

Edwin Melendez's Remarks for SSW Inauguration Ceremony

(September 27, 2011)

Buenos Dias.

It is a great pleasure and honor to be here today on this highly anticipated and festive occasion, and to share this event with university and community leaders.

Centro's Library and Archives have moved into the heart of the population it serves. This great repository of our past and present has a new home in el Barrio.

On behalf of the Centro staff and our broad community of supporters, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to all of those involved in our move to El Barrio and the celebration of our new home with the exhibit "Labor," such a unique tribute to the Puerto Rican heritage and to the historic preservation efforts of our organization.

First and foremost, we would like to thank President Raab, Provost Vita Rabinowitz and all the CUNY leadership for sharing our vision of a state of the art facility for Centro's Library and Archives, and for making that vision a reality. Without your leadership and determination this beautiful building would not have been possible.

We would also like to thank Dennis Rivera, Susana Leval and Antonio Martorell, for their dedicated work and leadership for making LABOR a reality. We would also like to thank the group of gifted artists involved in the creation of the exhibit: Melissa Calderon, Miguel Luciano, Juan Sanchez, and Nitza Tufiño, long-time friends of Centro, and to the renowned Puerto Rican Artist Antonio Martorell, whose leadership and vision in the development of this exhibit was exceptional. You are brilliant and talented artists and your exhibit will speak for itself to all those who visit.

There are many unsung heroes in our staff. I have to extend my deepest appreciation to Alberto Hernandez-Banucci, the director of the library and archives, and Jose de Jesus for their leadership in this transition; to Pedro Juan Hernandez, Senior Archivist, and Mayra Torres, for their support to the curators and artists crafting the exhibit; and to all staff in the Library and Archives for their dedication to these projects.

Finally, we would like to extend a sincere thank you to the community of East Harlem; we are overwhelmingly delighted to now be a part of your neighborhood. With your support, Centro will continue to be the main source of information on the Puerto Rican community in the United States. We will continue to work tirelessly to reinforce cultural identity and instill cultural pride.

In our new home the Centro Library and Archives we welcome you to share the best we have to offer.

Muchas gracias.