

Hispanic Heritage Month 2020

HONORING HISPANIC AND LATINX AMERICANS



**Celebrating Hispanic and Latinx
Americans across history who have
contributed to the growth of the
United States.**

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JOVITA IDAR

1865-1946

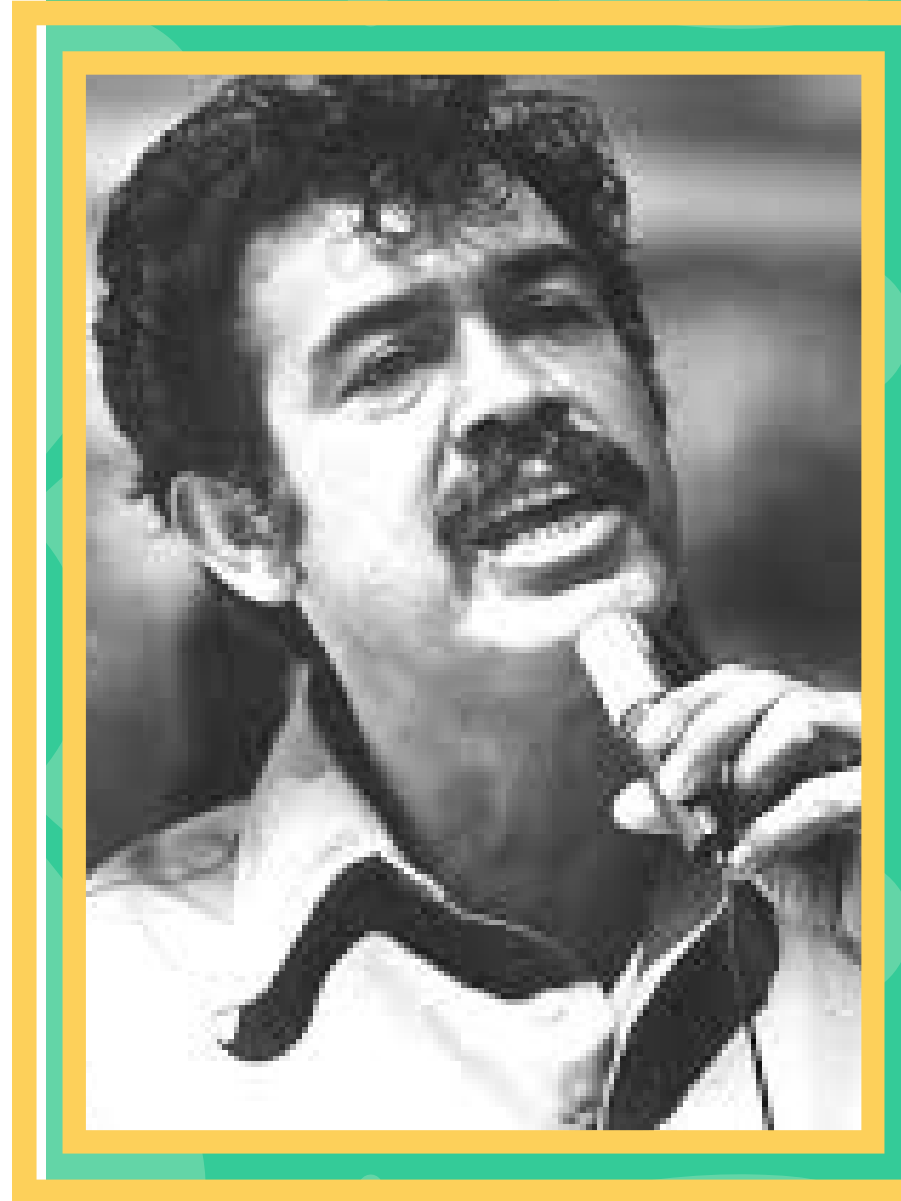


Jovita Idar was born in Laredo, Texas during a time when Jim Crow laws also limited the rights of Mexican-Americans in South Texas. She started her career as a teacher in southeast Texas where she was disappointed in the conditions of the schools. Idar then began to focus more on writing and activism at *La Cronica* with her father and brother. Together, the family wrote about the **inferior housing, schools, and working conditions of Tejano workers**, arguing for Tejano civil rights. Idar started the **Liga Femenil Mexicanista (League of Mexican Women)** where she pushed for the education of poor children in both Spanish and English to preserve the culture. She also wrote about the **importance of children learning Mexican-American history** to know "the glories of his nation." In 1917, Idar moved to San Antonio where she worked as a hospital interpreter for Spanish-speaking patients and established a free kindergarten.

RODOLFO "CORKY" GONZALES

1928-2005

Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales was born June 18th, 1928 in Denver, Colorado. He began to study engineering, but was unable to finish his education. After he dropped out, Corky began his boxing career, fighting in 75 featherweight matches, leading to his induction into the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame. Following his boxing career, he worked on **voter registration** during John F. Kennedy's campaign and **registered more Mexican Americans** than any other time in Colorado's history. Corky was a leader in the **Chicano Movement**. In 1966, he founded **The Crusade for Justice**, a civil rights organization fighting for Chicano nationalism and social change. He also established the **Escuela Tlatelolco** in Denver, a school that fosters cultural pride and empowerment. Corky wrote a poem called "**Yo Soy Joaquin**" that was dedicated to younger generations of Mexican Americans as they consider the historical triumphs and struggles faced by Chicanos in the United States.



SYLVIA MENDEZ

1936-present

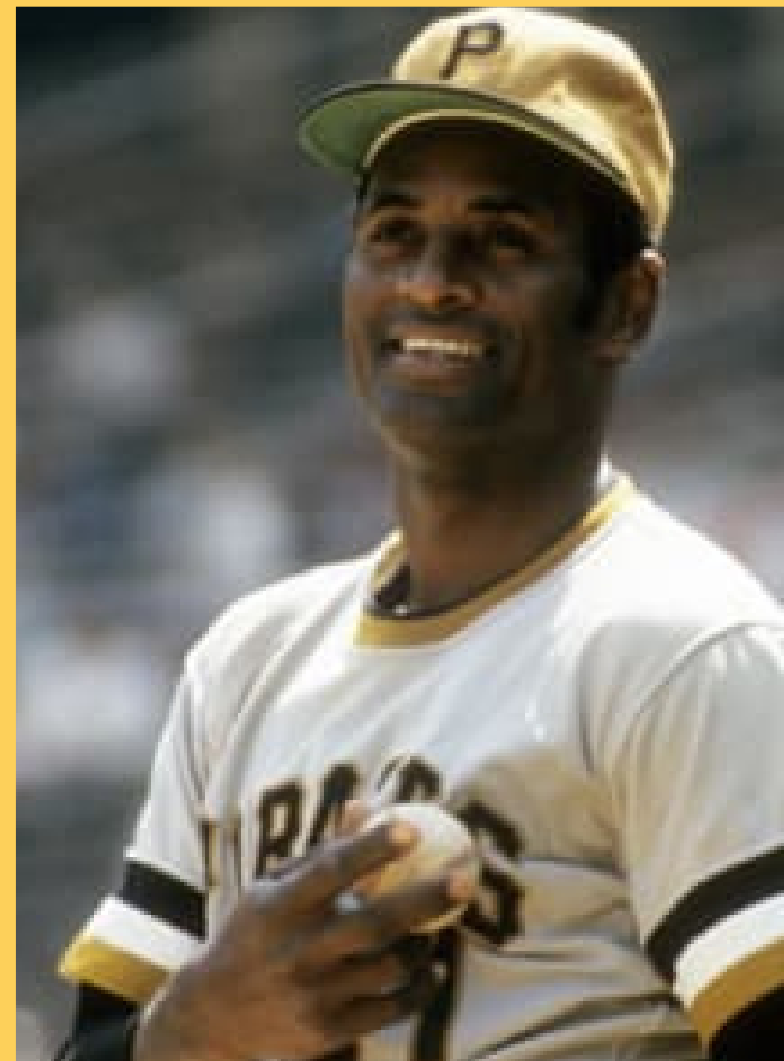


Sylvia Mendez is a civil rights activist of Mexican-Puerto Rican heritage. She was born in Santa Ana, CA, and moved to Westminster with her family where **de facto segregation** kept Hispanics from attending the same school as whites. When her family tried to enroll her in the "white school" due to its better resources, she and her brothers were denied enrollment because they were dark-skinned and had a Hispanic surname. Mendez's parents, Gonzalo and Felicitas, fought back against this discrimination by filing **Mendez vs Westminster** with four other Mexican-American families. When the school board insisted segregation was to the kids' benefit due to language barriers, children testified to show there was no language barrier. In 1947, the court ruled in favor of the families and the **Governor of CA moved to desegregate schools and public spaces**. Mendez gives lectures to educate others on the contributions of the families from the case. She was awarded the **Presidential Medal of Freedom** in 2011.

ROBERTO CLEMENTE

1934-1972

Roberto Clemente was born in Puerto Rico in August of 1934. Just after finishing high school, he started his professional baseball career with the Brooklyn Dodgers to play for their minor league team for a year. In 1955, he made his major league debut with the Pittsburgh Pirates. Though he had impressive stats, Clemente struggled with the **language barrier** between him and his teammates early in his career. He was the **first Hispanic player to: win a World Series as a starter, be the league MVP, be the World Series MVP, reach 3,000 career hits, and be elected to the Hall of Fame.** Clemente saw his career in baseball as a way to help Latin Americans make their lives better by giving them someone to look up to. He held **baseball clinics for low-income families** to help these children access both coaching and encouragement. Clemente died in a plane crash while accompanying packages to aid Nicaragua after an earthquake in 1972.



ELLEN OCHOA

1958-present



Ellen Ochoa was born in Los Angeles, CA, in 1958. She earned a bachelor's degree in physics from San Diego State University and a master's and doctorate degree in electrical engineering from Stanford University. She worked as a research engineer at the **Ames Research Center of NASA**. In 1990, she moved to the Johnson Space Center and was selected as an astronaut. Ochoa was the **first Hispanic woman to go to space and has flown to space four times**. She was a member of the crew that executed the first docking to the International Space Station. Ochoa was named the **Director of the Johnson Space Center**, making her the **first Hispanic to hold this position**. She has been recognized with awards including the **Presidential Distinguished Rank Award and the Distinguished Service Medal**, NASA's highest award. She is the Chair of the National Science Board.

MORE INFLUENTIAL HISPANIC/LATINX AMERICANS TO HONOR

Rita Moreno

Carlos Santana

Arturo Alfonso Schomburg

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Julia Alvarez

Jaime Escalante

Jorge Ramos

Dolores Huerta

Sylvia Rivera

Cesar Chavez

Pablo Alvarado

Sonia Sotomayor