



Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa Honors Cristina & Acceptance Speech

On January 24th, Cristina was honored by the Mayor of Los Angeles and the Latina Lawyers Bar Association at City Hall. Following this press release is Cristina's acceptance speech.

MAYOR ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA, City of Los Angeles

MEDIA ADVISORY, January 24, 2008

MAYOR VILLARAIGOSA WILL ATTEND THE LATINA LAWYERS BAR ASSOCIATION'S CELEBRATION CEREMONY HONORING ATTORNEY AND HOST OF TV'S CRISTINA'S COURT, CRISTINA PEREZ

Cristina Perez is the only Latina attorney to preside over court shows in Spanish- and English-language television

LOS ANGELES Mayor Villaraigosa will attend the Latina Lawyers Bar Association's celebration ceremony honoring attorney and host of TV's Cristina's Court, Cristina Perez at 6:00 PM on Thursday, January 24, 2008, at the City Hall Rotunda, 3rd Floor, 200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

Cristina Perez is a successful lawyer, television personality, radio host, business owner, national author and columnist. She hosted La Corte de Familia from 2000 to 2005 and La Corte del Pueblo on Telemundo. She is co-founder of Perez-Gonzalez, a professional law corporation which specializes in corporate/business, civil, immigration and naturalization law. A native of New York and daughter of Colombian immigrants, Cristina has lived in Los Angeles for more than 25 years. She received her Juris Doctor degree from Whittier Law School and two Bachelor of Arts degrees from UCLA.

Cristina's Acceptance Speech:

Mayor Villaraigosa, President Garcia, members of the Latina Lawyers Bar Association, and guests, thank you for inviting me to be here with you tonight. A special thank you to the mayor and his office for taking the time to host this event.

I am honored that you have selected me as a representative of all the other Latina lawyers and other professional Latinas who are making such great strides in representing the identity of our entire community. **When we celebrate one professional Latina, we celebrate all professional Latinas.** I know that I am just one of thousands of Latinas who have accomplished great things, always strived for success and never gave up their cultural identity in the process.

Tonight is really a celebration of the Latina identity and the success of our community in changing the face of our country. We are celebrating how today's Latina is part of the fastest growing ethnic group in the country. We are here to celebrate each other, our community and its culture.

As we all know, Latinas wear many hats, among them we are mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters and we are professionals, politicians, students, or just friends. Inherent in all of these is the leadership role we take on. We assume a leadership role that is dedicated to serving others, whether it is to our family or our community. We serve as the window for the rest of the world to view our community.

The community looks to us—its leaders—for advice as respected contributors for its success. While we may not realize it - ALL Latinas are critical role models. We play a critical role in the family, organizing communities and advocating for its improvement. And let's face it - we influence public trends and policies.

No matter what role we are in and what hat we wear, the foundation of the Latina identity is pride, working together and celebrating each other selflessly and without jealousy. In this way, I am honored and humbled to have been selected tonight as a spokesperson for the Latina community. **But I believe that we all need to take credit for the strength of our community together and I am just one individual within that community.** For me, our community is like a family and everyone who knows me, knows that family is the most important thing in my life – and I know this is true for your lives as well. Family is at the core of our Latino identity and comes into play in everything we do, both personally and professionally.

The power of a united family is what defines us as a group and because of that nobody can take away our strength. It is important that we continue to stick together, especially on the most important and challenging issues that we face today – immigration, the economy, healthcare and every other national issue that affects us as individuals,

families, a community and a nation. America is changing – and yes, I'm sure most of you have noticed how "change" is one of the most popular words being used in the national presidential campaigns, on both sides too. Change is clearly something that unites us all and I think the Latino community recognizes the power of change more so than many others. Together, the expression of our cultural identity has changed the face of our nation and will continue more and more for years to come.

So as much as I appreciate that you have selected me as one professional Latina to represent a community of many, I understand that this is really not about me at all. This is a celebration of Latinas in general. As Cesar Chavez learned from his mother early in his life: "Lleva dos la lucha, uno no puede hacerla sola" - "It takes two to fight, and one can't do it alone". I know that as one I cannot do it alone. Without the strength of my family and community, I would not be standing here as the professional Latina I am today. So for that I thank you – for helping to reinforce the power and strength of my Latina identity, for motivating me to continue striving for success on behalf of our entire community and always reminding me -- that when one of us is recognized, we are all recognized.

Thank you.

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