



FUNDACION
BIBLIOTECA

MESSAGE FROM THE HONORABLE RAFAEL HERNANDEZ COLON,
GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO,
TO THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY CHEST OF AMERICA,
ON THE OCCASION WHEN THE FIRST CITIZEN OF
THE AMERICAS' AWARD IS PRESENTED TO THE FIRST LADY,
MRS BETTY FORD
OCTOBER 2, 1976

FELLOW AMERICAN CITIZENS:

IT IS AN HONOR AND A PLEASURE FOR ME TO SEND YOU THE GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES OF MY FELLOW PUERTO RICANS, ON THIS HAPPY OCCASION WHEN SO MANY DISTINGUISHED AMERICANS FROM THE SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN CONTINENTS HAVE COME TOGETHER TO PAY DESERVED TRIBUTE TO A DISTINGUISHED LADY, AND IN SO DOING, HELP SUCH A WORTHY CAUSE AS THE ANDRES GRILLASCA CANCER CLINIC.

AS A NATIVE OF PONCE, WHERE THE GRILLASCA CLINIC OPERATES, I AM ESPECIALLY APPRECIATIVE OF THE WORK IT HAS BEEN DOING IN THE EARLY DETECTION OF CANCER, IN ITS TREATMENT, AND IN THE CONTINUING RESEARCH WHICH IS NEEDED TO VANQUISH THIS TERRIBLE FOE OF MANKIND.

IT IS FITTING, HOWEVER, THAT THIS BENEFIT BE HELD IN THE LARGEST PUERTO RICAN CITY IN THE WORLD -- NEW YORK

FOR WHERE ELSE COULD WE FIND SUCH A DISTINGUISHED
GROUP OF PUERTO RICANS, SOUTH AMERICANS AND NORTH
AMERICANS, UNITED IN THE HUMANE EFFORT OF HELPING
A STRUGGLING CLINIC SOME 1,600 MILES AWAY?

THE GRILLASCA CLINIC, AS YOU PROBABLY HAVE BEEN
TOLD, SERVES MANY MORE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES THAN
THOSE WHO LIVE IN PONCE. AS THE LARGEST CITY OUTSIDE
OF THE SAN JUAN METROPOLITAN AREA, PONCE IS THE HUB
OF A GROWING SECTOR OF THE ISLAND WHICH EXTENDS FROM
THE SOUTHERN COAST INTO THE INTERIOR, COVERING AT LEAST
ONE FOURTH OR MORE OF PUERTO RICO'S 3,500 SQUARE MILES.
YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TONIGHT WILL HELP THE GRILLASCA
CLINIC SERVE CANCER VICTIMS IN THIS LARGE AREA.

IF MAYOR BEAME IS IN THE AUDIENCE TONIGHT, I HAVE
A SPECIAL WORD FOR HIM. THE GRILLASCA CLINIC IS NAMED

AFTER A DEARLY BELOVED MAYOR OF THE CITY OF PONCE,
HE TOO, LIKE MAYOR BEAME AND THAT OTHER NEW YORK
MAYOR, FIORELLO LAGUARDIA, HAD TO TOWER OVER HIS
PHYSICAL HEIGHT TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF HIS TIMES AND
OF THE OFFICE TO WHICH HE WAS ELECTED.

I AM TRULY SORRY I CANNOT BE WITH YOU IN PERSON ON
THIS HAPPY OCCASION BUT I WISH TO CONVEY TO ALL OF YOU
MY SINCERE THANKS FOR HAVING COME TOGETHER TONIGHT
TO HONOR THAT GRACIOUS LADY, MRS BETTY FORD, AND TO
CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUSTENANCE OF THE GRILLASCA CLINIC
IN PONCE.