities at the Smithsonian Institution and its affiliated organizations across the United States and internationally.

Search Committee

The Smithsonian Latino Center's search committee was chaired by Richard Kurin, the Smithsonian's Acting Under Secretary for History, Art and Culture. The other members of the search committee include the following:

- Olivia Cadaval, curator at the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
- Gilberto "Gil" Cárdenas, member of the Smithsonian National Latino Board and the Julian Samora Professor of Latino Studies in the Department of Sociology at the University of Notre Dame
- Anna Cohn, director of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES)
- Francisco Dallmeier, director of the National Zoo's Center for Conservation Education and Sustainability
- Brent Glass, director of the National Museum of American History
- David Gonzales, member of the National Latino Board and vice president of community relations at PepsiCo
- Jesús Rangel, chair of the National Latino Board, and vice president of corporate relations at Anheuser-Busch Companies
- Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, member of the National Latino Board and former associate director of Arts and Humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation.

Díaz succeeds Pilar O'Leary, who was named director of the Smithsonian Latino Center in 2005 and resigned in February 2008. Daniel E. Sheehy, director of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, the nonprofit record label of the Institution, has served as acting director of the Smithsonian Latino Center since February.

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