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 ● October



### Why I became an American citizen

By Bera Jurado  
Contributing writer

Under the auspices of a program for Latin-American scholars I came from Panama, at age 17, to study chemistry at Trinity College in Hartford, Conn. Upon graduation, I pursued a Ph.D. in physical chemistry at U.C. Berkeley, where I met Miriam Miranda Mercado, born in New York City from Puerto Rican parents. Miriam had come to U.C. Hayward to obtain a graduate degree. It was love at first sight. A year later we married.

From Berkeley we moved to Panama and Costa Rica, where we lived a total of 14 years. Miriam became an educator in Panama and the Canal Zone schools. After Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega served on the CIA payroll during seven different U.S. administrations the government decided his time was up. The invasion occurred Dec. 21, 1989, taking the lives of 800 Panamanian and 23 U.S. citizens, of whom we knew three personally, one quite well. His name: Ray Dragseth, kidnapped, tortured and killed by Noriega's henchmen. The Stealth Bomber was tried in combat.

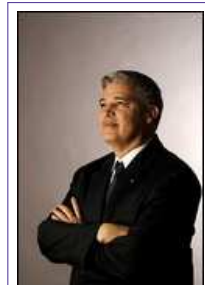
Shortly before the invasion we moved to Webster to be near family. My faith in God has been the inspiration of a life as a scholar, scientist, educator, independent businessman, religious prison worker, missionary, and last but not least, husband of the best wife and father of three outstanding professional young ladies.

I decided to become a naturalized American citizen in March 2006 at the Monroe County Clerk's Office after contributing to society but without certain rights, such as the right to vote and the ability to be an effective advocate.

There are two Greek words that describe time: cronos and kyros. Cronos is man's historical time, kyros his providentially appointed purpose.

My cronos and kyros are merging. Right now many illegal immigrants are suffering abuse. You may not experience it, but it is real. Historically ethnic violence has been preceded by verbal violence. Without condoning their illegality, I stand on the Declaration of Independence that states, "All men are created equal ... endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights."

What I am proposing is the beginning of an apolitical civic movement leading to the eventual creation of a Hispanic Anti-Defamation League. Those interested please write to me at [berajurado@aol.com](mailto:berajurado@aol.com)



enlarge +  
Bera Jurado is proposing a Hispanic Anti-Defamation League.

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