

# HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

## Celebrating the Successes of Today's Hispanic/Latino Leaders and Executives

**H**ispanic Heritage Month begins September 15, the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua—that all declared independence in 1821. Today, more than 50 million people in the United States identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino.

With key input in the last presidential election and increased buying power, Hispanic/Latinos are now the largest minority group in the United States and arguably the most dynamic.

We asked a selection of today's Hispanic/Latino leaders and executives to elaborate on their identities and experiences as Hispanics/Latinos in America. The following are personal glimpses into these leaders' lives, both personally and professionally.



## Z. ILEANA MARTINEZ

Thompson Hine LLP



**HEADQUARTERS:** Cleveland, Ohio

**WEBSITE:**  
www.thomsonhine.com

**BUSINESS:** Law firm

**EMPLOYEES:** 752

**TITLE:** Partner

**EDUCATION:** BS, Florida International University; JD, University of Miami

**LAST BOOK I READ:** *And the Mountains Echoed*, by Khaled Hosseini and *Little Bee: A Novel*, by Chris Cleave

**MY PERFECT DAY:** At the beach with my family and a good book

**INTERESTS:** International travel with family, Scrabble, reading, and movies

**What does it mean to be a part of the fastest growing minority in the U.S.?** This is a very exciting time for the more than 51 million Hispanics who currently reside in the United States, as we continue to make educational, social, political, and economic strides. Hispanics are not only the largest minority group in the United States, but also the largest minority group on college campuses. Currently, there are five Hispanic-owned companies that have revenues in excess of \$1 billion, and Hispanics continue to climb the corporate ladder. We have a Hispanic justice on the U.S. Supreme Court, and the number of state and federal Hispanic politicians continues to grow, with a record number of Latino members in Congress. Two of the most popular and highest-paid TV actresses are Hispanic. By 2015, the Hispanic market's purchasing power is projected to reach \$1.3 trillion, which will create further business and advancement opportunities for Hispanics.

**Are there any stereotypes of Hispanics/Latinos that should be refuted or are incorrect?** The entertainment industry does not accurately recognize and reflect the disparate roles Hispanics currently have in American society. Hispanics often are depicted in television shows and movies primarily in stereotypical roles such as maids and gardeners. While these jobs, and the people who perform them, are noble and valuable, they portray a very limited and incomplete glimpse of today's Hispanics.