



**Remarks by Mayor Eric Garcetti
Tribute to Mayors Series**

June 21, 2015

Mayor Eric Garcetti: Let's give it up for Antonio Villaraigosa. A man who has been a dear friend, mentor from the moment that we transitioned as mayor and I came over at 11:00 at night, the night that we passed the baton. We have accomplished so much together before that, but I couldn't be more honored to follow a mayor, who in Los Angeles and for this country, stepped up on infrastructure, education, transportation, the environment. He's been a real model for us all as mayors. And I've had as bobble head for a long time anybody that was at the DNC, remember the bobble head? Now I have a nice award with his face on it, too, that I can look at every day. When Antonio is not around, I can look over and say what would Antonio do? And it might even talk to this so. But seriously, Antonio, thank you for being such a brother, such a friend and such a great not only local, but national leader that means a lot to me.

And Mickey Ibarra who is the person who has built this up, I mean, look around this. This is something special you have

built, Mickey. It is special that you have built this and that people come here, across ethnicity, across geography, across the ages, to be able to come here together in the Latino Leaders Network, and I've been a proud attendee for many years. Thank you for honoring me and to do that alongside George Gascon, *El Cubano*, is somebody who has been an inspiration to me for many years and somebody great to serve with really. We miss you still in Southern California, but congratulations up north as well. Thank you to Mayor Johnson, to everybody who is here.

It is really amazing. I'm going to be very brief, but it is Father's Day today. And I was thinking about as Antonio was speaking this award. I am the product, *un nieto de imigrantes de Mexico*, my grandfather born in the midst of Mexican Revolution and lost his father, who was hanged in Hidalgo del Parral, in Chihuahua where Pancho Villa was assassinated. And his mother, my great-grandmother, my *bisabuela* picked him up and carried him over the border into Texas and then to Los Angeles. Growing up a lot of people think I grew up in politics because my dad was district attorney. He didn't run until the year I was graduated from college. So most of my lifetime, certainly my formative years, he was an anonymous line attorney in the District Attorney's Office in Los Angeles.

I used to spend my weekends at my grandmother and grandfather's house. My grandfather married a wonderful and

beautiful woman Juanita [indiscernible] Garcetti when she took his name. One of 19 children, Mexican American born to two Mexican immigrants from Sonora, the largest family at the time in Superior, Arizona, the largest family actually in the United States. They got a visit from the president because my great-grandmother on that side was done ladies having 19 children at 36. Do the math. That's a real Mexican family.

But that one weekend when I was spending the night at my grandparents' house as my sister and I used to do, there was a man who came on the television. And my grandfather said I know that man. He's the mayor of Los Angeles, Tom Bradley. I was so impressed that my very humble grandfather, who hadn't finished the seventh grade, who got in trouble when he was younger, knew the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles and I said, "How do you know him Grandpa?" All excited to hear and he said, "Well, when I was younger, and he was younger, he arrested me."

So I don't know if it was this mayor that was our predecessor that came and inserted himself into his life or when he met my grandmother volunteered to go to World War II as an original dreamer, by the way, he still wasn't a citizen, so he didn't have to. But he volunteered for the only country he knew, which is why I fight so hard for our dreamers now, came back, had his citizenship, got a trade, became a barber, and raised his family in South Los Angeles. And now his grandson is

the 42nd mayor of Los Angeles, in a town where Antonio and I have often said it doesn't matter where you come from, but like America, it only matters where you want to go to.

Antonio often tells the story of the founding of Los Angeles. We're actually a city that was a dusty pueblo before the nation's capital was even founded as a city in 1781. But those *pobladores*, the settlers that came from the Mexican part of the Spanish Empire North, were all Spanish speaking. They were all Latinos before we had the name, but they look like this room. They trace their ancestry to Africa, over 24 of them to Europe. There's even two that were classified as *chinos*. They're actually Filipino brothers and sisters who, who set off on the party originally to come up. So in Los Angeles, we've always understood that Latinos can be black, they can be white, they can be Asian, they can be young, they can be old. Latino is, I hope, something that we will all embrace. You're not guests of a Latino network tonight. If you're not Latino, you are Latino.

And in this country, when we look at this moment in time, I want to leave you with this piece of inspiration. We have a year that is like 2004 was the marriage equality, 1965 was to desegregation, 1965 was to the farm worker movement, and the 1840s were for the women's right to vote in Seneca. We have to take this moment, which is the largest normalization of people's

immigration status in American history. And make sure not only as so many of you mayors have by signing on to the amicus brief that we put together against all those governors who challenged the executive action that our president very bravely took, because we had to remind them that sometimes mayors of cities have a bigger population than the states of those governors that signed on, that we will win in the courts. And when we do win in the courts, I'll give you one city, there are 550,000 people in Los Angeles, who can come out of the shadows, put money on the table for our economy, improve their lives and be just like my grandfather, Salvador was to make a life for themselves and make in America we can be proud of.

As a mayor, I have realized the power that we have is to make change, to put as I have over half of our city commissioners make them women and over half of them are Latinas. The first Latina chief of staff of a big city mayor in America with Anna Guerrero, the daughter of farmworkers who wrote a beautiful thing on *Huffington Post* today on what it meant, having lost her father two years ago, but to grow up here in California, right next to those apple fields where her father, an immigrant from Guanajuato worked. We have a responsibility to take the power that we have, and this quilt that we have knitted together and to make sure that Latino leaders exist in each one of us.

So I'm ready to follow you. I'm ready to lead when you need. And I thank you for making that dream. When I was young boy, I dreamed one day of winning the Antonio Villaraigosa award, and now my dreams have come true. So thank you all very much. *Muchisimas gracias* [indiscernible].