

Ken Burns apparently got the message

To all Defenders of the Honor

We salute and thank you for the actions you took and letters you wrote to bring attention to our united concern over Ken Burns "Visions of Race in America" presentation sponsored by the Washington D.C. Sixth & I Historic Synagogue and New York-based Humanity in Action.

Your voices and immediate expressions of concern over these two organizations sponsoring Ken Burns to speak on this particular and sensitive topic were heard by the leadership of the two groups. Burn's history of excluding Latinos and Latinas from his public and corporate-funded documentaries is legendary and well known in the Latino and Latina community.

The outcome is thus, according to witnesses: At the beginning of his discourse, Burns stated that he "valued" Hispanics. He then proceeded to give a Black and White perspective of his Visions of Race In America. The rest of his presentation mirrored previous exclusion of Latinos and Latinas in his PBS documentaries. His view is not in keeping with our view of Race in America. One witness noted that had Humanity in Action and Sixth & I Historic Synagogue called the talk "African Americans in America," or something less expansive, there would have been no problem. But they didn't and there was a problem.

The focus of our actions in this most recent event took on special significance because it was billed as part of President Barack Obama's inaugural festivities, thereby giving the unfortunate impression that this was in keeping with the theme of "Change In America." Defend the Honor, through emails and letters from men and women throughout the country, made it clear that Ken Burns does not represent change or inclusion. We feel confident that we succeeded in educating the sponsors and others about the contributions and importance of the Latino and Latina community.

We look forward to hearing from Humanity in Action and Sixth & I Historic Synagogue. As of this writing, neither group has responded.

We thank you for your actions and involvement as we move forward with our efforts to Defend The Honor of the Latinos and Latinas of our country.
Gus Chavez and Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, Co-founders, Defend The Honor

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