

Foreword

by Daniel Gutierrez

My name is Dan Gutierrez and I am president and CEO of Pinnacle Achievement Group, Inc. I am also the founder and president of the Latino Empowerment Foundation and “Imagine” Conference, an organization devoted to mentoring Hispanic youth. Those that know anything about me know that I am very proud of my Hispanic heritage and that I am passionate about kids and young adults fulfill their dreams.

When I was approached to write the foreword for *Heritage Hispanic-American Style*, I was flattered, but felt a bit suspicious. People often ask me to lend my name to things that mean nothing to me and have no real value with regard to the Hispanic community. I glanced quickly through the manuscript and immediately realized that this was different, it had the perfect format to educate kids and adults about the contributions made by Hispanics today and throughout history.

I became excited. The ideas and thoughts that flashed through my mind can be summarized in the word Pride. This book is an invaluable source of pride and understanding about the huge impact Hispanics have had on world history and culture, in sports, religion, arts, literature, and so many aspects of human endeavor. Other words came to mind in rapid succession, words like family, honor, respect, and hard work. These define for me what it means to be a Latino, and go hand in hand with the Latin feeling that exist deep in my heart—the ones that I can never really put into words.

I am a proud Mexican American and grew up in Midlothian, Texas, a small town located in northwest Ellis County in the Dallas metroplex area. Going to school in a town like Midlothian has certain advantages, one of the most important being the small town atmosphere where close ties naturally develop with family and friends. I know that I would not be where I am today without the strong support and love of my family. They gave me the strength and resolve, in a hundred different ways, to persevere in the face of every tough obstacle. As a young boy, I remember thinking that I was going to be someone important someday. Who and what were unclear, but I was determined as a young age to find out.

My family taught me to go after my goals with passion and purpose. They also taught me to respect and support my community. I strongly believe that it is important for those who attain their goals to share their benefits with the society that served as the vehicle to their success. It has always been my goal to be a positive role model for young Latinos. I tell kids to take a good look at me—an ordinary person who was blessed with a loving family who always championed

the importance of a good education. I want to help every kid to understand that they can realize their dreams. It was natural, then, for me to think that the most important and lasting thing to do to help them was to support and promote education. Success has a simple formula: a plan, an education, and a lot of hard work, in the right direction. This is why I created the first ever Latino speakers forum “Imagine” in Los Angeles, and founded the Latino Empowerment Foundation.

I love working for a cause that encourages young people to aspire to high goals, to dream of something that maybe they thought was out of their reach. I hope to be an example of someone who overcomes obstacles, who accomplishes goals with gritty determination, and refuses to walk away from something he really wants. Young people need to see someone who has done that, someone who once was where they are now and who simply would not let go of his highest ambitions.

I have always believed that you have to make your dreams happen because no one is just going to hand them a great life. Others can help and support, but no one can do it but himself or herself. Depending on luck or good fortune will bring disappointment 99 percent of the time. The harder you work, the luckier you become. I want to pass that on to as many people as possible.

I want to see Hispanic kids grow up to soar into space, into the leadership of this country, and into whatever dreams they dare to dream. There are 1001 role models in this book: astronauts, artists, scientists, entertainers, athletes, and centuries of men and women whose work changed the world. This book was written in a question and answer format, in history bytes, in both English and Spanish. Reading motivating facts about Latino people and their accomplishments in both languages is a great way to become truly bilingual—if you weren’t lucky enough to learn both languages before kindergarten.

You can find heroes of every kind in this book, heroes with Hispanic names, who made it far beyond their early dreams. Just remember: never give up those dreams, because, as this book proves, they do turn into reality.

About Daniel Gutierrez

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Daniel Gutierrez is a published author and leading national motivational speaker. Leveraging his own background, training, and experience, his infectious humor, and his deep belief that there is greatness in each of us, Gutierrez is a compelling presenter who has inspired Fortune 500 companies and individuals alike to make positive changes that lead to success. From the moment Mr. Gutierrez takes the stage at an event, his potent energy makes a connection with his audience. A certified seminar leader and practitioner of neuro-linguistic programming, Gutierrez speaks plainly and persuasively from the heart about

subjects including living your dreams; discovering your passion; challenging your beliefs; looking for the “yes” rather than the “no;” staying on course; and becoming leaders. Through effective and inspirational management coaching, Gutierrez outlines fresh approaches to improving productivity, enabling the progress of diversity, and boosting the bottom line.

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Text Translator

Diane Tolomeo is a free-lance translator and foreign language instructor of Spanish and French. She was previously a career translator and foreign language instructor for the U.S. Federal Government in Washington, D.C., specializing in statistics, economics, and agriculture. She traveled extensively in her professional capacity with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, assisting U.S. government officials in providing technical assistance to developing countries. She has also taught foreign language at Mercer County Community College in Trenton, New Jersey, and at the elementary level at Grey Nun Academy, Yardley, Pennsylvania. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in foreign languages and teacher certification in French and Spanish at St. Francis University, Loretto, Pennsylvania.