

May 4, 2017

The Parade's 60th Anniversary Plans are Well Underway

In a press conference this past Tuesday, the Parade's Board announced that Oscar López Rivera will, in fact, march at the forefront of the 2017 Parade as Prócer de la Libertad (National Freedom Hero), in his first visit to New York City following his sentence commutation by President Obama. We also announced the continuation of the campaign to raise awareness of the grave humanitarian and economic crisis in Puerto Rico - first launched last year - and a new campaign focused on the centennial and impact of the Jones Act, a provision of which established U.S. Citizenship for all Puerto Ricans in 1917, changing the course of Puerto Rican history forever and causing a conversation and debate that continues to this day. The Parade's Board will continue to work with contingents to ensure that all issues and causes that impact the Puerto Rican experience in the USA and Puerto Rico are integrated, so that the community can continue taking action in solidarity and the Parade continues to represent, as its theme states, *un pueblo, muchas voces / one nation, many voices*.

The history of the National Puerto Rican Day Parade is one of cultural resilience, pride, unity, awareness and education, rooted in the spirit of activism, freedom and justice. We are proud that such legacy remains alive and strong today, 60 years after the Parade's founders first marched in New York City to celebrate their cultural heritage and raise awareness of the presence and positive contribution of the Puerto Rican community, and also spotlight the issues that affected Puerto Ricans in New York and Puerto Rico at the time. This continues to be part of the Parade's DNA, something the current Board honors with great responsibility. The Parade Board has a proven history of

embracing causes and has taken a proactive stance to bring vital issues that speak to the Puerto Rican experience across la Patria Extendida to the global stage that is Fifth Avenue. Be it taking a stance on civil and human rights for political prisoners, including Oscar López Rivera, calling for The Borinqueneers to be bestowed the Congressional Gold Medal, championing for environmental justice for Caño Martín Peña, LGBTQ rights and marriage equality, the Parade has confronted several issues and challenges. Others include the fight for fairness, justice and representation in U.S./Puerto Rico government and economics, labor rights, the current economic crisis, the Medicaid and healthcare in Puerto Rico, among other. Our Parade has a pioneering history and legacy of championing the people's voice and providing a platform that prompts healthy discussions and leads to positive change. This activism happens every June and year-round, as we have joined other community members in Orlando, Washington D.C. and at other locations over the past years. We will continue to do so, while still celebrating the rich cultural pride, heritage, identity and tradition, that bind us together.