

(S. B. 865)  
(Reconsidered)

**(No. 52)**

(Approved April 11, 2002)

### **AN ACT**

To declare the week of February 16 of each year as the "Puerto Rican Poetry and Poets Week" and to declare February 16 of each year as the "Day to Commemorate the Birth of Evaristo Ribera-Chevremont."

### **STATEMENT OF MOTIVES**

Poetry can be considered as one of the oldest and most widespread art forms. Although originally joined to music in songs, it became independent, and the musical rhythm was substituted by linguistic rhythm. From a metric point of view, poetry translates a human, emotional and sensually meaningful experience into words.

For many people, poetry consists of "capturing on paper what we feel in our hearts, thus preventing it from being lost in infinite space; it captures a tear, a smile, a memory, making them eternal; poetry means opening our heart and letting sentiment flow freely."

Poetry may be manifested in narrative form (epic poems, ballads, romances, and stories and fables in verse) or dramatic form (poetry as a direct discourse in specific circumstances) form. Lyric poetry, however, embraces hymns, lullabies, folksongs and popular songs, including the wide gamut of love poems and songs.

Some poets, and students thereof, have stated their opinion on what poetry means to them. For example: "the source of all poetry is the deep sentiment of what is inexplicable" (L. Arreat), "philosophy, solemn about

earthly things, shows its penetrating look and noble attitude; justice, in the sternness of its significance, is the teacher of harmony; theology on its cloud, is vested with charity, faith and hope; but poetry, seems as if it encloses within, what joins the visible and invisible, the virtue of heaven and the beauty of earth” (Rubén Darío), “music feels what is infinite in the air, painting and earth; poetry feels it in the earth and in the air, because its word has the feeling that walks and the melody that soars” (Rabindranath Tagore), “poetry is something that wanders along the streets; that moves, that flows by our side; all things have mystery and poetry is the mystery within all things” (García Lorca); “Prose is a representation of what has been thought, poetry of what has been lived” (Hebbel).

Puerto Rico has been blessed by having and by having had countless numbers of male and female poetic geniuses. To mention a few: Virgilio Dávila, José de Diego, José Gautier Benítez, Francisco Gonzálo Marín, José P.H. Hernández, Luis Llorens Torres, Trina Padilla de Sanz, Luis Palés Matos, René Márqués, José Antonio Dávila, Sylvia Rexach, Luis Muñoz Rivera, Lola Rodríguez de Tió, Francisco Matos Paoli, Julia de Burgos, Mercedes Negrón Muñoz, Evaristo Ribera Chevremont, among others.

According to students of Puerto Rican poetry, the great threesome of Puerto Rican poetry is composed of Evaristo Ribera Chevremont, Luis Llorens Torres, and Luis Palés Matos. The first of the three, to wit, Evaristo Ribera Chevremont, is one of the greatest poets of the Antilles. He traveled to Spain several times and established friendly ties with several writers' circles. He was much admired for his poetic gift, and several of his works were published in that country. He tried several modern poetic techniques that were available to him, such as Spanish-American modernism, and European “*Ultraismo*” and Surrealism. He wrote extensively in traditional

forms, specifically, sonnets, which he mastered fully, as seen in *Sonetos del Mar, del Amor, de la Soledad, de la Muerte, de Dios*, among others.

Evaristo Ribera Chevremont was born on February 16, 1896 and died March 1, 1976. He published his first volume of verse, *Desfile Romntico*, at the age of eighteen. He collaborated in the *Puerto Rico Ilustrado* Magazine, and he published many articles in *El Imparcial* newspaper. Among his works, the following are outstanding: *El Templo de los Alabastros* (1919), *La Copa de Hebe* (1922), *Los Almendros del Paseo de Covadonga* (1928), *La Hora del Orífice* (1929), *Tierra y Sombra* (1930), *Color* (1938), *Tonos y Formas* (1940), *Anclas de Oro* (1945), *Barro* (1945), *Tú, Mar y Yo y Ella*(1946), *Verbo* (1947), *Creación* (1951), *La Llama Pensativa* (1954), *Inefable Orilla* (1961), *Memorial de Arena* (1962) *Principio de Canto* (1965) *Río Volcano* (1968).

September 14, January 22, February 17, April 16, and July 17 of each year have been designated to commemorate the birth of Lola Rodríguez de Tió, Sylvia Rexach, Julia de Burgos, José de Diego, and Luis Muñoz Rivera, respectively, which are several of the most outstanding Puerto Rican poets. On these days, the contribution of each is recognized and exalted and the corresponding tribute is given. However, the recognition of many other Puerto Rican poets who have contributed to the poetry and culture of Puerto Rico is omitted, as is the case of one of the most outstanding Puerto Rican poets of our Island and Spanish America: Evaristo Ribera Chevremont.

Although formerly days were set that were designated to commemorate the life of a specific person, and to recognize his or her contribution to our society, we have searched for a way to select a day, week or month to commemorate the invaluable contributions of the various interpreters or composers of the various genres. In the specific case of this legislation, the

weekly celebration established herein, shall commemorate the birth of our Puerto Rican poetess, Julia de Burgos, for many years to come.

This Legislature desires that the week of the 16<sup>th</sup> of February of each year, when the birthday of Evaristo Ribera Chevremont is celebrated, be designated as the “Puerto Rican Poetry, and Puerto Rican Poetesses and Poets Week.”

This legislative measure seeks to extend the recognition of some Puerto Rican poets, for whom a specific day has been designated to commemorate their life and works, to all those other Puerto Ricans who have enhanced our Puerto Rican culture through the sentiments that flow from their hearts into the verses of their poems. This bill will help to encourage poetry as a means of expression of the sentiments of human beings inherent to the cultural development of a People.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:**

Section 1.- The week corresponding to the 16<sup>th</sup> of February of each year, is hereby declared as the “Puerto Rican Poetry and Puerto Rican Poetesses and Poets Week.” Furthermore, February 16 of each year is declared as the “Day to Commemorate the Birth of Evaristo Ribera Chevremont.”

Section 2.- The Secretary of State of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall issue a proclamation, at least ten (10) days in advance of the day that the week containing the 16<sup>th</sup> day of February of each year begins, to the effect of exhorting the Puerto Rican people to express their admiration and support and to render a well-deserved homage to Puerto Rican poetry, and the poets and poetesses, through the organization and sponsorship of the “Puerto Rican Poetry and Puerto Rican Poetesses and Poets Week.” Likewise, he/she shall do the same with regard to the 16<sup>th</sup> day of February of

each year, on occasion of the commemoration of the birthday of Evaristo Rivera Chevremont.

Section 3.- The Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, the Public Broadcasting Corporation for Puerto Rico, and the Luis A. Ferré Beaux Arts Center, as well as the bodies and public entities and the municipalities of Puerto Rico shall adopt the necessary measures to achieve the objectives of this Act by organizing and holding activities to commemorate and promote this artistic and cultural display during the “Puerto Rican Poetry and Puerto Rican Poetesses and Poets Week.” On February 16 of each year, which is the “Commemorative Day of the Birth of Evaristo Ribera Chevremont,” his poetic works shall be exalted. The importance of Puerto Rican poetry shall be manifested as an essential part of our Puerto Rican culture, and the participation of the citizenry and private entities in these activities shall be promoted.

Section 4.- A copy of the Annual Proclamation shall be distributed to the news media for its diffusion.

Section 5.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

## CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following Act No. 52 (S.B. 865) (Reconsidered) of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the 14<sup>th</sup> Legislature of Puerto Rico:

**AN ACT** to declare the week of February 16 of each year as the "Puerto Rican Poetry and Poets Week" and to declare February 16 of each year as the "Day to Commemorate the Birth of Evaristo Ribera-Chevremont,"

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, today 8<sup>th</sup> of January of 2004.

Elba Rosa Rodríguez-Fuentes  
Director

## CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following Act No. 52 (S.B. 865) (Reconsidered) of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the 14<sup>th</sup> Legislature of Puerto Rico:

**AN ACT** to declare the week of February 16 of each year as the "Puerto Rican Poetry and Poets Week" and to declare February 16 of each year as the "Day to Commemorate the Birth of Evaristo Ribera-Chevremont,"

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, today 6<sup>th</sup> of August of 2004.

Elba Rosa Rodríguez-Fuentes  
Director