

Honoring Hispanic Heritage Month

October 14, 2020

NEW YORK, October 14, 2020 – In honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month, Proskauer colleagues discussed the cultural connections and familial influences which enrich their lives. Celebrating the cultures and contributions of both Hispanic and Latino Americans, our Proskauer community members shared some insight about their families, careers and values.

Manager of business applications Johnny Lizardo said, “Raised in Puerto Rico, seeing my parents work so hard made an impact on me. They taught my brothers and me that the only way to move forward is to trust in God and to be a hard worker for your family.”

Johnny has brought that mentality to his professional life. “I moved to NYC to get better opportunities and professional challenges. Proskauer found me, and joining was one of my best decisions,” he said.

Born in Montevideo, Uruguay, corporate partner Carlos Martinez also emphasized the work ethic that originated from his parents. He expressed the importance of translating those lessons into the office as a mentor and member of Proskauer’s [Hispanic/Latino Lawyer Affinity Group \(HLLAG\)](#).

“HLLAG provides a space where I can share my experiences with young lawyers. It is critical for diverse associates to be able to access a partner who has some familiarity with where they are coming from, both culturally and socioeconomically,” he said.

Litigation partner Susan Gutierrez, whose family hails from Venezuela and Colombia, discussed her source of wisdom.

Susan said, “U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor inspires me. Her intellect is obvious, but so is her humanity. She embraces her culture and uses her position and voice to empower other Latinas to set and meet greater and greater professional goals. As she famously told Hispanic law students at Hofstra University in 1996, ‘The Latina in me is an ember that blazes forever.’”

In celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month, colleagues also shared some culinary recommendations.

Senior manager of expense management and analysis Jocelyn Pimentel's family is from the Dominican Republic says that Dominican history and traditions are a fusion of European/African cultural elements.

"The mixture of cultures is clearly seen in some of my favorite things, food and music. Family is one of the most valuable things in my culture and food and music always brings us together. The Merengue dance and music originated in the Dominican Republic and was declared by UNESCO an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. A few Dominican dishes include sancocho (7 meat stew), tostones (twice fried plantains), pollo guisado (braised chicken), and bizcocho Dominicano (Dominican cake)."

Jon English, who is Vietnamese and Mexican/Chicano, is an associate and co-chair of HLLAG. "'Mixed' is par for the course for Latino culture," he said. "Taste our food and listen to our music, for example, it's a blend of cultures, traditions and heritages. The 'mixing' creates a culture that is truly distinctive and unique in the world."

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- **Susan L. Gutierrez**
Partner