

In Memoriam



Bob Buckhorn, Mayor

WHEREAS, the City of Tampa takes pride in recognizing those individuals whose commitment and dedication have made a lasting impact on our community and its citizens. One of these individuals was **Matilda (Mati) Martinez Garcia**, a well-respected public servant, civic leader, trailblazer and advocate who passed away on Monday, March 28, 2016 at age 96; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Garcia was a third generation Tampa, Florida native born on May 30, 1919, and her roots in the community began when her grandfather immigrated to Tampa from Spain by way of Cuba, and as one of Tampa's first founding families, her ascendants contributed substantially to the rich and diverse culture of the Tampa Bay area; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Garcia was employed by the United States Social Security Administration until her retirement at age 72 serving as the Hispanic Program Officer of the West Florida Region, and her stellar forty-three year career was recognized by the organization with the *Commissioner's Award for Exception Commitment to Public Service*; and

WHEREAS, her dedication and contributions to Tampa and the state of Florida during her lifetime to the betterment of all people was immeasurable, and known as "*La Gran Dama de Tampa*" (the Great Lady of Tampa), Mrs. Garcia championed for human rights, Hispanic causes, fair housing, the underserved, immigrants, quality education, and the elderly, and the mantra she followed, "***Believe in what you do, be sincere, think of people who are less fortunate than you and may not be aware of their rights***" resulted in her serving as a role model for others to advocate for positive change; and

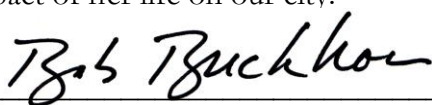
WHEREAS, her love of the Tampa and Hispanic communities, and her determination to make a difference is evident in the impact Mrs. Garcia had through her strong leadership, mentoring, and involvement in many organizations that she was often a founding member of and served in executive roles including the City of Tampa's Mayor's Hispanic Advisory Council, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Hispanic Professional Women's Association (HPWA), Hispanic Advisory Council for the City of Tampa's Chief of Police, Hispanic Business Institute, the University of South Florida's (USF) President's Council, The Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary, and as member of the Democratic Party, she served as a delegate to three Democratic National Conventions, her generosity included sponsorship of scholarships for the Latino Scholars Fund at USF, and she was appointed to the Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs by the late Governor Lawton Chiles; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Garcia has received numerous honors and recognitions during her lifetime of accomplishments and just a few are the prestigious *National Jefferson Award for Public Service*, Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Director's *Community Leadership Award*, the *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major Award for Human Rights*, HPWA's *Lifetime Achievement Award*, she was named Tampa Hispanic Heritage Inc.'s *Woman of the Year*, she has been inducted into the Hillsborough County Women's Hall of Fame and LULAC's Hall of Fame, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) *Matilda Garcia Total Community Award*, City of Tampa Mayor's Hispanic Advisory Council's *Matilda Martinez Garcia Leadership Award* and LULAC's *Meritorious Achievements of Teen Ideals (MATI) Award* are all named in her honor; and

WHEREAS, known as a kind woman who's efforts were on behalf of her beloved community and others, Mrs. Garcia served as an inspiration to all who knew her, she will be forever remembered for her devotion and love of her family, strong ethics and generous nature, and although we are grieved at the loss of this outstanding citizen, her legacy will continue to live on through the vast improvements she brought to our community and in all those whose lives she has touched.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bob Buckhorn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the city of Tampa, Florida, do hereby urge all citizens to join me in publicly expressing sorrow and heartfelt appreciation to the Matilda Martinez Garcia Family, her daughter Gwen, son Marcelino, Jr., Grandchildren, Great-Grandchildren, and other family members, and to express our hopes that they will take solace in their many cherished memories and the impact of her life on our city.

Dated in Tampa, Florida, this 1st day of April, 2016.



Mayor

