

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

WHEREAS: America's diversity has always been a great strength of our Nation. As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, we recognize and applaud the extraordinary accomplishments of Hispanic Americans; and

WHEREAS: From America's beginning, Hispanic Americans have served as leaders in business, government, law, science, athletics, the arts and many other fields. In 1822, Joseph Marion Hernández became the first Hispanic to serve as a member of the United States Congress, representing the newly established territory of Florida. Businessman Roberto Goizueta, a refugee from Cuba who rose to become the CEO of one of America's largest corporations, is an inspiring example of what immigrants to America can achieve through hard work and character. Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Roberto Clemente's athletic skills, generosity and charity made him a legend on and off the baseball field. Through memorable recordings and performances, singer Celia Cruz celebrated her heritage and helped introduce salsa music to the United States; and

WHEREAS: Hispanic Americans have sacrificed in defense of this Nation's freedom, serving in every major American conflict. More than three dozen Hispanic Americans have earned the Medal of Honor. Today, more than 125,000 Hispanic Americans serve in the Armed Forces, approximately 9 percent of our active-duty military. As we work to advance peace freedom and opportunity abroad, we are grateful to all of the brave men and women who serve our Nation, and to their families; and

WHEREAS: During Hispanic Heritage Month, I join with all Georgians in recognizing the many contributions of Hispanic Americans to the United States and to Georgia, and in celebrating Hispanic heritage and culture; now

THEREFORE: I, SONNY PERDUE, Governor of the State of Georgia, do hereby proclaim October 15, 2003, through November 15, 2003, as HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH in Georgia.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Executive Department to be affixed this 15th day of October in the year of our Lord two thousand three.