

DEFEND THE HONOR



Preserving the Legacy of Hispanics of the World War II Generation

defendthehonor.org

April 11, 2007

c/o Dr. Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez
The University of Texas at Austin
School of Journalism
1 University Station A1000
Austin, Texas 78712
512-471-1924
mrvias@mail.utexas.edu

Ms. Paula Kerger
President and CEO
Public Broadcasting System
2100 Crystal Drive
Arlington, VA 22202-3785

COORDINATORS

Gus Chavez
U.S. Navy Veteran
San Diego, CA

Angelo Falcón
President and Founder
National Institute for Latino Policy

Marta García
Chair and Founder
New York Chapter
National Hispanic Media
Coalition

Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez
Associate Professor
School of Journalism
University of Texas at Austin

Dear Paula,

On behalf of the Defend the Honor Campaign leadership, I am writing to acknowledge receipt today of and respond to the outline of your plans in response to the concerns we and the Latino community have raised regarding the Ken Burns documentary, *The War*, and its exclusion of the Latino WWII experience.

We are gratified that PBS has taken our concerns seriously and has made the decision to include, in a substantive manner, the Latino, as well as Native American, experiences in *The War*. We know that this was not an easy decision for you to make and that this project predated your leadership of PBS. We applaud you for your decisive leadership on this matter. We believe that this can be the dawn of a new, respectful relationship between the Latino community and PBS and that it actualizes PBS' commitment to diversity. We certainly will work with you to make it so.

We have a number of concerns that we would like to pursue with you further. First, we need more information about the extent to which the Latino story will be told in an expanded version of *The War*. We need more details from Mr. Burns and the Latino producer he will be hiring about how they plan to approach this.

Second, there is clearly a need to develop a mechanism by which the Latino community can work with PBS to provide advice and resources to you on an ongoing basis in order to avoid repeating the errors made in the production of *The War*. Such a voluntary Latino working group could provide advice on the educational materials you will be developing as well as on your outreach efforts in the Latino community for *The War*.

As you know, there is a wealth of research about Latino participation in World War II that has been generated by Latino and other scholars, as well as by Latino veterans' organizations. Our community would like to make that information available to the producers and to PBS. This would also be a vehicle for strengthening the relationship between PBS and the Latino community and would tap the talent and expertise of the many Latino organizations and individuals that have reached out to you on this issue.

Third, as we read the section on examples of local station productions, we would also like to see coverage, in those local productions, of the different Latino subgroups to include Puerto Ricans and others. While the Mexican American community represents the majority of Latinos in the United States, there are other Latino groups that have made important contributions to the defense of this nation.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to get further details on your plan, and discuss our concerns and how we continue to collaborate with you on this project.

Once again, thank you for taking this matter seriously and acting in such a responsible and constructive manner. You listened to us and in the process have done much to strengthen the credibility of PBS in the Latino community. We realize that this is a process, but we also recognize, and hope you appreciate, the progress that this moment represents. We and many others in the Latino community stand ready to work with you to make this happen.

Sincerely,

Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez
Associate Professor
School of Journalism
The University of Texas at Austin
1 University Station A1000
Austin, TX 78712
512-471-1924
Fax: 512-471-7979
mrivas@mail.utexas.edu
<http://utopia.utexas.edu/explore/latino>

on behalf of

Gus Chavez
Latino Community Development
and Education Advocate
4674 Esther Street
San Diego, CA 92115
619-807-8938 (Cell)
619-286-9858 (Home)
guschavez2000@yahoo.com

Marta Garcia
Co-Chair and Founder
New York Chapter
National Hispanic Media Coalition
101 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10013
(212) 965-9758
mediacoalition@optonline.net
www.nhmc.org

Angelo Falcón
President and Founder
National Institute for Latino Policy
101 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10013
212-334-5722
afalcon@latinopolicy.org
www.latinopolicy.org