

# Proclamation



*Jane Castor, Mayor*

**WHEREAS**, Tampa Hispanic Heritage, Inc. is an organization established in 1979, devoted to preserving, promoting, and celebrating Tampa's diverse Hispanic culture, and together with corporate partners, has honored those men and women who represent excellence by their outstanding achievements, endeavors, and contributions, and who help enrich the lives of other Hispanics; and

**WHEREAS**, Tampa Hispanic Heritage, Inc. will celebrate its 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Hispanic Gala with the presentation of the **2024 Hispanic Man of the Year Award** to a well-known individual admired and respected for his commitment to others, and who has dedicated his life to promoting and preserving the Hispanic culture and traditions through civic and community service; and

**WHEREAS**, this year's honoree, **Rafael Gonzalez, Esquire**, is a respected attorney, community leader and advocate who has dedicated his life to the betterment of others, was born in Cuba, grew up in Madrid, Spain, and immigrated to the United States graduating from Miami Senior High School where he was a top student earning several awards; he went on to receive his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Florida (UF) and thereafter his Juris Doctorate (JD) from Florida State University (FSU); and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Gonzalez has had an illustrious career in law including as corporate council, as CEO and Vice President of many centers and groups, currently a Partner with Cattie and Gonzalez, PLLC, he has published over 300 books, articles, and book chapters, is considered one of the nation's leading experts within several disciplines, has lectured nationally over 500 times, and has taught law subjects at FSU, USF, the University of Tampa, Stetson University College of Law, and others. His expertise has been invaluable as a consultant, in his testimonies at federal hearings and committees, and in his proposed legislation opinions; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Gonzalez firmly believes a "*higher education is the single most important asset in order to reach the American dream,*" and he generously gives of his time, energy, and resources, with an emphasis on education, supporting students and faculty, and community events that promote Latino causes and student success; many of his contributions include serving as President of the FSU College of Law Alumni Association, as a member of the USF President's Latin Community Advisory Council, Status of Latinos Presidential Advisory Committee, encouraging USF leadership to achieve the federal Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation, leading fundraising events to support Latino education, and his over 30 years of commitment has elevated the lives of many students and the institutions and organizations he has been involved with; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Gonzalez is greatly admired for his service, advocacy, commitment, and leadership to the community, his law practice, and clients, and to the betterment of Latino individuals and students; he has a genuine desire to make a difference in the lives of others, he is an inspirational role model, and certainly deserving of being named the **2024 Hispanic Man of the Year**.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Jane Castor, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the city of Tampa, Florida, do hereby proclaim Saturday, September 21, 2024, as

**"RAFAEL GONZALEZ, HISPANIC MAN OF THE YEAR DAY"**

in the city of Tampa, Florida, and call upon all residents to join me in recognizing, commending, and thanking him for his outstanding service and contributions to our community.

Dated in Tampa, Florida this 21<sup>st</sup> day of September 2024.



*Jane Castor*  
Mayor