

**Columbia University Strengthens Commitment to
Latino Arts and Activism Collection with New Acquisitions**

NEW YORK, December 7, 2015 – Columbia University Libraries today announced three new archival acquisitions for its Latino Arts and Activism Collection: the personal papers of the Cuban-American journalist, poet and playwright **Dolores Prida**; the personal papers of **Rosario Ferré**, an innovator of twentieth century Puerto Rican and Latina literature; and the institutional papers of **United Bronx Parents**, a trailblazing, grassroots Latino organization fighting for bilingual education and minority hiring since the 1970s.

The new acquisitions are available to researchers through Columbia's Rare Book & Manuscript Library and reflect an expanded commitment by the University's libraries to Latino culture and advocacy. The Latino Arts and Activism collection was launched three years ago by professor **Frances Negrón-Muntaner**, director of the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race at Columbia University.

"There is an urgent need to preserve and make accessible the papers and other materials of Latino artists and organizations," said Negrón-Muntaner. "Without these collections, not only will it be difficult to understand the history of New York and the impact of Latinos in the city. It will be impossible to tell the larger American and global story in all areas, including in the arts, politics, and popular culture."

Sean Quimby, Director of the Rare Book & Manuscript Library, added: "The experience of moving back and forth between New York City and Latin America has resulted in unique forms of literary and artistic expression and it is our goal to see that those forms of expression are preserved."

The first recent collection was that of Dolores Prida, who settled in New York with her family in 1961. Upon Prida's untimely passing in 2013, President Obama in a letter to her sisters wrote: "'With conviction, compassion, and humor, Dolores used her gifts to connect with people across the Latino community and around our country. Her words illuminated her vision for a fairer, more just America, and they helped unite others behind the future she knew was possible.'" The archive acquired by Columbia includes Prida's manuscripts, recordings of her plays, unpublished materials, and rare documents related to the understudied "dialoguero" groups comprised of young Cubans in the U.S. during the 1970s. Her writings focused on the Latino experience in America, which she also explored as a journalist through her popular advice column titled "Dolores Dice."

The second major acquisition is the archive of **Rosario Ferré**, a fundamental voice in twentieth century Puerto Rican literature. "Rosario Ferré's thoughtful books, short stories and essays introduce readers to a different reality of contemporary Puerto Rican life, one that includes and celebrated women's lives, artists and intellectuals," indicated award-winning writer **Esmeralda Santiago**, author of the classic *When I Was Puerto Rican*, among other books. "She does it with courage, grace and dignity." Ferré was also part of the 1980s Latina literary boom in the U.S. and remains today one of only three Latinas to have been nominated for a National Book Award, receiving that distinction for her first book written in English, *The House on the Lagoon*, published in 1995.

The third collection is that of United Bronx Parents (UBP), a Latino organization that was initially involved in fundamental struggles around bilingual education and minority hiring. Over time, the UBP grew to provide services in other critical areas such as food security, day care, drug rehabilitation, HIV prevention and education. The archive includes institutional documents, correspondence, photos, and recordings pertaining to the founding and impact of the organization. "The United Bronx Parents not only fought for and gained services for disenfranchised communities but inspired and mentored young people who learned from and continued to work for these social justice ideals," stated prominent activist, educator, attorney and media producer **Iris Morales**. "The UBP archives make this legacy available for generations to come."

These materials also illuminate the life and career of the founder of United Bronx Parents, **Evelina Lopez Antonetty**, who was an influential Puerto Rican activist for four decades. "I am proud that Columbia University has helped us to save the history of my mother and United Bronx Parents," commented Ms. Lorraine Montenegro, daughter of Lopez Antonetty. "In 1962 we had a little storefront at 608 Union Ave. where my mother would deal with the problems of parents from P.S. 5 in the Bronx since she was the President of its Parents Association that eventually evolved into UBP." In addition to her grassroots activism Lopez Antonetty had a major role in reshaping politics in the Bronx; she supported the career of young politicians like the future Congressman José Serrano and also organized voter registration drives.

The new acquisitions will now join the larger collection, which includes the papers of writers Jack Agüeros and Manuel Ramos Otero, as well as the photographic archive of *El Diario/La Prensa*, the nation's oldest Spanish-language daily in the United States.

Columbia University Libraries/Information Services is one of the top five academic research library systems in North America. The collections include over 12 million volumes, over 160,000 journals and serials, as well as extensive electronic resources, manuscripts, rare books, microforms, maps, and graphic and audio-visual materials. The services and collections are organized into 20 libraries and various academic technology centers, including affiliates. The Libraries employs more than 450 professional and support staff. The website of the Libraries is the gateway to its services and resources: library.columbia.edu.

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