

HISPANIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH



*Embracing the Fierce
Urgency of Now*

Biography

Major Karen J. Gregory, USAFR, is an Air Force Behavioral Scientist and Organizational Assessment Consultant. In 1997, Major Gregory received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology from Fayetteville State University, NC. In May 1999, she earned a Master of Arts dual degree in Human Resource Development and Management from Webster University.

Major Gregory formerly served as the Organizational Assessment and Development Division Chief, J-9 Research Directorate, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute and as Course Director and Assistant Professor for the Organizational Behavior Course, Management Department, U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA). She has served as a consultant for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief Staff of the Air Force, USNORTHCOM/NORAD, Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, Navy Warfare Center, U.S. Coast Guard, Patrick AFB Tides Club, and the Department of Behavioral Science and Leadership (USAFA).

Major Gregory's military decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, AF Commendation Medal (1OLC), Joint Service Achievement Medal, and AF Achievement Medal (1OLC).

Major Gregory is married to Miguel A. Fernandez. They have two sons, Alonzo and Jacob.

Preface

Major Karen J. Gregory, USAFR, is an Air Force Behavioral Scientist and consultant for the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI). Major Gregory formerly served as the Organizational Assessment and Development Division Chief, J-9 Research Directorate, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute and as Course Director and Assistant Professor for the Organizational Behavior Course, Management Department, U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA). She has served as a consultant for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief Staff of the Air Force, USNORTHCOM/NORAD, Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, Navy Warfare Center, U.S. Coast Guard, Patrick AFB Tides Club, and the Department of Behavioral Science and Leadership (USAFA).

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Fact

Source

In September 1968, Congress authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to proclaim National Hispanic Heritage Week, which was to be observed during the week that included September 15th and 16th. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan expanded the observance to become Hispanic Heritage month, beginning on September 15th and ending on October 15th.

[U.S. Census Bureau](#)

We observe Hispanic Heritage month in the United States by celebrating the culture and traditions of U.S. residents who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico, and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

[U.S. Census Bureau](#)

September 15th was chosen as the starting point of Hispanic Heritage Month because it is the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico declared its independence on September 16th and Chile became independent on September 18th.

[U.S. Census Bureau](#)

Many Hispanic words have become part of the American language such as redo, cabana, macho, bonanza, mosquito, chocolate, tobacco, adobe, burro, corral, desperado, incommunicado, patio, plaza, poncho, vigilante, cafeteria, canoe, hurricane, cannibal, manatee, tomato, canyon, armada, bronco, and barbecue.

[Hispanics in America's Defense, DoD, 1990](#)

The word Hispanic is derived from Hispania, the name given by the Romans to the entire Iberian Peninsula (Spain, Portugal, Andorra, and Gibraltar). Portuguese and Brazilians may or may not refer to themselves as Hispanics.

[Diversity Jobs](#)

The usage of Hispanic as an ethnic indicator in the United States is believed to have come into mainstream prominence following inclusion in a question in the 1980 U.S. Census, which asked people to voluntarily identify if they were of "Spanish/Hispanic origin or descent." The term Hispanic is currently used to refer to Spanish-speaking people in the United States of any race.

[Diversity Jobs](#)

The estimated Hispanic population of the United States as of July 1, 2007 was 45.5 million making people of Hispanic origin the nation's largest ethnic or race minority. Hispanics constituted 15 percent of the nation's total population. In addition, there are approximately 3.9 million residents of Puerto Rico.

[U.S. Census Bureau](#)

As of 2007, 64 percent of Hispanic-origin people in the United States are of Mexican background; 9 percent are of Puerto Rican background, with 3.4 percent Cuban; 3.1 percent Salvadoran; and 2.8 percent Dominican. The remainder is Central-American, South-American or other Hispanic or Latino origin.

[U.S. Census Bureau](#)

The size of the U.S. Hispanic population ranked 2nd worldwide, as of 2007. Only Mexico (108.7 million) had a larger Hispanic population than the United States with 45.5 million (Spain had a population of 40.4 million).

[U.S. Census Bureau](#)

In 2007, 34 million U.S. residents age 5 and older spoke Spanish at home. Spanish speakers constituted 12 percent of U.S. residents.

[U.S. Census Bureau](#)

In 2007, 13 percent of the Hispanic population 25 and older had a bachelor's degree or higher.

[U.S. Census Bureau](#)

As of 2007, there were 1.1 million Hispanic veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces.

[U.S. Census Bureau](#)

Forty-three men of Hispanic heritage were awarded the Medal of Honor. Of those forty-three, two were presented to members of the United States Navy, thirteen to members of the United States Marine Corps and twenty-eight to members of the United States Army. Twenty-five Medals of Honor were presented posthumously.

[Congressional Medal of Honor Society](#)

Colonel Manuel "Pete" Fernández, Jr., who flew 125 combat missions in the Korean War, was the first Hispanic flying ace.

[DEOMI TRIP Report Jun-Aug 2003](#)

The first Hispanic-American to become a four-star admiral was Horacio Rivero of Puerto Rico, in 1964.

[Puerto Rico Herald](#)

The first Hispanic-American to be promoted to flag rank in the USCG was Rear Admiral Ronald J. Rábago, who earned his first star in 2006.

[USCG Historian's Office](#)

Lieutenant General Elwood R. Quesada was the first Hispanic general officer in the Air Force. Later he became the first head of the Federal Aviation Administration.

[National Republican Hispanic Alliance](#)

In 1982, General Richard E. Cavazos became the Army's first Hispanic four-star general.

[National Republican Hispanic Alliance](#)

Lieutenant General, Pedro Augusto del Valle (1893–1978) was the first Hispanic Marine to reach the rank of lieutenant general. Del Valle participated in many conflicts ranging from the Banana Wars in Nicaragua to the seizure of Guadalcanal. He later became the commanding general of the 1st Marine Division during World War II.

[6th Marine Corps District](#)

Sergeant Major José Luis Santiago, USMC, has the distinction of being the 2nd Battalion 9th Marines' first Hispanic Sergeant Major. In addition, he is the first Sergeant Major since its reactivation on July 13, 2007.

[2nd Battalion, 9th Marines](#)

In 1986, Franklin Chang-Díaz (Costa Rican) was the first Hispanic-American to fly in space. He flew on a total of seven space-shuttle missions. The first female Hispanic astronaut was Ellen Ochoa, whose first of four shuttle missions was in 1991.

[Encyclopedia Britannica](#)

Dr. Antonia Novello was appointed in 1990 by President George H.W. Bush to be the Surgeon General of the United States. Dr. Novello was the first Hispanic person and the first woman to become Surgeon General, the highest ranking doctor in the U.S. government.

[Academy of Achievement](#)

Dr. Carlos Finlay (Cuban) became famous for his work in identifying the mosquito as a carrier of the deadly yellow fever germ.

[Finlay Medical Society](#)

Judge Sonia Sotomayor (Puerto Rican), is the first Hispanic U.S. Supreme Court justice and the third woman to serve on the high court.

[CNN](#)

There was an increase in the number of Hispanics on active duty in the military from 122,255 in 2007 to 149,680 in 2008. The 122,255 active-duty Hispanics in 2007 included 16,721 foreign-born soldiers.

[Pew Hispanic Center & DMDC data posted on DEOMI website](#)

According to the Defense Manpower Data Center, as of September 2008, in the active duty forces Hispanics constituted 14 percent of Navy personnel, about 13 percent Marine Corps, 11 percent of Army personnel, 5 percent of Air Force personnel and about 11 percent Coast Guard personnel.

DMDC data posted on DEOMI website

As of September 2008, in the active duty forces Hispanic men accounted for 10 percent of enlisted men and Hispanic women were 12.8 percent of enlisted women in the Armed Forces. The Hispanic share of commissioned officers is much lower with 4.2 percent for men and 5.6 percent for women.

DMDC data posted on DEOMI website

As of September 2008, only 8.5 percent of the active duty senior enlisted ranks (E7–E9) in the Armed Forces were held by Hispanics.

DMDC data posted on DEOMI website

As of September 2008, the 17 Hispanic flag and general officers in the armed forces represented only 1.8 percent of the 969 flag and general officers.

DMDC data posted on DEOMI website

Hispanic representation in the reserve and guard officer corps was 4.7 percent in 2008 compared to the 9.1 percent enlisted force.

DMDC data posted on DEOMI website

Hispanics are most heavily represented in the federal reserve components (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps Reserves) than in the state-based Army or Air National Guard.

DMDC data posted on DEOMI website

Hispanic representation in the civilian force was 6.6 percent as of September 2008.

DMDC data posted on DEOMI website

As of September 2008, only 5.1 percent of SES series civilians were Hispanics.

DMDC data posted on DEOMI website