



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Washington, D.C. 20560
*U.S.A.**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY*
COUNSELOR FOR LATINO AFFAIRS
1000 J Jefferson Drive, S.W. 10004 Y21
(202) 371-8000 FAX (202) 786-2304

September 20, 1996

Ms. Denise Lugo
Executive Director
The Latino Museum of History, Art and Culture
112 South Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Denise,
Dear Ms. Lugo:

On behalf of Secretary Heyman, the Center for Museum Studies and the Smithsonian Institution's Latino Oversight Committee, it is my pleasure to invite you to the symposium, "Latino Museums: A National Conversation." The symposium will convene this coming October 24-25 at the Finley Conference Room, National Museum of American Art. It will explore the problems and opportunities confronting the small but dynamic group of museums serving Hispanic audiences and lay the groundwork for future collaboration. It is my sincere hope that you will accept this invitation to join a distinguished group of Latino museum professionals and Smithsonian personnel at this important encounter. The Smithsonian will underwrite your travel and lodging expenses while attending the symposium.

The Smithsonian aspires increasingly to become a Latino-serving Institution. Over three years ago, the Smithsonian empaneled a national task force charged with evaluating the Institution's representation of Latinos, their history, art, culture, and contributions to our nation. The task force submitted a sobering report. When he assumed the office of Secretary in September of 1994, I. Michael Heyman committed the Institution to a new relationship with our Latino audiences. Since then, significant breakthroughs have been made in critical areas, and the foundation for further progress has been laid down.

We have much to learn and profit from each other. As museum professionals serving diverse communities and caring for the materials of Latino culture, you have accumulated a unique fund of front line experience and know-how. As the national museum and one of the world's premier research institutions, the Smithsonian has access to extraordinary resources that should have wider circulation among all segments of our nation.

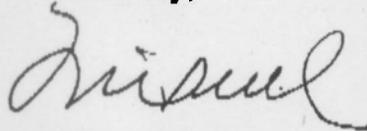
This coming together will make it possible for you and your colleagues to explore jointly with critical members of our own management the ways of collaboration. During the second day of the meeting there will be significant time dedicated to pursuing specific common interests. It would help us to know whether you have any projects going on with Smithsonian units, as I know some of you do, and what areas of Smithsonian activity you are especially interested in accessing. There will also be an opportunity to interact with members of our Latino Oversight Committee.

Under separate cover I am sending you a packet of information about the Smithsonian and the symposium. Upon acceptance we will be asking you to submit a short mission statement for your museum and a short biography of yourself. Those materials will be circulated to all other participants prior to convening. Feel free to send us whatever additional informational materials you would like us to distribute. Between invited guests and our own Smithsonian people, there will be approximately 30 to 35 active participants.

Katherine Kirlin of my office will be handling the logistics. She will be contacting you in the next few days in order to arrange for your travel and lodging, and for the preparation and distribution of informational packets. Again, I sincerely hope you can join us and look forward to welcoming you in the nation's capital.

Finally, on behalf of the Director of the National Portrait Gallery, I am pleased to extend to you an invitation to the gala opening of their exhibit "Red, Hot and Blue," which will take place on the evening of October 24. The exhibit, a salute to the American musical since 1866, will be one of the most exciting offers by any of our museums during our 150th anniversary year.

Sincerely,



Miguel A. Bretos
Counselor to the Secretary
for Latino Affairs