



**Remarks by Mayor Alvin Brown
Tribute to Mayors Series**

January 22, 2015

Mayor Alvin Brown: I want to thank Mickey, for his vision on really launching this network, Latino Network that brings so many diverse leaders together. Let's give him a round of applause for his leadership. And, you know, when I think about my good friend, Mayor Villaraigosa, it's an honor to receive an award named for such a powerful leader whose constant commitment sets an example for all of us to follow. Someone who believes an opportunity for all, someone who believes in empowering people, and really getting behind them, so they can deliver what they promise back at home. For that, my friend, I want to thank you. Let's give him a round of applause for his leadership.

I want to acknowledge Tom Cochran, who I've known for so many years, served with his son during the Clinton administration. And I know that part of leadership is empowering and given mayor's an opportunity. So I want to thank Tom Cochran. Let's give him a round of applause for being here tonight. I know not to be long, so I accept this on behalf of

the many people in Jacksonville who are indispensable partners with me in an effort to build a strong, successful, diverse community.

From day one as mayor, I made it a priority to build the connections with Jacksonville's growing Hispanic Latino communities. I've brought on the best and the brightest from the Hispanic and Latino communities. I really wish that some of them were here tonight, Betsy Santiago, who was the president of Hispanic Chamber now serves in the mayor's office. Paul Martinez, who's an entrepreneur, now runs a \$400 million corporation for the mayor. You can't get a contract without Paul Martinez. Mario Rubio, who handles my state affairs to make sure that Jacksonville is in the game when it comes to investing in cities, and Tony Lopez, who runs my Park and Recreation, to make sure that we not only have the largest urban park system in America, but the best. So I am truly humbled to be able to assemble the best team that you can think of. And they're the first in the history of the City of Jacksonville to serve in the mayor's cabinet.

We've also created what are now annual community events, including Hispanic Heritage Month, our citywide Hispanic Expo and our new Hispanic Community Leadership Awards in our community. Why? I'm honoring the first in every category in my city, which is very important. We have a vibrant, strong city.

But we're stronger together than we are apart. The other thing I want to point out is that if you think about your city, as I think about Jacksonville, and we're growing tremendously, but some of the members have been in Jacksonville for decades. Others are new arrivals. Many in Jacksonville are there because of their service in the military. We have a strong presence in Jacksonville. We have three bases.

But the most important thing I want to point out about our community, the Hispanic community. They raise their families there. They contribute to the community. They pursue their careers, and they've opened and run businesses. They are the best. In fact, I don't want to brag too much on my city, but I got to bring out this fact. Jacksonville was recently ranked six, the sixth best city in the United States of America for Hispanic entrepreneurs. The sixth, ranked number six. Five of our ports, top trade partners are in Latin America, and Jacksonville's continue to be the number one U.S. port serving Puerto Rico. That's right.

So it's not only about culture vitality, but it's about economic empowerment. So they create jobs in a city and invest in a city and make it stronger. And I made sure that I include them in everything that I'm doing. We recruit over 600 mentors. Many of them are Latino Hispanics in the school system mentoring young people, making sure that they have an opportunity to live

the American dream like me. So I see them like my brothers and sisters, just like me. I'm the first of my family to go to college. I put myself through school. I started at a small company named Winn-Dixie, stocking groceries at night, going to school in the daytime, working 40, 50 hours a week.

I was raised by my mother and my grandmother who raised five kids, worked two jobs, never went to college but they instilled me [indiscernible]. They instilled in me a sense of faith and hard work that you can achieve and live the American dream if you work hard and play by the rules. I have many in my community who work hard and play by the rules. So as mayor, I'm going to do everything that I can to make sure that that community is empowered and have the same opportunity that I have because one day maybe Paul Martinez may be the first Hispanic mayor in Jacksonville, Florida. Why not?

So for me, I'm truly humbled and honored to receive this award. Mayor in your name, you've led city and a state with distinction. You're a former president of the U.S. Conference of Mayor. You've done a phenomenal job leading and being a public servant, a servant leader, for your state and for our country. And I'm very humbled and honored to receive this award in your name because your name means something. To me, it means that you were the best public servant leader. And you did a phenomenal job leading this organization called the U.S.

Conference of Mayors and you gave me an opportunity to lead, to become chairman of the port task force for the U.S. Conference of Mayor because you believed in me. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. I really appreciate Mickey your organization giving me this award. Thank you and God bless you have a wonderful weekend.