



STATE OF NEBRASKA



Proclamation

WHEREAS,

Dr. Hector P. Garcia was born on January 17, 1914 in Llera, Mexico and immigrated to Mercedes, Texas in 1917. After earning his doctorate in medicine from the University of Texas at Galveston in 1940, he moved to Omaha, Nebraska to complete his medical residency at Creighton University; and

WHEREAS,

Dr. Hector P. Garcia would begin his lifelong career serving in the military by joining the Citizens Military Training Corps, a branch of the U.S. Army, in 1929. During World War II, he achieved the rank of Major and earned six Battle stars and a Bronze Star by the war's end; and

WHEREAS,

In 1945, he began his service to the Latino population and community-at-large after settling in Corpus Christi, Texas by opening a medical clinic that helped indigent patients and sharing health education public service announcements. Due to discrimination and a lack of advocacy for Latino-American veterans, Dr. Hector P. Garcia founded the American G.I. Forum in 1948 in Texas, with an Omaha chapter being established in 1957. The American G.I. Forum fought against discrimination and advanced opportunities for Latino veterans nationwide in civil rights, education, voting rights, and was among the first organizations to hold a civil rights march in the United States; and

WHEREAS,

Dr. Hector P. Garcia continued his civil rights advocacy and public service for the remainder of his life. He brought attention to the neglect, poverty, and discrimination of Latinos in the areas of migrant labor, jury selection, healthcare, integrated education and was instrumental in repealing the poll tax. His study and exposure of the harsh working conditions of Latino farm laborers would serve as a backdrop for the 1956 novel and film "Giant;" and

WHEREAS,

In his lifetime, Dr. Hector P. Garcia was appointed to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, named to the Order of St. Gregory the Great by Pope John Paul II, served as an alternate ambassador to the United Nations where he was the first American to give a speech to the U.N. in a language other than English, and was the first Mexican-American to be awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Ronald Reagan in 1984, the highest honor a civilian can receive in the United States; and

WHEREAS,

Dr. Hector P. Garcia died on July 26, 1996 leaving a legacy of community service, civil rights advocacy, diplomacy and improving the care and opportunities of the Latino community nationwide. The American G.I. Forum continues to operate in Omaha and has expanded to several chapters around Nebraska serving veterans to this day.

NOW, THEREFORE,

I, Dave Heineman, Governor of the State of Nebraska, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM the 26th day of July, 2014 as

DR. HECTOR P. GARCIA DAY

in Nebraska, and I do hereby urge all Nebraskans to take due note of the observance and educate themselves and others on the legacy of Dr. Hector P. Garcia and to keep his memory alive by giving back to their community through volunteer service or support.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand, and cause the Great Seal of the State of Nebraska to be affixed this Ninth day of July, in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Fourteen.



Attest:

Secretary of State

Governor