

“5 Naciones un Corazón: Five nations, one Heart“

Central American Independence Celebration at Hartford, CT.

September 15, 2024

Essay by Paola Evangelista (Class of 2026) and Mafer Vacca (Class of 2027)



On September 15th, the Hartford City Hall transformed to welcome the commemoration of the 203rd anniversary of Central American independence from Spain, an event made possible by the efforts of The Central American United Committee of Connecticut.

The United Central Americans of Connecticut is a collective of Central American residents in Connecticut who, since 2017, have worked to raise awareness about the cultural, socioeconomic, and political contexts of immigration from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica to the United States.

One of their signature programming highlighting Central American heritage is the raising of the flags of the countries that were once part of the former Central American Federation, established between 1823 and 1839. It was Central American national that tried to survive as one country after Independence until internal conflicts destroyed the project.

Today's countries that belonged to that nation continue to strive for greater freedoms and immigrants to the U.S. recall that history.







The raising of the national flag of Nicaragua, the country especially recognized this year by the group.





Families, neighbors, and the wider Hartford community came together for this celebration, which continued with a ceremonial program beginning with a welcome by Melissa Cordon and Manuel Zaldivar, Honduran members of Centroamericanos Unidos de Connecticut, Central Americans United of Connecticut.





Following the introductions, Carla Astudillo-Fisher, a Chilean singer performed the American National Anthem.



Nicaraguan Marvin Martinez Sáenz read the poem, *Sabor a Nicaragua*. Saenz portrayed the sensations and memories of those who find joy in recognizing in Nicaragua home, family or roots. Gilda Cordero, a Nicaraguan member of Central Americans United, selected the poem for reading at the event.



Address by Professor Dario Euraque of Trinity College's History Department & International Studies, (left), and a member of the Central Americans United Committee and co-director at the Center for Caribbean Studies.

Euraque reflected on the scale of the Central American diaspora that now makes up the homes of urban communities like ours - the history both endured and that continues to be written.

His address alluded to his ongoing fall course, HIST/AMST 204, Central American Immigration to the U.S., as his students (right) were in attendance directly engaging with the topics and themes of their coursework beyond the classroom.



Amilcar Hernandez, Puerto Rican Councilman for the City of Hartford, addressing the audience.

Addresses from several representatives closely connected to the Central American community in Connecticut provided insights on the significance of Central American Independence, celebration and ongoing contemporary struggles.



Minnie Gonzalez, State Representative for Hartford (left).

Anabel Figueroa, State Representative for CT House District 148 in Stamford (right).

Hilda Santiago, State Representative, Meriden.



Commission of Human Rights (CHRO) Representatives, Ana Mitchell and Cheryl Sharp.







The afternoon ended with a Nicaraguan cultural dance presentation performed by William Herrera Gutierrez, a ballet and folkloric dancer.



Jesse Mejia, Salvadoran member of Centroamericanos Unidos de CT, shared closing remarks that reminded the audience of the strength found in community and the joy of embracing our colors while proudly claiming culture in the diaspora.