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**DISTRICT ATTORNEY RICHARD A. BROWN HONORS
LATINO LAWYERS ASSOCIATION OF QUEENS COUNTY WITH INAUGURAL AWARD
IN CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today celebrated National Hispanic Heritage Month by honoring the Latino Lawyers Association of Queens County, Inc. for its service and leadership in the field of law.

District Attorney Brown said, "Latino lawyers of Queens County through their Association have provided a forum in which hardworking and dedicated attorneys can acknowledge their cultural roots and serve their communities. It is fitting that the Latino Lawyers Association of Queens County should be the first recipient of my office's Hispanic Heritage Award."

Established in 1997 as a nonprofit organization, the Latino Lawyers Association of Queens has steadily grown to represent and promote the interests of the legal and Latino community by providing a voice, guidance and information on important issues facing Latinos and by advancing opportunities for Latino lawyers, judges, law professors and law students. Last year, the Latino Lawyers Association received the Award of Merit from the New York State Conference of Bar Leaders in recognition of its collaborative project with the Latino Law Students Association at St. John's University, entitled "Street Law en Español."

In presenting the Hispanic Heritage award at a reception today in his Kew Gardens offices, District Attorney Brown said, "Diversity is one of America's greatest strengths. Leadership comes in all races and ethnicities. In my office we are particularly proud of our capable and experienced complement of minority Executive Assistants, Bureau Chiefs, Deputy Bureau Chiefs, Supervisors and Assistants as well as our talented and hard working minority support staff members. It is important in public service to have a diversity which reflects the makeup of the community that we serve. It helps to enhance credibility, confidence and trust. Queens County has a large Latino population that continues to grow, and having members of my staff with a background in this culture and a familiarity with the Spanish language enhances our ability to better serve our community. Today, we honor the Latino Lawyers Association of Queens County and its members and commend them for their dedication, commitment and service to the Latino and legal communities of Queens County and New York City."

Lourdes M. Ventura, president of the Latino Lawyer's Association of Queens County and a former Queens County assistant district attorney, accepted the award on behalf of the association. In attendance were members of the Latino Lawyers Association, the Unified Court System, public officials, assistant district attorneys and executive and support staff members. Assistant District Attorney Mariela Palomino Herring, Chief of District Attorney Brown's Gang Violence and Hate Crimes Bureau, delivered closing remarks.

National Hispanic Heritage Month began as a week-long celebration in 1968. The observance was expanded in 1988 to a month-long celebration (Sept. 15 - Oct. 15). During this month, America celebrates the culture and traditions of U.S. residents who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America and the Caribbean. September 15 was chosen as the starting point for the celebration because it is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively.

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Note to Editors: E-version of this press release posted at www.queensda.org