



PRESS RELEASE
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New York State Sen. Martinez recognizes community leaders during Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration



Photo: Sen. Martinez and performers with El Teatro Rodante Hispanico pose for a photo during the Fourth Senatorial District's Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration. Click [here](#) for a downloadable version of this photo.

CENTRAL ISLIP, N.Y. – Hispanic Heritage Month is observed each year from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, celebrating the pride, strength and shared traditions that have shaped communities across the United States. The monthlong

recognition honors the cultures, histories and contributions of Americans whose roots trace to Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.

To commemorate the observance, New York State Sen. Monica R. Martinez hosted her annual Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration on Tuesday, Oct. 14, 2025, where she recognized 13 community, educational and business leaders from across the Fourth Senatorial District for their work to strengthen and enrich the lives of residents.

“The stories and accomplishments of these honorees reflect the diversity and strength that define our district,” said Sen. Martinez. “Their leadership, service, and commitment to others enrich our community and remind us that unity and compassion remain at the heart of who we are. This celebration is a tribute to their impact and to the enduring spirit of the Hispanic community.”

The honorees were:

Rev. Stanislaw Wadowski | Ministry Leadership Award

Father Stanislaw Wadowski, born in Poland, began his missionary work in the Bronx and later in Tijuana, Mexico, where he studied in a seminary founded by Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Ordained in 1997, he has served in several countries before joining St. Anne’s Parish in Brentwood in 2015, where he continues to lead with faith and compassion.

Mauricio Noroña | Educator Award

Mauricio Noroña, a Clinical Assistant Professor of Law and Director of the Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic at Touro Law Center, guides students in representing immigrant families while advocating for fairness and dignity. An Ecuadorian immigrant, he mentors the next generation of public interest lawyers, particularly Latino and immigrant-background students.

Angelica Rodriguez Alonso | Educator Award

Assistant Principal at Amityville Memorial High School, Angelica Rodriguez Alonso leads the ENL and World Languages departments and promotes inclusive learning that celebrates cultural diversity. Born in the Dominican Republic, she empowers multilingual students to embrace their identities and reach their full potential.



Photo (left to right): Detective Maritza Preddy, Jose Deniz, Xiomara Benitez Saavedra, Angelica Rodriguez Alonso, state Sen. Monica R. Martinez, Lauren Alfaro, Mauricio Noroña, and Rev. Stanislaw Wadowski during the Fourth Senatorial District's Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration on Oct. 14, 2025. [Click here for a downloadable version of this photo.](#)

Xiomara Benitez Saavedra | Student Leadership Award

A first-generation college student at LIU Post, Xiomara Benitez Saavedra studies education and psychology while serving as Secretary of the Student Latino Union. With Peruvian and Salvadoran heritage, she contributes to bilingual outreach at the Wyandanch Public Library and aspires to become a bilingual educator.

Lauren Alfaro | Student Leadership Award

Lauren Alfaro, a senior at Wyandanch Memorial High School, is the founder of the Her-Story Club and has served in her school's student government as both Executive and Class President. Her leadership also extends into the wider community through her work with Suffolk County's Peer Diversion Court program and her advocacy for civic engagement in the Town of Babylon.



Photo: Members of the Sol & Sombra Spanish Dance Company dance during Sen. Martinez's Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration on Oct. 14, 2025. Click [here](#) for a downloadable version of this photo.



Photo: Performers with El Teatro Rodante Hispanico dance during Sen. Martinez's Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration on Oct. 14, 2025. Click [here](#) for a downloadable version of this photo.

Jose Deniz | First Responder Award

Born in Venezuela, Jose Deniz is a dedicated member of the West Babylon Fire Department and Supervisor at the Wyandanch Wheatley Heights Ambulance Corps. Fluent in five languages, he has trained recruits, supported multiple departments, and serves as a trusted mentor and community leader.

Detective Maritza Preddy | Law Enforcement Award

Detective Maritza Preddy has served with the MTA Police Department since 2008 and was promoted to Detective in 2015. Assigned to District 1 in Central Islip, she investigates crimes with professionalism and integrity while strengthening relationships between law enforcement and the community.

Paula Dolber | Community Leadership Award

Born in Medellín, Colombia, Paula Dolber is Director of Client Services for Ferro Kuba Mangano / Liga de Justicia Abogados, where she connects families with vital legal and healthcare resources. She also serves on the board of Fundación Esperanza, leading outreach efforts that bring opportunity to families across Long Island.

Rachel Jarvis | Community Leadership Award

Rachel Jarvis, an Inventory Analyst with Optimum (Altice USA), is Secretary of the Puerto Rican Coalition for a Better Community. A proud advocate for Long Island's Puerto Rican community, she organizes cultural events and shares her heritage through music as lead singer of The Blend.

Erika Brooks, LMSW | Not-for-Profit Leadership Award

Erika Brooks, a bilingual social worker from Puebla, Mexico, has over sixteen years of experience supporting seniors and immigrant communities through advocacy and trauma-informed care. She currently serves with the Suffolk County Office for the Aging and on the Board of RiseWell Community Services.



Photo (left to right): Simon Valenzuela with Pollo Campero, Ana Maria Caraballo and Diana Torres with JVC Broadcasting, Frank Napoli, state Sen. Monica R. Martinez, Erika Brooks, Rachel Jarvis, and Paula Dolber during the Fourth Senatorial District's Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration on Oct. 14, 2025. Click [here](#) for a downloadable version of this photo.

Francesco “Frank” Napoli | Not-for-Profit Leadership Award

Frank Napoli, born in Tripoli, Libya, co-directs Iniciativa Ciudadana para el Cambio, an organization promoting labor rights, education, and immigration support. During the pandemic, he coordinated food distributions for families in need and continues his decades-long advocacy for equity and opportunity.

JVC Broadcasting | Business Leadership Award

Founded in 2009, JVC Broadcasting operates 17 radio stations and five event venues in New York and Florida. With its on-air personalities including Diana Torres and John Gutiérrez, the company promotes diversity, empowerment, and storytelling that connect and inspire communities.

Pollo Campero | Business Empire Award

Originating in Guatemala, Pollo Campero has grown into a global restaurant brand with 14 New York locations, including three within the Fourth Senatorial District. Its restaurants serve as gathering places for families and engage in local programs that celebrate culture and community.

This year's ceremony was held at the Central Islip Fire Department.



Photo: Performers with El Teatro Rodante Hispanico dance during Sen. Martinez's Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration on Oct. 14, 2025. Click [here](#) for a downloadable version of this photo.



Photo: A performer with El Teatro Rodante Hispanico stands with a banner for Sen. Martinez's Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration. Click [here](#) for a downloadable version of this photo.