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House of Representatives

A TRIBUTE TO GILDA BOJORQUEZ-GJURICH

SPEECH OF
HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TUESDAY, JULY 17, 2007

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding member of the Los Angeles-area business and civic community and a woman of true distinction, Gilda Bojorquez-Gjurich.

Raised in East Los Angeles, Gilda graduated from Garfield High School and Woodbury University in Burbank, where she majored in accounting. Following graduation, she put her education to work, pursuing a career as a general contractor and becoming a partner in an Alhambra-based construction firm. It was a successful and top-rated venture, reflecting her keen business sense and her ability to break through the glass ceiling as a woman in the construction industry.

Complementing her success in the business community, Gilda has spent decades making extensive civic contributions, serving on the board of directors for various nonprofit organizations and working to improve the lives of those less fortunate in the greater Los Angeles community.

For many years, Gilda has been a key member of Las Madrinas, an informal group of dedicated advocates mentoring the young women at Ramona Continuation High School in East Los Angeles. She has provided financial resources, and recruited volunteers and role models to help inspire and guide these young women working to turn their lives around in the school's alternative learning environment.

In 1989 Gilda became a founding member of Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE), and she continues to play a dynamic and influential role in the organization. Over the past two decades, HOPE has become a vibrant nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to ensuring political and economic parity for Latinas through leadership, advocacy, and education.

In 1991 Gilda co-founded HOPE's annual symposium entitled, *A Proud Past ... A Powerful Tomorrow*. To date, the symposium has welcomed more than 3,000 Latinas who have come together to learn about issues important to our community. Gilda was also instrumental in getting local, county, and state officials to declare the annual symposium date as Latina History Day, celebrated on the second Friday in March to commemorate the historic achievements of Latinas.

Gilda was also pivotal in the growth and success of the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation, established in 1963 to serve disadvantaged individuals and families in the Los Angeles area. She was chair of the foundation's National Hispanic Women's Conference, and is credited with helping the group become a multi-million dollar organization that serves more than 100,000 low-to-moderate income Latinos throughout seven counties in California providing high quality social services and programs to those communities where need is the greatest. Gilda continues to serve on the board of directors for the organization.

While her advocacy on behalf of Hispanics has made her a loved and well known figure throughout Los Angeles, Gilda has also served with distinction and earned recognition at the state and national level. Over the years, she has served three presidents in appointed positions, including her appointments to the Commission on International Women's Year, the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, and as an emissary to evaluate the revolution in Nicaragua. California Governor Gray Davis presented her with a commendation for exemplary community service in recognition of her years of service on behalf of her fellow Angelenos.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Gilda as she celebrates her 80th year, and a lifetime of commitment to the economic empowerment of Los Angeles communities and Latinas across the nation. Gilda exemplifies what it is to be a role model — not just for Latinas, but for all Americans. Latino families in Los Angeles, the state and the nation are truly fortunate to have such a devoted advocate, and I am equally blessed by her friendship that I look forward to cherishing for many years to come.