

# HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Sept. 15 to Oct. 15

2011 THEME: Many Backgrounds, Many Stories...One American Spirit



The National Hispanic Heritage Month observance started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded to a month by President Ronald Reagan in 1988. It was enacted into law on August 17, 1988, on the approval of Public Law 100-402.

It begins on September 15 because it is the anniversary of independence for the Latin American countries Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively. Also, Columbus Day, or Día de la Raza, which is held on October 12, falls within this 30 day period.



## Lydia Villa-Komaroff – Scientist and Educator

- Born on August 7, 1947 in Las Vegas, NM and raised in Santa Fe, NM.
- Board member and Chief Scientific Officer at Cytonome/ST, LLC and a member of the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center.
- Earned her Ph.D. in Cell Biology from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1975, only the third Mexican American woman in the United States to receive a doctorate in the sciences.
- Internationally recognized scholar in cell and developmental molecular biology.
- Known for her role in insulin research as a member of Walter Gilbert's team at Harvard, detailed in Stephen Hall's book, *Invisible Frontiers: The Race to Clone the Insulin Gene*.
- Profiled in the PBS special DNA Detective in 1995.
- Selected by Hispanic Engineer and Information Technology Magazine as one of the country's most powerful Hispanics, because of her contributions to the advancement of molecular biology and leadership experiences with scientific and technological institutions.
- Founding member of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), and has been both a board member and vice president of the organization.



Further Reading: [www.gale.cengage.com/free\\_resources/chh/bio/villa\\_l.htm](http://www.gale.cengage.com/free_resources/chh/bio/villa_l.htm)

Lydia will be a Keynote Speaker at this year's SACNAS conference in San Jose, CA held on October 27-30, 2011. NOAA will be participating at the conference as exhibitors. For more information on SACNAS, please visit their website at [www.sacnas.org](http://www.sacnas.org).

