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## Que Ondee Sola- November 1996

Eduardo Arocho

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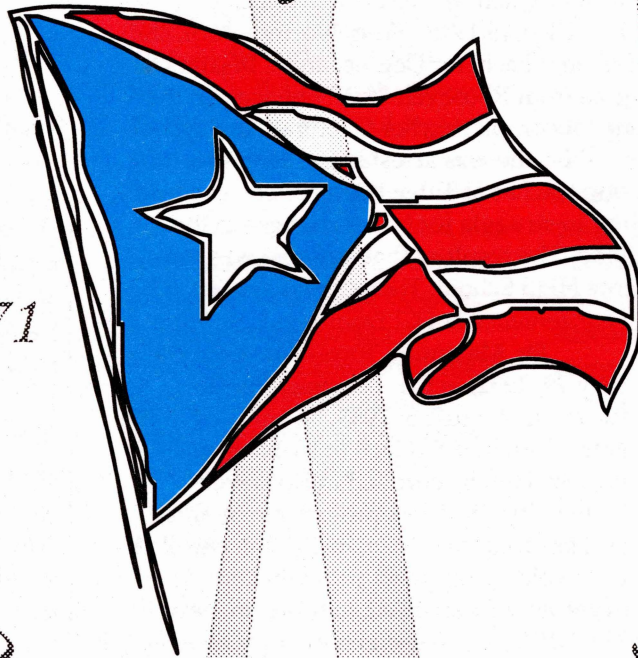
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November 1996

*Qué*

*Ondee*

*Sola*

*UNION*  
*for*



1971

1996

*Puerto Rican Students*

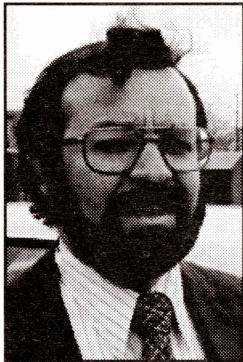
*A n n i v e r s a r y*



## EDITOR'S NOTE

by Eduardo Arocho

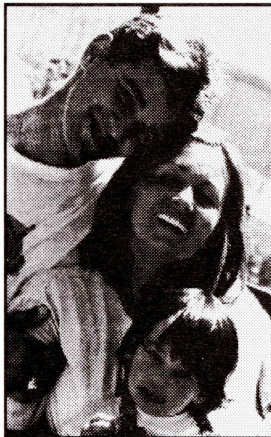
The Union For Puerto Rican Students (UPRS) will celebrate 25 years at Northeastern, a quarter century since its' founding. The UPRS will honor those alumni who were involved in advancing the mission of UPRS, and continuing to work in the Puerto Rican/Latino community today. Among our honorees are Congressman Luis V. Gutiérrez, who will be the Keynote Speaker this evening and State Sen. Miguel del Valle, founding member of the UPRS. Special



recognition goes to Dr. Daniel Stern, Kingsley Clarke and Dr. Angelina Pedroso for their unwavering support of the UPRS in the past 25 years. The Banquet is dedicated to Dr. Maximino Torres, and also to Carmen Valentín because of the impact she had on many of the founders of UPRS.

Carmen Valentin was born in Arecibo Puerto Rico, in 1946. From Northeastern, she received a Bachelor Degree, and a Masters degree from Roosevelt Univ. She was on the verge of completing her Doctorate in Psychology when she was arrested in 1980. As a young teacher at Tuley High School, she lead

students and the community to struggle for better changes in the education they were receiving. The result of that struggle was the creation of Roberto Clemente High School. Today she is serving a 90 year sentence at FCI Dublin in California.



Dr. Maximino Torres was born on May 29, 1932, in San Lorenzo Puerto Rican. In August of 1953, he enrolled in the North Teachers College (now Northeastern). In 1965 he enrolled in Roosevelt University's Masters program in Spanish and graduated in 1970. In 1973 he enrolled in Loyola's Education program and eventually received a Doctorate in 1983. The UPRS was responsible for pressuring the university to hire a Latino counselor to serve the Latino student population. That is when UPRS brought in Dr. Torres. Max as he likes to be called was instrumental in the creation of Proyecto Pa'lante in 1971, and since then has been a counselor there.

We pay tribute to these people for their contributions to UPRS and to the work the Union has done at NEIU. We apologize if we weren't able to recognize all of the alumni but the mere fact that we are celebrating the UPRS is recognition for all those who have in the past contributed and those who will contribute in the future.

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*Que Ondee Sola* is a monthly journal reflecting the thoughts and opinion of the Latino students and the Latino community with an emphasis on Puerto Rican self-determination.

*Que Ondee Sola* is published at Northeastern Illinois University. The opinions expressed in *Que Ondee Sola* do not necessarily reflect those of the administration. Responsibility for its contents lie solely within the staff of *Que Ondee Sola*. We appreciate and encourage all suggestions.

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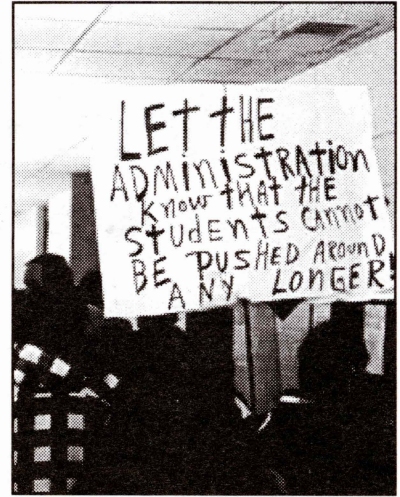
# UPRS SILVER ANNIVERSARY

by Eduardo Arocho

Most people who walk the halls of Northeastern whether faculty member, student, administrator, or visitor, may not realize that this year marks the 25th anniversary of the Union for Puerto Rican students. You may ask, What does that mean? It means that for the last 25 years, the most prominent leaders of the Puerto Rican/Latino Community in Chicago have graduated from Northeastern and have been UPRS members. That throughout this quarter century of life UPRS gave birth to admissions programs that increased Latino student enrollment. That for each of those 25 long years, The UPRS has perpetuated a struggle for student rights, self-expression, self-determination and has been the voice of a traditionally marginalized group. Even to this day, UPRS continues to be at the vanguard of Latino student leadership.

The UPRS is not just a Puerto Rican Student organization, it is an organization that has been traditionally composed of other Latino and ethnic groups. Hence the name Union For Puerto Rican Students and not Union Of Puerto Rican Students.

The UPRS began in the Summer of 1971, founded by Puerto Rican/Latino students who felt that academic life did not reflect the inner-city communities from which they came. They found themselves increasingly marginalized by life in this academic institution. At that time, in the early 70's, there were only 59 Latino students at Northeastern. Many of these students were transfer students from community colleges or other universities. Outreach and recruitment needed to be done in the inner-city High Schools, to increase the number of Puerto Rican/Latino students in the University. Following a period that some may characterize as turbulent, the UPRS challenged Northeastern to live up to its "Urban Mission". Thus, the Union for Puerto Rican Students was successful in pressuring the University to implement programs like: Proyecto Pa'lante, English and math developmental courses, Puerto Rican History and Sociology line, the Mexican/Caribbean Studies Minor, The Bilingual Education programs, El Centro and many other educational innovations.



*Que Ondee Sola* is another project of the UPRS. QOS became the voice for this student movement and has documented the history and transformation of the UPRS and the Puerto Rican/Latino Community. It is the longest consistently published Latino student publication in the United States. QOS provides the space to discuss important issues in the community and to promote the activities and goals of the UPRS. In addition, QOS acts as a much needed resource of the history and culture of Puerto Rico and Latin America, where students would not otherwise have access to this information.

Northeastern has certainly been impacted by the work of UPRS. Just the mere fact that today 21% of the student body of Northeastern is Latino, up from only 59 students in 1971, illustrates the impact that the UPRS has had here at NEIU. Moreover, not only Puerto Rican and Latino

(Cont. pg. 8)



# A conversation with Luis V. Gutiérrez

## Enrique Salgado, Jr.

In its 25 year existence the Union for Puerto Rican Students has produced many of our community leaders. Whether as a social worker, as a teacher, as a media personality, or as elected officials they have continued to make a profound impact on Puerto Ricans/Latinos in Chicago and nationwide. Always keeping one foot firmly planted in the community these leaders have defended us here and abroad.

Recently, I had the opportunity to sit down and have a conversation with US Congressman Luis V. Gutierrez, representative of the 4th congressional district. Rep. Gutierrez, an alumni of North-eastern Illinois University and past president of the UPRS (1974-76), attended the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras, P.R. In his senior year he transferred to Northeastern, and soon after became the President of the Union for Puerto Rican Students.

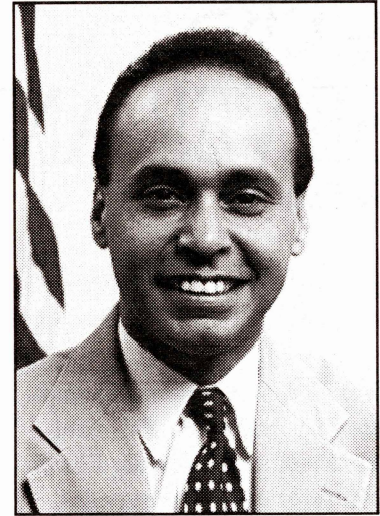
I asked Rep. Gutierrez, what was it that attracted him to join UPRS. He said, "It was the connection that the Union had with the community, and the issues that the Union worked on that prompted me to join. The

Union worked on everything from the creation of Roberto Clemente High School, to the issue of housing because there were a lot of people who didn't have housing, to the problem of police brutality in our community. The Union was always involved in the community."

Before he became alderman of the 26th ward and then U.S. representative of the fourth district, Luis Gutierrez taught English as a volunteer along with other members of the Union for Puerto Rican Students at the Puerto Rican High School (now the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Alternative High School).

Rep. Gutierrez points out that it was as a member of UPRS working around the issues that faced our community that he learned to organize, to work with others, to get involved in the community. It was the experience with UPRS that taught him how to reach goals and objectives, and how important an education is in order to reach them.

As I continued to speak with the Congressman, it astonished me to think that a young man from Puerto Rico, who drove a cab to support his



family and who struggled in the community, would one day be sitting in Washington as an elected representative of the people. As I stated earlier Luis Gutierrez has continued to make a tremendous impact on Puerto Ricans/ Latinos. All the while he kept one foot firmly planted in the community from which he came.

What were his thoughts when he heard that the Union for Puerto Rican Students is celebrating 25 years and what message or advice does he have for future members of UPRS? He replied: "Continue to stand tough, be successful, study hard, be rich and prosperous, and always remember to keep the bridge between the community and the university with one foot planted in both."



# Interview with MIRIAM RIVERA

by Eduardo Arocho

**When did you become a member of UPRS?**

When it started in the summer of 1971.

**Why did you join UPRS?**

Because there weren't too many Latinos on campus I think that was our way of coming together and having some commonality. We had to stick together somehow, and that was our way of doing it.

**What was the purpose of this coming together?**

It was mainly survival. A lot of things went on against us as students here by other students. For example, I remember one time we were sitting in the Cafeteria, which used to be where the bookstore is now. Five or six of us were sitting around and listening to Spanish music. It wasn't loud, but a couple of white males came to our table and told us, "turn off that music and go back to where you came from." It was incidents like that that made us feel like we really needed to stick together. You couldn't just be out there by yourself here because I don't think you could have survived very well, and we knew that. Our mission was to keep everybody in school and

get through however we could. Academically we were trying to help each other in just surviving here, but then we had to deal with community.

It wasn't for Latinos to get in.

**What were some of the things that you specifically did in UPRS?**

A lot of what we did we did as a group, because we were still trying to get courses. We were still trying to get instructors- Max Torres was involved. A lot of it was figuring out how we could get established here on campus. I don't even remember who the president was at the time to be honest with you. So our meeting had more to do with the big issues. We wanted to bring Betances in. We used to work a lot with Ben Coleman. He was probably the number one supporter. I don't know what we would have done without him. We worked to get Puerto Rican history. We brought in Inez Bocanegra. It wasn't so much what individuals did as much as the whole group, and I think that was what was so nice about it. We knew that we were all in this together, and without that unity it wasn't going to work. I think that's probably why things got done.



How did UPRS connect with the community? Why was this important?

The main importance was to get the word out that Northeastern was a place that Latinos could come to, and that whether we were wanted here or not we were here to say. Obviously there are a lot of other reasons. You know we didn't have a lot of the problems that are out there now. Of course, there have always been gangs and drugs, but not to the extent that they exist now. But I think that our work was trying to get our people to understand that college was a viable option and that yes we could do it. I found out about Northeastern through *Aspira*, I mean I didn't even know this place existed. I don't know how other people found out. We needed to get the word out, the more of us that came the more we could get out.

(Cont. pg. 8)



## *Program*

- 6:00 Reception*  
*Son Del Barrio*
- 7:00 Welcome Address*  
*Salme Steinberg , NEIU President*  
*Lisa Quinn, Alumni Affairs Director*  
*Enrique Salgado Jr., President of UPRS*
- 7:30 Dinner*  
*Grupo Yuba*
- 8:30 Keynote Speaker*  
*Hon. Luis Gutiérrez,*  
*U.S. Representative of the 4th Con. District.*
- 8:50 Tribute*
- 9:00 Honorees*
- 9:15 Special Recognition*
- 9:20 Alumni Recognition*
- 9:50 Qué Ondee Sola Presentation*  
*NEIU Ronald Williams Library Archives*
- 10-11:30 Dance*  
*Orquesta Melao*
-

*Honorees*

*Jaime Delgado*  
*Aida Sánchez*  
*State Senator Miguel Del Valle*  
*Congressman Luis Gutierrez*  
*Irma Romero*

*Tribute*

*Dr. Maximino Torres*  
*Carmen Valentin*

*Special Recognition*

*Dr. Daniel Stern, UPRS Advisor*  
*Dr. Kingsley Clarke, Qué Ondee Sola Advisor*  
*Dr. Angelina Pedroso*

*Alumni Recognition*

<i>Dr. Inez Bocanegra</i>	<i>Che Maldonado</i>
<i>Freddy Calixto</i>	<i>Sandra Mantilla</i>
<i>Edwin Claudio</i>	<i>Guy Reyes</i>
<i>Linda Coronado</i>	<i>Miriam Rivera</i>
<i>Judge David Delgado</i>	<i>Antonia Rodriguez</i>
<i>Willie Delgado</i>	<i>Enrique Romero</i>
<i>Marvin Garcia</i>	<i>Julia Salgado</i>
<i>Erica González</i>	<i>Millie Santiago</i>
<i>David Hernández</i>	<i>Carlos Torre</i>
<i>Jose Hernandez</i>	<i>Marcos Vilar</i>
<i>Lourdes Lugo</i>	



MIRIAM RIVERA CONTINUED

**Looking back now how do you see the significance of the role of UPRS you know 25 years ago?**

The UPRS has changed a lot and I'm even seeing a change now. When we first started I don't think we were as militant, as it became later. The wonderful thing about UPRS is that it has changed along with the times. There was a time that UPRS had to be more university-focused on getting the students in classes, etc. Later there came a time to really get into the community, because there were some serious things happening in the community. So I think the vision that UPRS has had over the years has been multitiered. I

think that's the reason why it's existed so long. It may have turned off some people when it did become very militant, because people didn't understand that you can be militant in different ways. I think that when we started out with UPRS we were just as militant. It was just a different wave with a different target maybe. So if it hadn't been for UPRS many of the people that have come to this institution wouldn't be here because Proyecto Pa'lante wouldn't have been here, Max wouldn't have been here. UPRS has always been the impetus. I think the fact that UPRS has been respected by the administration, because they know that some clubs come and go, but

UPRS has always been there. No matter who the leadership is, UPRS still has an organization that is strong and must be reckoned with. So I think it has been very instrumental in the progress that Latinos and Puerto Ricans have made here on campus. I think UPRS encompasses everybody because there have been other Latino organizations on campus that have not been very active, but UPRS has always been there. It's important with prospective students that when they see our view book they see UPRS. Even if they're Colombian, Mexican, Guatemalan, they saw that there was a Latino organization out there.

SILVER ANNIVERSARY CONTINUED

students have benefited, but also white students, some of whom come from "better prepared" suburban high schools, have found use of the math and English developmental program.

The Puerto Rican/Latino community of Chicago has benefited by UPRS alumni, many of whom have gone on to serve the community and play very important leadership roles. Congressmen Luis V. Gutierrez, State Senator Miguel Del Valle, Aida Sanchez, Miriam Rivera, Marvin Garcia, Dr. Inez Boccanegra and many other

prominent leaders in our community.

Why is it important to celebrate 25 years of UPRS? Because the Union for Puerto Rican Students is not merely a student organization, but a grass roots organization that has blossomed into a mighty palm tree whose coconut fruits are filled with the juices of wisdom and stamina. Moreover, UPRS has always maintained a bridge between community and university and is constantly constructing bigger and better bridges. It has always been a force to be reckoned with that cannot be ignored.

The true value of UPRS has been its undeniable success and ability to withstand the tests of time. It will be interesting to see 25 years from now how the UPRS has evolved, what type of new leadership has appeared, and what new and exciting things they will do in a world far different from that of 1971. Until then, let us celebrate our silver number 25.

# 25 years of UPRS: AN ORAL HISTORY WITH MIGUEL DEL VALLE

by Enrique Salgado Jr.

*In this section of Que Ondee Sola, we probe the history of UPRS by interviewing some of its most distinguished alumni, women and men who were involved in the creation and definition of this students organization and who continue to work in the community today. I was fortunate to get an interview with the very busy State Senator Miguel Del Valle, who was more than happy to set time aside and reminisce about the origins of Union for Puerto Rican Students.*

**Could you explain how were you involved in the founding of the Union for Puerto Rican Students, could you explain how and what was that time like?**

I was 19 when I started at Northeastern. I had spent a year doing different things trying to figure out where I was going. I had started out at the University of Puerto Rico because I had received a scholarship, but was there only two months and came back, because this is what I knew, this is where my partners were at. I had a hell of a time at the University of P.R. I

had trouble Spanish at the time. Just couldn't adjust. I was born in Puerto Rico, but I came to live in Chicago at the age of four. While, I love Puerto Rico and had been back to vacation a couple of times growing up, I was home sick. This was home, the Humboldt area where I grew up, and so I left the University of Puerto Rico and came back here.

There was one individual at what is today known as the Trina Davila Center who I had worked for in the summer youth employment program. He was a graduate of Northeastern and he worked with the city at the time. He kept after me, kept telling me, "You have a good head on my shoulders. He encouraged me to apply for the scholarship that I applied for when I was a senior at Tuley which is now Clemente High School." He encouraged me to apply for the University of P.R. scholarship and of course I blew it at the University of P.R. but when I got back to Chicago I checked him out and he was still pushing me to go to school.



I spent months, I don't recall how many—I had three different jobs in three different factories working the night shifts. It was good for me because during that time I did a lot of thinking about what I wanted to do with myself. This person said to me, "You gotta go to school. You got a good head on your shoulders." Finally, he helped me connect with Northeastern cause he knew folks at Northeastern. During that summer, I went to see the Financial Aid counselor and I was hooked up with the college work study program. He helped me hook up with an agency in the east Humboldt Park area called the Latin American Boys Club. Where I was able to get on the college work study program working off campus in the community.

In September I started my full time classes at Northeastern. When I started there, there were already a couple of people that I

*(See next page)*



had gone to high school with Paulo Ramirez and Sam Flores and a couple of other people were working to put the Union for Puerto Rican Students together. We got together, held several meetings. I think the records might show, if documents are still around that I was the first treasurer. I remember accepting the role of treasurer. We didn't have any money but I took it on. We held several meetings and the group grew. Out of that we then started some activism to get Northeastern to be more accessible to the Latino students, and to be more responsive to the Latino student.

I think there were around 65 Latino students total on campus at the time. It was a much smaller school it didn't have the science building, the classroom building or a few of the other buildings that are there now. However it was still a large school, one with a very low Latino enrollment. We felt very much alone and needed to deal with that isolation. So, one of the first issues that we were working on was to hire a Latino counselor. We started talking and making noise with the President of the University and the administration. The administration responded. We had a couple of actions. I remember doing a couple of demonstrations at the school. We took a group of students up to the president's office in an unan-

nounced manner with signs, etc. The University met with us, talked with us and offered to create a part time position for a counselor to work with Latino students. We said, "No, we want a full time position. It's got to be full time." and we went back and forth. Finally they said yes and they proceeded to look for someone, and we said no-we are going to be a part of the process. We met and insisted that the students be involved in the search, the screening, and the selection of the person that would become our counselor.

The person I mentioned earlier who had convinced me to go back to school was Max Torres. I said, "I know a guy, let's interview him." We set up a committee and a couple of the guys like Paulo and Sam had met and knew Max because of his work in the community. We went to Max and set up an interview. There were a few other people we interviewed. We decided we wanted Max, so the university hired him, and he's been there ever since. That was our doing, our decision. I think that has something to do with the way Max has operated over the years.

Max worked with the students very closely, developing a recruitment program. We knew it was not just a matter of having a Latino counselor. We needed a mechanism, a vehicle for increasing the Latino enroll-

ment on this campus and for getting out into the community. Max developed the program Proyecto Pa'lante. I forget how the name came to be. We used to have these brainstorming sessions. We would all get in a room and strategize and kick things around, and a lot of times these things would even occur at Maxi's house where we'd get together and plot. Proyecto Pa'lante was born and a few years after that the University established El Centro, as another program in the community.

I continued my involvement with the Union until my Senior year. My involvement in my senior year declined a bit because I was busy trying to graduate. For the first three years I was very active, and during those years we had people like Edwin Claudio, and Jaime Delgado who by the way, I knew prior to going to Northeastern back in my Senior year in High School when we were involved in a youth organization call the Spanish Action Youth Committee. The SAYC was my first organizing experience during my Senior year in High School. We helped organize a student walk out to protest the conduct of a teacher. Jaime Delgado was a member of the Spanish Action Youth Committee, and so were Sam Flores and Paulo Ramirez. We had a little office here on Division. We were young fellas

# QUE ONDEE SOLA



SPECIAL ISSUE

October, 1975



Que Ondee Sola, 1975

Lolita Lebrón

MIGUEL DEL VALLE CONT.

but we were into it. Just like you, I had very little knowledge of Puerto Rican History, even though when I went to the University of Puerto Rico for that short period of time. I started buying books, exploring.

We also saw that at

Northeastern we needed some courses on Puerto Rican History. Some students even got involved in co-teaching, like Carlos Torres. I think he was one of the more instrumental people in getting Qué Ondee Sola started. That led to the newsletter and everything just

kind a came together. It was a period of tremendous creativity. Of tremendous tension, too, but it was creative tension. It was just the right time for building and making things happen. The climate was right. As Latino students we knew the work was going to be meaningful for decades to come.





A Message from the President Salme H. Steinberg...

Your twenty-fifth anniversary is an excellent opportunity to look forward. On behalf of the university community, I offer best wishes for a future rich with student leadership that is effective and compassionate and increases awareness of social justice issues.

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