

The ADVOCATE

for the City University of New York Graduate Center

Inside Badillo's Labyrinth of Solitude

A Recapitulation and Commentary on Herman Badillo's Anti-Latino Remarks

By Silvia Rivero and Jocelyn Solis

In September, Herman Badillo, chairman of the CUNY Board of Trustees, made several inflammatory statements toward Latinos, and Mexican and Dominican immigrants in particular. As a result, the Graduate Center saw reactions from AELLA, the Latino and Latin American Student Association, as well as other chartered student organizations that made public statements in outrage to Badillo's remarks. Below you will find a series of articles that trace what Badillo actually said, followed by responses from the press and the community at-large, statements made by student organizations and individuals of the Graduate Center, as well as Badillo's justification for his remarks following such reactions. Our objective is to clarify this series of events and continue to keep members of the Graduate Center updated with regard to this matter.

Who is Herman Badillo?

Herman Badillo is a Puerto Rican native who immigrated to New York City at the age of eleven. He worked his way through school, graduating cum laude at City College, and then as class valedictorian from Brooklyn Law School in 1954. As a Democrat, he went on to

become the Bronx's first Latino Borough President and in this position was responsible for the founding of Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College in the South Bronx, the first and only bilingual college in the CUNY system. He became the first Puerto Rican-born congressman in 1970, and was re-elected three times. Badillo was also sponsor of the Bilingual Education Act of 1974. In addition, he was an active member of the Latino community and helped found the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund. Earlier this year he switched to the Republican party. He is the first Latino to serve as New York City's Deputy Mayor. He also serves as Mayor Giuliani's educational advisor. In May, he was appointed Chairman of the Board of Trustees of The City University of New York by Governor Pataki, after having acted as Vice-Chairman for two years, and about ten years as a CUNY trustee.

Badillo's Latest Controversy

Although Herman Badillo has caused controversy before with his conservative policies on open admissions and exit exams in CUNY, his latest controversy arose at a luncheon on September 22nd when he made disparaging comments about new immigrants, especially Dominicans and Mexicans, and later claimed

that his words were taken out of context. Please see the transcript for his exact words. In response to these statements, members of the Latino community, especially those representing some of the city's prominent community organizations such as the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, Alianza Dominicana, Dominicans 2000, and the Tepeyac Association, among others, spoke to the press, voicing their indignation and requesting that Badillo be removed from his position as CUNY Chair. These organizations, as well as students from CUNY colleges have been coordinating protests wherever Badillo is supposed to be speaking. It is worth mentioning that Badillo never spoke to protesters nor offered a direct apology to the Latinos he particularly insulted. In fact, he has been breaking appointments and avoiding angry demonstrators.

(Re)Actions from the GSUC

At the Graduate Center, an "awareness campaign" was initiated through the Latino and Latin American Student Association (AELLA), sending an e-mail to all departments about this incident and posting flyers around the building containing newspaper clippings, AELLA's statement, and information about a public protest.

CONTINUED PAGE 9

Keep CUNY's Doors Open!!!

By Mark Noonan

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES (AMENDMENT 1): Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble.

CUNY GRADUATE CENTER: Let's abridge the rights of our students to peaceably assemble.

Imagine for a moment the following scenario. It is the first festivity of the year thrown mutually by the Medievalist Club and Philosophical Society in the student lounge on the fifth floor of the CUNY Graduate Center building. While sipping a fine California Chardonnay (vintage April), you are deeply engaged in a discussion of whether a knight wearing armor in the year 1015 A.D. requires as much bravery in battle as his less protected opponent — a muscle-bound barbarian from the East donning only a loincloth and Billy-club. You are siding with the barbarian, when a latecomer from the Marxist Club party joins the conversation to make the parallel analogy of a person of great wealth needing less talent and courage to "make it" in America as compared to say a young man from Susquehanna of miniscule means. Immediately it dawns on you that a quote from Lucretius will settle the matter in your (and the



A vampire roaming the Graduate Center library after hours

barbarian's and the Marxist's) favor. But before you can state your case, a bevy of CUNY security guards appear out of nowhere to announce that the party is over. It is now 9:45 p.m. on a Friday night, you are told, and the CUNY Graduate Center is officially closed. The guards politely ask that the Gregorian Chant Music be turned off, the wine bottles re-corked, and that everybody make their way to the egress.

Imagine for a moment this scenario. Your apartment-mate has invited her boyfriend to stay for the entire weekend. Late on Sunday afternoon, rain tumbles from the sky, so instead of going into Manhattan, the happy couple decide to watch movies well into the night. Problem is, the only space for you to work on your dissertation chapter is in the kitchen from where you can't help but hear the

See OPEN!!! page 12