

(S. B. 943)

(No. 151)

(Approved August 8, 2006)

## AN ACT

To direct designation of Salinas High School with the name of Héctor M. Hernández Suárez, an outstanding composer, writer and public servant who brought honor to the name of Puerto Rico, especially his town of birth, Salinas.

### STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

Mr. Héctor M. Hernández was born on February 15, 1925 in the Municipality of Salinas and died in San Juan, Puerto Rico, last September 5, 2005. His parents were Manuel Hernández Martínez and María Suárez de Hernández. He attended his first grades at Palmer Public School in the Municipality of Salinas. Since early childhood, he was a very good, diligent and responsible student, reason for which he was promoted to a higher grade on two occasions; from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> and from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>. He later attended Muñoz Rivera High School, also in Salinas, where he graduated from 12<sup>th</sup> grade with honors, and distinction in the English language, which he spoke and wrote fluently.

From an early age, *Don* Héctor M. Hernández excelled in the fields of sports and music. He was a member of the high school basketball team and later organized *Los Bucaneros* baseball team. In the field of music, he was in the Salinas Municipal Band, where he excelled playing the trumpet and piano, which led him to compose his famous "*Pa' Salinas.*"

For his post-secondary studies, he attended *Universidad Pontificia Católica de Ponce*. He was an exemplary Puerto Rican who loved God above all things,

music, his native town of Salinas and his dear family, especially his beloved wife, Helvia Mayoral and their cherished sons and daughters, Leo, José Carlos, Héctor José, Olga, Nitza and Héctor Manuel.

From 1955 until 1962, he was the personal assistant to Luis A. Ferré, at Empresas Ferré, in Ponce. From this time to 1958, he completed his university studies. He was Vice-president and Administrator of the then regional newspaper *El Nuevo Día*. Among his greatest achievements that filled him with pride was to collaborate in turning that newspaper into one of general circulation in Puerto Rico. He was Vice-president of the Public Library in Ponce. As part of his professional life, he was also appointed Vice-consul of Sweden in Ponce.

Mr. Hernández was the first Governor of the Sertoma (Service to Mankind) Clubs, and organized eleven new clubs in the Island. He received the Sertoma Club Distinguished Governor Award in the general assemblies of two consecutive years.

Héctor M. Hernández played an important part in Luis A. Ferré's political endeavors, having been his Special Assistant from 1969 to 1972. After his work in La Fortaleza, he continued to contribute to public service at the Municipality of San Juan from 1973 to 1976.

Between 1977 and 1980, he was Legislative Secretary and General Administrator of the Senate of Puerto Rico, becoming the first to fill such significant positions simultaneously. Thanks to him, the process of the Daily Sessions of the Senate, a process that was thirteen years behind schedule prior to his arrival, was automated.

On July 25, 1952, he was inspired to write his most worldwide-famous and awarded musical work, "*Pa' Salinas*." This extraordinary musical piece, which

was heard all over the world, became the most popular *plena* of the Orchestra of César Concepción. In addition to César's orchestra, several musical groups included this piece in their recordings, among them being an adaptation by a Virgin Islands group that entitled it "*Boncollina*." Arturo Somohano's Orchestra included it in a medley of *plenas*, and it was featured in a Tony Croato recording. In Venezuela, Oscar D'León's Orchestra also included it in some of its recordings. On a visit to the town of Salinas in Texas, in the United States, César Concepción played this magnificent *plena*, which motivated Héctor M. Hernández to compose an English version of it.

He also composed other *plenas*, the first of which was "*Pa' Arroyo*," followed by "*Pa' Santa Isabel*," "*Plena Navidad*" and "*Canto a Salinas*," as a gift to the town of Salinas on its homage in August 1991. Some of his other works are "*Peñolanas*," and "*Ellas son Puertorriqueñas*." As well as his famous *plenas*, Héctor composed several *boleros* among which "*Voy Buscando un Amor*," recorded by Sonora Ponceña, is worth mentioning. Other *boleros* are "*¿Eres Tú?*," "*Dayanara*," "*Si tu supieras*," "*Fascinante*," "*Ven a mí*," "*Nunca Pensé*," and "*Cerca de ti*," among others.

He also composed several *guarachas* such as "*¿Cuál es el Problema?*" and "*El Picaflor*." The *guajira*, "*Tres Cositas*" and *cha-cha-cha* "*Dame un besito*," are among his other prestigious musical works. At the request of his beloved sister, Elda, he even composed a religious Christmas carols entitled "*Bendito sea Dios*."

On August 16, 1991, the Mayor of Salinas at the time, Basilio Baerga Paravisinim, dedicated the activities of the "Salinenses Ausentes" for those who are Salinas-born but no longer live there to him. Subsequently, in 1993, he won an award in the Puerto Rican *Danza* Contest sponsored by the Institute of Puerto

Rican Culture for his work entitled “*Princesa Azul*,” of which professor José Raúl Ramírez made a piano recording.

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

Section 1.- To direct the designation of Salinas High School with the name of Héctor M. Hernández Suárez, an outstanding composer, writer and public servant who brought honor to the name of Puerto Rico, especially his town of birth, Salinas.

Section 2.- To direct the Public Buildings Authority, in coordination with the Department of Education, to install a duly sealed and secure urn exhibiting a copy of this bill, several photographs and a copy of the lyrics of the *plena* entitled “*Pa’ Salinas*,” written by Héctor M. Hernández Suárez, at the main entrance of the new school building so that it shall serve as inspiration and example for present and future generations.

Section 3.- The expenses incurred shall be defrayed from the budget of the Public Buildings Authority, the owner of the work.

Section 5.- The Structures and Public Highways Naming Commission of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall take the necessary steps to enforce compliance with the provisions of this Act, without being subject to the provisions of Act No. 99 of June 22, 1961, as amended.

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. 151 (S.B. 943) of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature of Puerto Rico:

**AN ACT** to direct designation of Salinas High School with the name of Héctor M. Hernández Suárez, an outstanding composer, writer and public servant who brought honor to the name of Puerto Rico, especially his town of birth, Salinas,

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

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, today 22<sup>nd</sup> of December of 2006.

Francisco J. Domenech  
Director