

July 12, 2007

Tim Goodman  
San Francisco Chronicle  
901 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Goodman,

As spokesman for the Northern California Defend the Honor Campaign, part of a national action in protest of the proposed broadcast by PBS of a fatally flawed documentary by Ken Burns, we wish to inform you of our opposition to its airing as is and provide you with the information and demands we have presented to NCPB/KQED within the past couple weeks.

The points we raised with Jeff Clarke and his staff, with whom we met June 26 last, were as follows:

- The series, as we have been informed, leaves out the contributions of Latinos on the battlefield and on the home front during WWII. As such, we fear that the series insults and denigrates the memory of Latinos' contribution by omitting any mention of our role in WWII
- The discrimination by omission will have a lasting impact on the Latino community into the future
- Because Burns deals with the role and experience of African Americans and Japanese Americans, as well as white Americans, in the series, we question his motives and professionalism in producing a work that omits Latinos; the only solution we see, therefore, is that he must correct his "oversight"
- We want to ensure that the series that is aired does represent a true picture of the impact of WWII; our meeting with Clarke and his staff was intended to help us all meet this goal
- This proposed production fails as a documentary because it does not reflect history factually and honestly, and bombs as a creative "vision" because it dishonors a whole group of people who certainly didn't serve their country to be ignored and treated as second class once again
- The failure of PBS to ensure that such a sweeping production such as "The War" so flagrantly omitted the role of Latinos reveals breakdowns in policy and oversight which PBS must address
- This production is so fraught with controversy that KQED/NCPB will be subject to serious criticism and lasting rancor with the public if it succumbs to PBS' pressure to air it without making appropriate enhancements to the content.

We made the following basic demands of Clarke and his staff:

- Because we are not yet assured that the series is being enhanced to reflect the concerns and interests of the Latino community, we asked NCPB to inform PBS President Paula Kerger that it will not air the series until such time as significant enhancements are made in the video, digital and print components and this controversy is resolved.

- **We have learned that the DVD package presented at the Television Critics Association meeting this week did not contain what was supposed to be an updated version with Latino content inserted**
- We asked that NCPB urge PBS to take additional time to enhance the various components
- We offered to cooperate with NCPB in the planning and production of relevant and related materials that reflect local and regional Latino views and interests.
- Toward that end, we recommended that NCPB set up, in collaboration with us, an advisory group to work with station staff in the planning and production of appropriate materials
- We reminded Clarke that responses to the data information request we had submitted two weeks earlier had still not been provided and this raised additional concerns about the NCPB commitment to diversity and community collaboration.

I believe this information provides you with a perspective beyond what you might have heard or seen from Burns at the TCA meeting earlier this week. We are extremely concerned that PBS and Ken Burns have done a monumental disservice to the Latino community. In fact, few issues in my memory have coalesced the entire Latino community as this one has—Latinos of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban ancestry take personal issue with Burns and PBS when they ignore and insult the memory of the sacrifice that their elders made in ensuring freedom for all of us. For the national perspective, please see <http://www.defendthehonor.org>.

We believe that you and the Chronicle should provide us with the time to convey our side of the controversy both about the concerns we have and the efforts we are making to right what we consider a terrible wrong done to our elders. We would also like to have John Diaz of Editorial join us; he has written recently about the National Association of Hispanic Journalists in San Jose conference, one of the groups which support the national campaign.

By the way, among the folks named below is a veteran of WWII, Leo Avila, other veterans, along with representatives of several community organizations. My contact information is 510-219-9139, cell and email: [armandorendon@sbcglobal.net](mailto:armandorendon@sbcglobal.net). I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Armando Rendón, Esq. for  
Raul Araujo, Co-Founder, National Hispanic Employee Association  
Leo Avila, American GI Forum  
Gloria Flores-Garcia, Chicana/Latina Foundation  
Felix Galavíz, American GI Forum  
Willie Galván, State Commander, American GI Forum  
John Gamboa, Executive Director, Greenlining Institute  
Roberto Haro, educator and author  
Aurora Levins Morales, California Puerto Rican Historical Society  
Carlos Muñoz, Professor Emeritus, U.C. Berkeley  
Johnny Saldivía, Chair, Western Region Puerto Rican Council  
Olga Talamante, Executive Director, Chicana/Latina Foundation

Attachments

## FACTS: The Significant Role that Latino Soldiers Played During WWII

- As many as 500,000 Latinos served during World War II, representing the three major ethnic groups: Mexican, Puerto Rican and Cuban; this would have been about 3 percent of all service members. At the time, the U.S. population numbered about 132 million
- Latino soldiers exhibited an unusually high sense of valor and loyalty: No Latino soldier was ever charged with treason, desertion or cowardice during WWII.
- 13 Mexican-Americans were awarded the Medal of Honor in WWII. This is the highest proportion of Medal of Honor winners of any identifiable ethnic group. Numerous other Latinos were awarded the Purple Heart, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star and the Distinguished Service Cross during WWII.
- Mexican Americans were routinely sent to the most dangerous sections and missions of the armed forces and thus overrepresented on military casualty lists.
- Despite being Medal of Honor winners, Latinos were routinely denied service in restaurants and diners following the war because of their heritage. Here's an example of how racism trumped any recognition of patriotism among Latinos: When a decorated Mexican American WWII veteran, Felix Longoria, died shortly after coming home from the war, a funeral parlor in Three Rivers, TX refused to bury him because of his Mexican lineage. The funeral parlor remained staunchly defiant even when this incident became a national headline. It wasn't until then-US Senator Lyndon Johnson intervened to have Longoria buried in Arlington National Cemetery that Longoria was finally laid to rest.
- Thousands of Mexican citizens served in the U.S. military; some were naturalized almost on the battlefield, others earned their citizenship after the war; but others were never able to become U.S. citizens.



*Northern California Defend the Honor Campaign*  
&  
**Northern California Public Broadcasting, Inc. - NCPB**  
**Tuesday, June 26, 2007**  
**2 - 3pm KQED Board Room**

*Northern California Defend the Honor Campaign*

**Armando Rendón**, Defend the Honor Campaign, Northern California  
**Willie Galván**, CA State Commander, American GI Forum  
**Johnny Saldivia**, Chair, U.S. Western Region Puerto Rican Council  
**Leo Avila**, Past CA State Chair, American GI Forum  
**Olga Talamante**, Executive Director, Chicana/Latina Foundation  
**Ortensia Lopez**, Executive Director, El Concilio of San Mateo County  
**John Gamboa**, Executive Director, Greenlining Institute  
**Lisa Gutierrez**, Summer Associate, Greenlining Institute  
**Andrea Nieves**, Summer Associate, Greenlining Institute  
**Valeria Fike-Rosales**, Summer Associate, Greenlining Institute  
**Ricardo Valencia**, Fellow, Greenlining Institute  
**Felix Galaviz**, VP Alameda Country Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

*NCPB Community Advisory Panel Attendees*

**Rose Marie Fontana**, Bilingual Qualitative Researcher, Garcia Fontana Research  
**Hilbert Morales**, President and Publisher, El Observador  
**Lorraine Yglesias**, Emerging Markets Innovation, Monterey Bay Aquarium

*Northern California Public Broadcasting, Inc. Attendees*

**Jeff Clarke**, President and CEO  
**Linda O'Bryon**, Chief Content Officer  
**Jo Anne Wallace**, VP & General Manager of KQED-FM  
**Raul Ramirez**, Exec. Director of Radio News & Public Affairs, KQED-FM  
**Michael Isip**, VP for TV Content and Educational Services  
**Louise Lo**, Exec. Producer, TV Productions  
**Scott Walton**, Communications Director  
**Stacey Karp**, Director of External Affairs  
**Tim Olson**, Director of Interactive